

FAO: DR POMEROY

HOME SECRETARY'S SPEECH
THE POLICE FOUNDATION: 9 JULY 1998

May I begin by thanking The Police Foundation for inviting me to address you this evening. This is an important event. It gives me a valuable opportunity to outline some of the government's agenda for policing over the next few years.

Work of the Police Foundation

2. I should also like to commend The Police Foundation for their continuing contribution to the development of policing in this country. As many of you will know, the Foundation has been in operation for almost 20 years. During that time it has made a noticeable impact on the way in which policing has developed.

3. The Foundation has considerably expanded its interests over the years. It is now working on a wide range of projects from traffic research to lay visitor schemes and police complaints. Significantly it is also working with the Association of Police Authorities (APA) on how the authorities have approached their responsibility to monitor forces' performance against the policing plan. That is a study which I shall be very interested to see in the Autumn. And of course, a recent major initiative was to establish the Independent Inquiry into the Misuse of Drugs Act, chaired by Lady Runciman. A report on this work is scheduled in the Autumn of 1999. I am sure it will make a very valuable contribution to the debate on how we handle drug misuse.

4. The Police Foundation very much values its independence - as do I. From time to time we need to be reminded that we don't always get everything right, and an independent view can be extremely helpful in pulling us back on course. And make no mistake, policing needs to be right on course - for it is the most costly element of the criminal justice system.

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Best Value

5. This year expenditure on policing will be more than £7 billion. That is a substantial programme at a time when the public expenditure climate remains tight. There will be an expectation not only that the police service delivers value for money but also that it can demonstrate it is doing so across the whole policing agenda. That means a relentless and continuing look at what the service does, how it is done and whether it can be done more effectively and efficiently.

6. In recent years the police service has achieved a great deal in improving its approach to efficiency and measuring performance. But the process has to be a continuous one. It is no more open to public services than it is to the private sector to say - well, that's it, we've now achieved all that we can in terms of efficiency. If we assert that, we are asserting something which is both incredible and against all experience. Incredible, because such an assertion implies that the service has now achieved a perfect level of efficiency output, which can never be true: against all experience, because we know what has been achieved not only in the private sector but in many parts of the public service too. The private sector has to work typically to secure year on year improvements in efficiency just to survive. In the public sector too there have been very significant improvements in unexpected places - in local authority manual services, in the delivery of social security benefits, in the Prison Service, and in further education, where a 30% improvement in efficiency has been secured in five years.

7. But improvements in efficiency requires clear direction. So part of the work done in the Comprehensive Spending Review has been to identify aims and objectives, both for the criminal justice system as a whole, as well as for the police service. Until we are clear what outcomes we want it will remain difficult to direct efforts towards achieving those outcomes.

8. I do not pretend that any of this is easy. But it is a move that we must make - we must shift the emphasis from inputs to the measurement of performance against the outcomes that we are striving to achieve. We have consulted both ACPO and the APA on

the aims and objectives for the police service as we developed them, and I hope that they will be announced very shortly. The measures will, for example, enable us to see which forces are performing well and where improvements are needed.

9. David Davis, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, commented recently in 'The Times', 29 May, that there is an "...enormous variation in the performance of police forces...". The article goes on to say that this is so "even when resources were not an issue".

10. Those of you who are parents will at some time have asked the question: Why and how does one school do better than another, even though it is in the same kind of area, with similarly qualified teachers, and pupils from similar backgrounds - and individual levels of funding.

11. And we all know the answer - that the often astonishing variation in the performance of otherwise similar schools is down to good management and leadership - and not to resources.

12. What this illustrates is a simple truth: that the solution to every problem is not money.

13. What is true for the education sector is true across business and the public service, including the police and the wider CJS, but with this difference. With some public services there is an element of consumer choice. Patients have some choice over their doctors, and parents a good deal of choice over schools. But by definition no similar choice is there for police services. This makes it all the more important that the policing service provided is effective, efficient and of high quality. And, as I have said, that is not dependent on money alone. HMIC and Audit Commission data show that one force may have been very tight for cash, but doing well on average whilst another may have enjoyed higher spend per head and a greater increase, and be doing less well.

14. Take another set of indicators - rates of sickness, and of early retirement through ill health. These vary astonishingly between forces. Ill health retirements by a factor of five - from 17% in one force to 77% in another. And if we then look in the Inspectorate's reports, we find the explanation - good leadership, management, high morale - these are what make the difference.

15. Part of our contribution nationally to helping make that difference is to develop the idea of "Best Value" - so that services are always tested objectively against a VFM yardstick. Under the Government's Best Value proposals, local authorities - including police authorities - will have a duty to provide economic, efficient and effective services. Services which are of high quality and to which the public have fair access. In other words, to offer Best Value for the money they spend.

16. We are keen to ensure that Best Value is applied to the police service in an appropriate way. Three forces (Cleveland, Greater Manchester, and South Wales) are currently taking part in Best Value pilot projects and I hope that they will provide valuable lessons on the best way forward.

17. Let me stress that taking forward work on value for money and Best Value is not just a job for senior management or the corporate planning department. Every single officer has a contribution to make to the delivery of an effective and efficient service, just as improving the effectiveness of schools above all depends on the class teacher.

18. It is officers on the ground - those who are at the sharp end of the fight against crime - who are most frustrated by inefficiencies and waste in the system. Cutting down on that inefficiency and waste will free officers to do the job they do best. And often it is front line officers themselves who are in the best position to judge how that can be done. That is why I stress that improving efficiency and value for money cannot be just a boardroom exercise.

19. I welcome very much the positive responses the police service has offered to our consultation on Best Value and I hope that, with their continuing help and leadership, Best

Value will help to ensure the delivery of a better, more cost-effective police service, accountable to local communities. I am delighted that ACPO are already responding so positively to the challenges of this work. I know that we will not be able to make progress without them.

20. Let me now move on from Best Value to give you a progress report on 14 months as Home Secretary - and to set out some key initiatives which I plan for the immediate future and which will inform the policing agenda.

21. As some of you may have heard me say before, an 18 year planning period does help enormously when taking up a new post. Opposition is a good preparation for Government - (though the opposite is not necessarily true). That said, I hope you will find commendable the progress we have made in making our plans a reality in such a short time. Many of these plans are, as I hope you will appreciate, a direct response to concerns expressed over a number of years by the police service, and those with whom they work closely.

The government's approach

22. I want to begin by making two major points about the way in which we are approaching policy development in government and then go on to talk about how I see this affecting the police service both nationally and internationally.

- Point one. Government action should be **evidence-based**. The policies which we promote will be based on a careful assessment of the facts and a thoughtful consideration of the views expressed to us by those who are delivering our policies on the ground, and
- Point two. We want 'joined-up government'. Many key issues run right across traditional boundaries. Partnership is not just for other people - it is applicable across and within all government departments.

23. What are the implications of these two approaches for the police?

Evidence-based policing

24. I would like to see a move - across a whole range of policing activity - toward evidence-based policing. What does this mean?

25. Let me begin with the Crime and Disorder Bill.

26. This is our response to the long held view put to us by the police and others that in order to reduce crime we need designated leadership at local level. And that progress can only be made by partnership.

27. As you all now know, the Bill is crystal clear on the need for crime reduction partnerships. And it goes on to say that those partnerships, and the crime reduction work done by them, should be based on a significant crime audit at local level. The action locally must not be based on whim or received wisdom, but embedded in the evidence from data on local crime and disorder; from the communities, and from the many other agencies who will be joining in these partnerships.

28. A key question will be: what are the consequences of working in partnership for local decision making?

- First, decisions will be shared - agreement will be needed on appropriate and effective action.
- Secondly, joint performance indicators, which may need to be developed, will help in making sure that all the agencies are singing to the same hymn sheet.
- Thirdly, the police will need to join in partnership more widely than ever before. They will be working closely with the local authorities, and there will also be a need to attend to crime associated with businesses, schools, and other

groups but crucially with communities. Genuine community consultation and partnership will lead to the kind of sustained reductions in crime and disorder which we will be looking for.

[AD LIB eg from Victims Support Group and how police attend estate problems.]

29. You will be pleased to hear that the guidance in relation to the Crime and Disorder Bill, which stresses the importance of partnership, will be available shortly in published form. But in the meantime, Alun Michael, the Deputy Home Secretary, has personally ensured that it is available on the Internet.

30. One of the questions I sometimes get asked by police forces (among others) is why we are not providing any extra cash to get the implementation of the Crime and Disorder Bill up and running.

31. Well, the answer is that the police service is no different from many other organisations in that it is required to do an extremely important and admittedly difficult task on the basis of the resources allocated to it. Moreover, I believe that many of the provisions in the Crime and Disorder Bill will not require more resources from the Service. You may sometimes need to use them a little differently. But that is a process on which some forces have already embarked with notable success. I do think that it requires you to build on the best practice that you have yourselves developed, and much of that best practice will also be cheaper.

32. [AD LIB : EXAMPLE OF ONE OFFICER ALLOCATED TO SOLVE NEIGHBOUR DISPUTE]

33. A further example, still on the problem-solving theme, of tackling calls related to a repeat location, often referred to as a 'hotspot' and predictably in this case, a car park. This particular car park, in Leicester, where our Problem Orientated Policing project is based, was suffering its own 'mini crimewave' of theft from vehicles. Whilst this had been recognised by the police, there was little other relevant information as reporting officers

had simply put down the location as 'Sainsbury's car park'. Leicester hit on what I think was an excellent idea to obtain further information, and one which lets the aggrieved victim know that the police were active in preventing and detecting crime. Each victim was sent an explanatory letter with an accompanying plan of the car park and asked to mark on the exact location of their vehicle when it was broken into.

34. What emerged was a completely different picture from that which Sainsbury's and the police had imagined. Instead of the crimes being spread across a relatively large area of the car park, they were in fact concentrated into a very small area. With a little persuasion Sainsbury's erected close circuit television cameras and employed extra security in the relevant area of the car park. Within a week a gang of four offenders was caught red-handed. Overall, they maintained a reduction in crime of over 75% - with obviously fewer calls for service.

35. This is what I mean when I say that it is possible to save money by reducing *crime* more effectively. It did not require a great deal of effort to provide evidence to the car park managers, but a command and control system which was capable of analysing calls for service certainly helped. We must get better at this.

36. Another major challenge arising from our emphasis on evidence based policing is the greater implementation of good practice. We need to know what works, where it works and why it works in order to ensure that the very best methods becomes a routine part of everybody's policing. This calls for practically oriented research and evaluation - good practice based on evidence.

37. This takes me to the launch today of the latest Police Research Group report on repeat victimisation. Many of you will be familiar with much of this work which has now been carried out for over 10 years. Today's report pulls together what we have achieved over the last few years, but it also sets out what we need to do to make the most of this knowledge.

38. It is now widely recognised that if you have been a victim once you are more likely to be a victim again. This is true for a whole range of offences - from domestic violence and racial crime to burglary, car crime and retail crime. These findings are a daunting reality for the people who suffer from multiple crimes. But they are also a gateway to tackling the problem. Knowing about repeat victimisation tells you where to focus your effort and when. So it can help to catch criminals and to prevent further crime.

39. A series of Home Office funded projects have clearly demonstrated the significant gains to be made from tackling repeat victimisation as part of the overall crime reduction strategy - both in terms of reducing crime and improving the quality of service to victims. Equally heartening are the grass-roots local initiatives which have shown similarly positive results. Let me give you just one example from the report. A divisional repeat victimisation programme in Stockport achieved a 21% reduction in burglary, compared to a 5% reduction for the rest of the force. We know that this drop was largely achieved by tackling repeat victimisation because repeat burglaries fell by 44% over the same period.

40. The report also contains important new evidence about who actually carries out repeat victimisation. It has often been asked whether repeat victimisation occurs because the same offenders go back. This work is in an exploratory phase but some key findings have emerged. The evidence is that in most cases it is indeed the same offenders, often returning because they have learned from the previous offence about the ease or attractiveness of future crime against the same target.

41. One study, for example, has looked at patterns in burglary cleared up. This shows that in 80% of cases where a crime is repeated against the same target and more than one crime in the series is solved, the same offender is involved.

42. The evidence also suggests that offenders who victimise the same target more than once are the more prolific offenders. This has important implications for offender targeting strategies. It clearly makes good policing sense to include special effort to detect repeat victimisation offences, because those who will be detected will be the more committed criminals.

43. This is a good illustration of how the police can marry up crime detection and prevention efforts to make a real impact on crime.

44. The development of statutory local partnerships to tackle crime and disorder in their areas presents a golden opportunity to apply this knowledge in further ways, which is why the guidance highlights the importance of identifying repeat victimisation as part of the local audit and then taking effective action to tackle it. This research report will be widely distributed throughout the service and local authorities. The message is clear. To use a dreadful cliché it makes for a "win-win" situation.

45. Whilst evidence-based policing is particularly relevant to crime, to crime audits and to the Bill, it goes beyond that. It is relevant to the ethics of policing, to the quality of investigations which take offenders to court. It goes without saying that the courts expect evidence and proof of guilt. We all have to be constantly vigilant to ensure that the very best investigations are carried out, that they are ethically sound and that the prosecutions are firmly rooted in hard facts.

46. This applies, of course, not only to criminal investigations, but also to the way in which disciplinary procedures are handled within forces and to the application of management procedures more broadly.

47. I have in mind here equal opportunities policy where recruitment and promotion have to be firmly based on evidence of the appropriateness of the individual concerned and their merit for a higher rank. It simply will not do to allow racism or sexism, or any other prejudice, to impinge upon the decisions which are made in the course of either policing our communities, or managing ourselves.

48. It was not that long ago that one now very senior police officer withheld from a promotion board the fact that she was pregnant because, at that time, she feared it might affect the decision. I also know, more recently, of a manifestly pregnant officer who went before a promotion board and who achieved promotion to superintendent, notwithstanding.

49. I hope we are moving to the point where the question of whether or not an applicant for a post is pregnant, or black or Asian, or female, is completely and utterly irrelevant, not only to the decision-makers, but to the individuals concerned. The possibility that they may be discriminated against on any grounds should not, in an ideal world, even enter their heads. And it is that ideal world to which we should all be aspiring.

Joined-up Policing

50. Moving now to my second theme - joined up policing - I am pleased to see real progress here.

51. And these changes are happening quickly. It was not that long ago that the service agreed on national standards for the police uniform. The trials of the new uniform, to take place later this year, are the culmination of the work began by the Uniform Project Group back in 1995. Until now the police uniform has arguably been anything but uniform, and it is only now that the full efficiency savings can be gained from the standardisation of requirements.

Boundaries

52. We all know that offenders are at best ignorant of force or national boundaries and at worst exploit them for their own ends. We have to get better at ensuring a seamless police experience for offenders. This requires co-operation across force and national boundaries.

53. The police service has recognised this with the establishment of the Police Information Technology Organisation; National Crime Squad; improved National Criminal Intelligence Service, and a re-organisation of ACPO's Committee and Sub-Committee structures. All these initiatives contribute to making policing more effective and making crime more difficult. Let me give a few details on progress here.

54. First a significant development in enhancing the way we tackle cross-border and major organised crime has been the establishment of the National Criminal Intelligence Service and the National Crime Squad.

55. They are not national police forces, but their formation recognises the changing face of international and organised crime, and the need for law enforcement agencies to respond together to these changes.

56. It is too early to make a thorough an assessment of the contribution I know that these two bodies in their new guise will make. Both have active and energetic leadership, and I believe this is a good example of where we and our predecessors have responded to national policing needs, and with our international commitments in mind. We have acted together to meet the need for changed arrangements in tackling major crime.

Implementation

57. But it is alarming how long it can sometimes take to make progress in key areas. For all the subscription by the police to the concept of operational independence, the rather dismal truth is that experience suggests the service may be more likely to change from central direction rather than local initiative. I know this point may not be received with acclamation but let us look at one example.

58. Take paperwork. The 1995 Masefield Scrutiny was set up to examine the administrative burdens on the police and to recommend how it could be reduced. A follow-up inspection by HMIC in May last year found little or no progress. Inter-agency working across criminal justice agencies, who ought to be working to the same agenda, is almost non-existent? Police Review's leader, 3 July, asked "Will we have to wait for another review of the review of the Masefield scrutiny in a few years time to discover once again little progress is being made?".

59. I am left wondering what more we can do. For example, how many forces are actually using a quite sensible PRG report which came out in April, following the HMIC

Inspection. This suggested how to reduce paperwork- it provided an extremely good practice model using the experience of traffic officers. My guess is that most forces would see 'traffic officer' in the title and move on.

60. This report followed an earlier PRG report on reducing administrative burdens which was drawn on quite heavily by Robin Masefield but I suspect is now forgotten in forces.

61. There is no point whatsoever in making proposals for improvement if they are not acted upon. **Implementation** must be higher on our agendas.

62. And it is not only the implementation of good management practice within forces which interests me, important though this is. I am concerned to see action in implementing improvements across the board - in all the relevant agencies and partnerships, toward reducing crime.

63. Let me give you a concrete example - a real success story. The police knew for years that cars were broken into and driven off because their security was poor. The locks were useless and there were no immobilising devices on engines.. What did they do - indeed what could they do? Surely it was for the car manufacturers to get their act together and redesign the cars. And were these manufacturers about to do this. They were not. Why should they? More car thefts meant more sales of replacement radios, wing mirrors, whole cars.

64. So what could be done? Let me tell you. In 1989 the Home office published the first car theft index. It listed cars by make and by type. It showed that some vehicles were far more attractive to the would be car thief than others. It ranked them. [I hope the manufacturers will excuse me if I mention a not often noticed vehicle at the bottom of the theft list - if you do not want your car stolen then buy a pink Lada estate. Safe as houses.]

65. The effect of this on the manufacturers was striking. They invested heavily in car security because it had become an issue with the buying public. Vauxhall, to take one

example, have, in just one year invested £75 million on developing and implementing measures to prevent car crime, and I know they are not alone. And why? Because nobody wants to be at the top of a car theft list.

66. And the follow-up car theft index, published this year shows what a remarkable improvement there has been. The improved security has made a real contribution to the fall in car thefts which we are now witnessing.

67. I have mentioned this not simply because I like success stories but because I think it illustrates the kind of thinking that we need to get better at if we are to really make a difference in reducing crime. The manufacturers of cars could have done something about car security for themselves, without the stick of the theft index. They did not because they did not see it as in their commercial interests to do so. At the risk of sounding cynical - if we want improved implementation of good practice; if we want the designers of goods and services to pay due attention to reducing crime in all aspects of their operation, then we have to ask ourselves - Why should they? And go on to answer that question by identifying the right 'levers' for action.

68. And this is something that the police and their crime reduction partners are going to have to get even better at because the police do not have control of the crime 'drivers' - the aspects of our society which push crime up - like cars, expensive TVs and videos, mobile phones, housing estate design or drugs.

69. Let me give you a current example. Digital televisions will be on the market in the next 12 months. They will be expensive; they will be in demand; they will be portable. And they will be the target of theft and burglary. I hope the manufacturers are listening because my understanding is that the manufacturers of the new digital products could, if they were so inclined, design these televisions (and the videos and radios) in such a way that they could be rendered useless to any thief who tried to steal them. We need to get technology working for us and we can if we can persuade ...bully..., cajole..., bribe, or somehow get everyone pulling in the same direction - we will reduce crime.

International scene

70. On a much more positive note, we are also making progress on the international scene. Our presidency of Europe, which has now just ended, brought home to me yet again the extent to which we can be proud of our policing style.

71. At the recent Crime Prevention Seminar held during our presidency, it was clear how highly valued was the advice and experience of British police forces.

72. Following that seminar the first meeting of the EU crime prevention network was held. It will develop and spread good practice across Europe. I am sure that our contribution will be greatly valued and that we can also learn from our European partners.

73. Operationally, greater co-operation will also result from the long awaited establishment of Europol, a new EU wide criminal intelligence organisation which will be up and running in the Autumn.

74. This year the UK also holds the Presidency of the so-called Group of Eight or G8 countries, which involves the USA, Canada, Japan, Russia, Germany, France, Italy and the UK. Its focus is tackling organised crime.

75. We are improving co-operation in the cross border tracing and seizure of criminal assets. And we are leading the way in projects to target child pornography, cocaine trafficking and East European crime.

Conclusion

76. I am sure you will agree that the agenda is daunting. Requirements of the police range from tackling anti-social behaviour in partnership with local agencies, to addressing drugs trafficking and serious violence - at both national and international levels.

77. But I hope you will also agree that we in government have made a significant start in our first year by responding with vigour to the long standing needs of the service for changes in the way in which policing is delivered.

78. We have provided the money and the legislative framework, and we will shortly be spelling out the priorities for action. We will then be looking to the police and their partners to demonstrate that they can deliver the goods.