

## ST GEORGE'S HOUSE 2012 ANNUAL LECTURE

### CHALLENGES FOR MODERN POLICING AND ITS LEADERSHIP

BY

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Your Royal Highnesses, Mr Dean, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a wonderful honour for me to be invited to speak in this extraordinary place, and to such a distinguished audience. I have been privileged to attend Evensong here twice before and have literally been struck dumb by the beauty, history and sense of this place. To be allowed to speak here is beyond my wildest dreams and a truly unforgettable experience. I must thank St George's House, an institution I have personally benefitted from on several occasions, for thinking of me, and taking, I must say, a considerable risk in the hope that I may have something to say which begins to live up to being here, to you, the audience, and of course to the speakers that you have had before. I am going to talk about policing in the United Kingdom, some of our current challenges and opportunities, and some particular challenges I think there are for our leaders. I should declare here that I am not entirely impartial, I am in fact biased. Policing has given me a wonderful life, of interest and challenge, insights and opportunities, of fun, enjoyment, friendship, excitement and on occasion great satisfactions. I am hooked and I feel immensely privileged to have been allowed to be a police officer, and to have undertaken command and leadership in this particular period of policing. As you know, I currently work in the Met, we police 620 square miles of London, our capital city, with over 7 million residents, 1.5 million commuters and huge numbers of tourists. London is probably the most diverse city on the planet, where 300 languages are spoken, and nearly 50 per cent of the country's black and minority ethnic population live. We answer 6 million calls, deal with over 800,000 crimes and police about 4,500 protests, ceremonial and large public events every year. We have about 32,000 officers and 54,000 people in total, which I think makes us the biggest single employer in London. We also have, as an aside, 81 police forces, 228 dogs - police horses, 228 dogs and three helicopters. We lead the UK counter-terrorist efforts and have a number of other national responsibilities. We have the privilege of policing Parliament, government buildings, the diplomatic community and, of course, providing protection to Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family, as well as visiting Heads of State, members of the government and other VIPs. The Met is much the largest of the 43 police forces in England and Wales. Incidentally, you may think, as many Chief Constables do, that 43 seems rather a lot. That there must be some efficiencies, perhaps some greater effectiveness and flexibility to be gained from having fewer larger forces. It's worth remembering though that in the US, they have 50 national law enforcement agencies, 49 state forces, 3,000 county sheriff departments, 3,000 city police departments and over 13,000 independent small



town and rural forces. This breathtaking scale and complexity puts our own struggles at achieving consistency, information sharing and agreement between forces into some sort of perspective. I am immensely proud of the Met and the people who work in it and with it. I firmly believe that the Met does many things better than any police service in the world, but of course like any very large institution, it has pockets of mediocrity and some bad practices. But as I speak, there will be Met people showing incredible compassion and humanity, displaying great courage and restraint in the face of threatened or actual violence, making really difficult split second decisions in life threatening situations with, unlike on the television, too little time and too little information. There will be officers and staff providing an excellent service to a victim of rape, liaising with colleagues from multiple international police services in a complex terrorism inquiry, displaying kindness to a person with severe mental health issues or showing great skill in dealing with a neighbourhood problem, a cyber attack, applying a new forensic technique - I could go on and on, and that will be happening now. All these extraordinary things are quite normal for our people and this great work, done well, with a strong sense of service and for many vocation is of course most unlikely to get reported. But as a previous commissioner used to say: probably somewhere out there in London there is a Met person doing something daft, or having a bad day, and that, as in the church, I suspect, may well get reported. I often begin talks with some audience participation. Don't worry, I don't think that's appropriate for this occasion. But I would like to pose you some questions to think about. Do you know what the role of the police is? Do you have a view about how they should do it, and what they should do better? Have you ever thought about joining the police? If not, why not? Would you be happy for your son, daughter, sister, brother to join? Have you been a victim of crime? Have you committed a crime? Have you been arrested? I particularly enjoy these last two questions in mixed audiences of children and adults, there is usually quite a lot of shifting about and the odd child who learns something new about mum or dad! The conversations though that tend to develop bring out some common themes. Firstly, the mandate, the mission for policing is not enshrined in law. this has tended to result in a huge variety of tasks being expected, sometimes of course leading to overload and failed expectations. It also regularly results in calls for a Royal Commission to clarify: what is it exactly that society wants from its police? I don't support that call, because, secondly, I think we can most of us rally happily around some key roles. Saving lives, preventing crime, investigating crime and bringing it to justice, maintaining order, the Queen's peace, sometimes forgotten, but a big part of the job. Some would actually argue the most important part of the job. Certainly we all saw horribly and vividly last year the effect of order breaking down in London and other cities. We would perhaps also agree on upholding the law and protecting people's human rights. And we would also all recognise, I think, there is a whole category of stuff that the police do because they are and should be the service of last resort, responding to emergencies and cries for help at any time of day or night, all year round. We can usually agree also that it's



important that the police do their job fairly, with integrity, courteously, thoroughly, professionally, compassionately, they should be friendly and accessible and most people should agree that they should use minimum force, although I do find, I have to say, in older audiences, many people who claim to remember the good old days, when the bobby gave the apple scrumper a good box around the ears! We don't do that, that wouldn't be minimum force. We understand that the police should use discretion and that actions should be suited to the circumstances. We can expect them to have high personal ethical standards, adopting perhaps the Nolan principles of public life, and clearly they should act impartially, free of undue influence from politicians or elsewhere, and they should be held to account. Now, almost all of those themes were envisaged by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 when he laid the Bill before Parliament that founded the Metropolitan Police, and they were made real by the leadership of the first two commissioners, Rowan and Mayne. Peel also envisaged other principles that have stood the test of time. Police officers should be citizens. Peel had formed a police force in Ireland and he had studied others in Scotland and France. He was most anxious that our police should be very different from those in France, so ours would be in uniform, and could not be accused of being spies, but equally they should not be military, like the hated gendarmes, hence the distinctive blue uniform with the top hat. Secondly, citizens have a role in policing. Policing by consent has been a constant theme of British policing since then. Peel's police, like ours today, consisted of constables, enjoying an ancient office of independent authority, in which constables are not employees, they are not civil servants. Lord Denning famously said: they are and should be independent of the executive. They swear an oath to the Queen, and they are accountable for their actions to the law. However, Peel's police were far from universally popular, and they met a great deal of resistance, far more than we do now. Indeed, nowadays I think all but the most entrenched extremists and violent gang criminals actually support the police in most ways. Almost everybody wants an effective police, and wants their police to improve. This includes, incidentally, the vast majority of persistent criminals. Though just like the speeding motorist, they wish the police were a little less effective against them, and better at policing other people! And the vast majority of the public remain immensely supportive and grateful to the police, as we all saw manifest last year, after the disorders, when there was an outpouring of thanks, friendliness and cups of tea as London recovered. But of course, we will disagree about the police, with limited resources, the police can't do everything to the nth degree and like other services, choices have to be made, and people have strong and differing views about which crimes and services are more or less important. Police decisions will not please everybody all of the time. Indeed, as they frequently find themselves at the rubbing points of society, rubbing between opposing protestors, for example, or between arguing parties, neighbours, partners, violent drunks, and they find themselves in complex situations involving multiple different or opposing interests, such as in investigating allegations of child abuse within a family. Police officers get very used to being accused of doing too much by some, and not enough by others.



And this leads to a certain pragmatism and stoicism in the culture which, when not overdone, is extremely helpful and rather impressive. One feature of what we in the police try to do in the 2000s was to raise trust and confidence in all communities. Now, this wasn't an academic exercise or one about chasing performance indicators, trust and confidence is fundamental to good policing. Without trust, you won't have crimes reported properly, information about what's going on, people won't come forward to be witnesses and informants, to provide observation points, to help an officer who is being attacked. Without trust and confidence, the police are not legitimate, and all their actions are taken uphill. I joined the Met in 1983, by 2001, I could say quite confidently that it was a much, much better police service in almost all ways. And yet paradoxically, it appeared that public confidence in the police, as measured by the polls, had reduced, by 17 percentage points in that time. We could, of course, always comfort ourselves with the bittersweet knowledge that as is certainly true to this day, trust and confidence in the police is extraordinarily much higher than that in politicians, or journalists, poor old journalists always come bottom of these polls. The reasons for this fall are clearly complex. The polls show general downward trends in relation to all institutions and people in authority. This may perhaps partly have been because of the preponderance of bad news stories in the written media. I heard recently of some research which analysed the British newspapers in 1974 and in 2006. In 1974, the researchers found that there were roughly three positive stories, good news stories, for every one negative, bad news story. In 2006, the ratio was said to be 18 broadly negative, bad news stories, for every one positive. Some of this apparent reduction in trust, of course, may simply have been a function of polling, the way the questions were asked, we all know how we feel sometimes when we're polled, we don't always give completely a straightforward answer, but I have to say that in policing we did believe there had been a genuine change for the worse, despite, as I have said, us feeling we were actually doing a better job, and this actual reduction in trust was probably partly because our policies appeared to be dominated by concerns about efficiency and vehicle patrols and an overfocus on targets in relation to certain crimes which actually didn't concern people so much, and secondly, very importantly, there was less obvious focus on victims, and police visibility and presence, and you will know that in big cities, there was a particular lack of confidence among minority communities in the wake of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. I'm glad to say that that trend in confidence did not continue inexorably downwards. Indeed, for the last several years, the trend has been up, and I think the police service has a very good story to tell of achievement and performance. Let me give a very few examples. However you measure it, and despite the headlines, crime has fallen very considerably in the last ten years. I accept that some crimes, notably internet based, fraud, and those suffered by the most alienated, may well be and in fact are under-reported. I also accept that overall crime, particularly violent crime, is still too high, but no one who has studied the data would suggest anything other than that there has been a very large reduction overall. The British Crime Survey suggested crime is



at its lowest level since 1981. Clearly, the police can't take all the credit for this. Economic and demographic factors may well have played a part, and the work of other agencies may be very important, particularly in some areas. Take homicide. In London last year, there were 103 homicides. In 2002, I know because I was part of dealing with them, there were 230. More than twice as many. The reduction is great news, but we may never know how much of that reduction is due to our police work on domestic violence, our improved intelligence about organised gang criminals, our work to reduce knife crime, and how much frankly is due to better paramedic skills or the surgeon's knife. I know the commander for homicide is in the room, so he may not agree with me. As an aside, the homicide rate in London is absolutely tiny compared with that in the United States. Clearly, any murder, any homicide is a terrible tragedy but it is worth remembering, when I last checked the rate, we were in London about one third of that in New York, and one fifteenth and one twentieth of other big cities like Philadelphia and Detroit. There has been great investment in neighbourhood policing recently, so that in most neighbourhoods, the police are noticeably more visible and more active in dealing with local problems. Most people know they can expect to see a PC or a PCSO and they know these officers are dedicated to their area, and the public knows something about the crimes and problems in their area. Some crimes, such as domestic violence and sexual assault, require a highly specialist response and in these we have hugely improved our care of victims and effective investigations. We have also become stronger and stronger at working with others across the spectrum of crimes and problems, from the very, very local to the international. Let me give a couple of examples. We know that about 20 per cent of criminals commit 80 per cent of crime. We also know one of the factors which are going to help people stop offending, finding employment, stable housing, being in a relationship, sorting out drug and alcohol problems, and so on. Now if we take a city like Bristol, that 20 per cent, who are committing 80 per cent of the crime, that's about 800 offenders, In Bristol, all the agencies that can help stop re-offending have concentrated on those 800, they have collocated their teams to ensure interventions are timely and co-ordinated. This is not being soft on crime, in fact it is the opposite. The offenders know the agencies are on their case and they know they are more likely to get caught and sent to prison if they break their licensing conditions, but equally they are helped to go straight. In Bristol, they have seen a 40 per cent reduction in re-offending by these individuals and they have the lowest rates of what is called serious acquisitive crime, robbery, burglary and so forth, since 1980. In the world I now work in, everything depends on working effectively with others outside the police. In preventing terrorist attacks and bringing terrorists to justice, we work ever more closely with the security service and with other intelligence agencies, as well as with law enforcement abroad. This relationship with the security service is truly the envy of the world of counter-terrorism. In providing protection to people, to our sites and private places, and to the critical national infrastructure, we depend on working with and through industry, businesses and government agencies. In ensuring we are prepared for an attack,



God forbid, we work and train and exercise with other emergency services, local authorities, the voluntary sector and businesses. And perhaps in some ways, the hardest, in trying to help prevent people become violent extremists, or ensuring that the spot those who have become just that, we work with education, health, we work with the faith groups, and community groups. In each of these, we depend on good communication with and support of the public. Through considerable investment and support from successive governments, we have created a formidable modern capability which is built on the foundations of traditional British policing. Counter-terrorism is just one type of policing where we are, for a variety of reasons, sometimes sadly through hard experience, regarded as world leaders. Literally several times per week, Scotland Yard has police visitors from around the world interested in how we work. Looking at our response to homicide, to critical and major incidents and disaster, working with bereaved families, working with minority groups, e-crime, kidnap, sexual offences, organised crime, our Hughes of hi-tech, covert, intelligence, financial investigation capabilities, our hostage negotiators. I could go on. But all those are all world leading. The officers from the UK are much in demand abroad for peacekeeping, capacity building and training. They are regarded as dependable, diligent, professional, unlikely to be swayed by politics, well-trained, and aware of the needs of local communities and modern techniques. I don't pretend that policing in the UK is perfect, far from it. We are still too bureaucratic, some of our systems are weak and don't support our frontline people well enough, we are not accessible enough, some people still see us as secretive, perhaps we haven't explained well enough how we do things. We are working in an increasingly accountable and indeed litigious world, and we are not alone in this, but we have perhaps in some areas become risk averse. Researchers suggest that we may allow our decision-maker to be overinfluenced by the need to justify after the fact, and give a written account, rather than getting on with the decision. Of course, the unprecedented challenges we faced last autumn showed us that we need to improve our preparedness for preventing major disorder and we are probably still - sorry, Freudian slip. We are probably still inefficient in some ways, we are very efficient in others, and we could of course cut our costs further. I will come back to that. And as I said already, violent crime and here in particular gun and knife crime associated with gangs in London, are still far too high. A word about corruption. There has been much coverage of police corruption in the newspapers in the last few weeks, corruption of the police and the criminal justice system is a constant threat. Sadly, most of the world's population live with a criminal justice system which is profoundly corrupt and/or ineffectual. In this respect, we are most fortunate, I would say, to live where we do. policing of course is not unique in being susceptible to corruption, it can and has affected any professional institution. Indeed, in the last few days, we have heard allegations of corruption of a headteacher, a senior bank executive and even a senior official at the Vatican. But I would argue that of course some factors may make the police particularly vulnerable to corruption. Firstly, and rather obviously, we spend a great deal of our time with criminals and potential





corruptors. Secondly, the use or non-use or abuse of our powers can have a massive effect on people's lives. And thirdly, we possess confidential and sensitive information which may be of great interest to people who have no legitimate access to it. One academic who has studied police corruption around the world said: if you haven't discovered a corruption scandal recently, it's because you haven't looked for one. I think this is an exaggeration, but it does strike a cautionary note. You don't know what you don't know. And as Lord Condon, the previous Commissioner, said at the Leveson Inquiry, the history of police malpractice is cyclical and it goes something like: scandal, inquiry, action, relaxation, complacency, scandal, inquiry, and so on. Many of you will know that Sir Robert Mark undertook an enormous campaign against corruption in the Met in the 1970s which resulted in officers in prison, sacked and in total 450 leaving. When I joined in 1983, so-called noble cause corruption was a major problem, allegations of fitting up, unreliable confessions and excessive force were widespread. Officers behaving dishonestly to ensure that people they believed were guilty were found guilty. And as you all know, this resulted in some notorious and dreadful miscarriages of justice. In the 90s, the Met again sought to root out officers who had corrupt relationships with informants. Or who were making large amounts of money out of their links with organised criminals. The criminologist Maurice Punch talks about corruption in terms of the rotten apple, the rotten barrel and the rotten orchard. Now, I have worked with police forces abroad that are rotten orchards, it is a desperate situation, very difficult to change and so horribly difficult for the honest officers to survive and thrive. In the 70s and in the 90s, I think it would be fair to say that the Met certainly had what appeared to be some rotten barrels. We do have some challenges now, some of these, of course, are being played out in the Leveson Inquiry, individuals who appear to have been approached for information in return for payment by private security or by journalists or news organisations. We also still receive complaints, sometimes high-profile, about corruption from 20 or 30 years ago. Any allegations are taken incredibly seriously. And I genuinely believe these to be rare instances, not networks of bad people, not endemic. Overall, I suspect I am working in a police service which is less corrupt than it has ever been, and I do not believe that this is complacency. These changes have come through multiple means. Changes in the law, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, for example, which means that for the last 25 years, officers have taken for granted the rights that a prisoner should have, access to a solicitor, and so on. Rights which incidentally do not exist in many, many western European countries. Secondly, the opportunities for corrupt behaviour are so much reduced because much more police activity is visible and recorded through CCTV in cells, during interviews, and now of course out on the streets by the public on their phones. Thirdly, there is a much higher level of scrutiny by journalists and the courts. This may be an unpopular thing to say, but I believe both journalists and many magistrates were far too passive and unquestioning of the police until later on in the 80s. Fourthly, we now have much higher levels of independent regulation and inspection, and our own supervision of high risk areas such as handling informants



and undercover work. We have invested heavily in corruption prevention and investigation, and I believe the culture is profoundly changed. I believe that in most places, there is zero tolerance of malpractice from leaders and supervisors and staff. And it's interesting to note that of ten allegations of racism recently referred by the Met to the Independent Police Complaints Commission, six were reported by our own staff. You may also have noted the response of the Met to the allegations recently, not defensive, but uncompromising about their seriousness, eager to understand the problem, and where possible have independent investigations. Another question for you: which of you thinks that it might be a good idea to try to bribe a - bribe a traffic officer in this country? If anyone does, I can assure you it is not. The last three cases I heard of attempted bribery resulted in the officer reporting it immediately and the member of the public being arrested but for those of you who travel abroad it is worth thinking of where this "petty" corruption is commonplace.

Equally, since I am giving you some tips, I should tell you, if stopped by a traffic officer in this country, the phrase "do you know who I am?" ... or: "I know the Chief Constable", is unwise. At the very best, you will receive an old-fashioned look. I don't pretend for one second that the improvements we have made have all been brought about by police leaders. Policing doesn't take place in a vacuum, it is greatly influenced by the law, communities and social change, as well as by the bodies to whom it is accountable, and although leadership is frequently the key, some improvements have happened despite not because of police leaders. You may have noticed that there have been significant changes in relation to women in policing in the last 30 years. Now, more than a quarter of our police officers are women, and about 40 per cent of our staff overall. Women are flooding into the CID, into the detective world, and I think they will perhaps form the majority in the very foreseeable future. Women are in every specialism, and also in some significant leadership positions. In London at the moment, the Metropolitan Police has eight deputy Assistant Commissioners, I know the ranks are complicated, it is rather like the Mikado, but that is one down from me. these Deputy Assistant Commissioners run operations, of those eight, five of them are currently women, they run the Met. Don't tell the Commissioner I said this, but it is true. In my view, these changes were actively resisted by some Chiefs and with a very few honourable exceptions not encouraged by others who were if you like passive resisters. The changes were brought about by changes in the law, by the actions of some brave buy nears taking on the system, by pressure from the outside, for example by police authorities and by the leadership of a few senior women and even fewer men who kept on nagging, haranguing and exposing the nonsenses. And there were some nonsenses, things that seem laughable today. When I joined, if you wanted to be a dog handler, you had to have a wife. Just before then, if you became pregnant, you had to resign. My friends who carried firearms on the National Crime Squad, covert squad, had to carry them in a handbag, so that at the vital moment when the armed robbers arrived, they would be scrabbling around trying to open the bag and find the





wretched thing. All sorts of barriers were put in place, many formal and explicit, later informal or hidden, that made it practically impossible for women to enter various specialisms. That was then. And is long gone now, thank goodness, and women are thriving and being themselves in every area of policing. And I always remember that though the police in the 70s and 80s were undoubtedly, by today's standards, profoundly racist, sexist, I could go on, my own experience in 1983 was that the Metropolitan Police was rather less racist and sexist than the big firm of accountants or indeed the fish and chip shop that I had worked in before. I honestly believe we have a firm base on which to deal with the challenges to come. When I look back and compare the police service I joined with that in 2012, I can say categorically the more transparent, accountable, open, humble, eager to learn and adaptable, our people are better educated, more questioning, more highly skilled and trained, and much more diverse. We have higher professional standards, with far less corrupt, much more ethical, much less aggressive, much, much fairer. Our culture, I believe also, has retained what has been best in British policing: courage, determination, adaptability, can-do, great in a crisis, resilient, dependable, team working. We do have a few challenges and opportunities coming up. Firstly, in technology. There are lots of opportunities within our grasp to use technology even more to identify offenders speedily, to ensure dangerous offenders comply with their bail conditions, to identify patterns of association, to recognise offenders before they commit a crime. Many of you will think you know a lot about forensics from television. The speed of change in forensics has been absolutely astonishing and we are now in a position where really, the laboratory is being taken to the crime scene, so that the identification and analysis is being done at the scene, or on the arrested person, within minutes. It is an extraordinary change. Technology gives us opportunities to communicate better, more directly with the public, and particularly of course with young people. It also, however, lends itself to new types of crimes, and I fear some of you may have suffered those, new ways of committing crime, and from us, it requires different intelligence and investigative skills, particularly in sifting enormous volumes of digital data and securing it as evidence and presenting it in courts. Secondly, the challenge from what we call austerity, the economic situation may bring different crime patterns, in particular, in previous recessions, property crimes have increased. It also means substantial reductions in our budget. For the Met, this means we may have to find something like £800 million in savings in the coming years. And it is, of course, also affecting our own staff, as it is the rest of the public sector and far beyond. In addition, their terms and conditions are changing as a result of the Windsor and Hunt reviews. Thirdly, we have the challenge for the public inquiry chaired by Lord Leveson, the events that led to this have damaged the Met's reputation. We have already made substantial changes to the way we deal with the media, and the way we account for and supervise contacts and hospitality. Whatever Lord Leveson recommends, we will do. an effective, professional relationship between the police and the media is fundamental to the future, not just for the police and the media, but for the public as well. Fourthly, the threat from



organised crime and terrorism do not look set to diminish. The nature of the terrorist threat has changed in the seven years since the dreadful dark days of July 2005. The threat has diversified, but it endures, and frankly seems likely to do so for some considerable time to come. Organised crime currently costs our country £20-40 billion per year, nobody knows, but it is a huge amount. Fifthly, the environment we work in seems to us to be ever more complex. And one in which we are all scrutinised ever more, and that scrutiny is not very forgiving. Six, we have major changes coming in national policing, with the formation of the National Crime Agency, the Police Professional Body, and the closure of the National Police Improvement Agency. Many forces are forming collaborations with their neighbours, sharing services, either in so-called back office functions, or in operational functions like firearms, surveillance, major crime. This should allow us better use of our resources and a more flexible response and of course bring savings. In addition you will probably be aware that many forces are looking at outsourcing some functions. And this brings me perhaps to the most fundamental change we face. We are about to enter an extraordinary period, where four great experiments in police governance and accountability are taking place in Scotland, in Northern Ireland, in England and Wales and in London. In Scotland, policing has always been fundamentally similar but slightly different to England and Wales, because of the law, the role of the Procurator Fiscal and Crown Office, and the greater historical involvement of local authorities. The Scots are now headed towards one big single force replacing the current eight. It will have 17,500 officers and be headed up by a Chief Constable who will be held to account by a national police authority. In Northern Ireland, the police service will probably legitimately claim to be the most accountable police service in the world. Not only is the Chief Constable held to account by the policing board of the ombudsman, but since April this year, each local council area, 26 in all, will have policing and community safety partnerships which, through their Police Committee, will have statutory specific monitoring functions. It's a curious paradox that individual police officers feel held to account to a very high degree internally and externally and formally and informally, they, we feel that this increases by the day. There are certainly a plethora of organisations charged with holding to account. Officers find their actions scrutinised in courts, criminal and coroner's, of course, but increasingly subject to civil action, judicial review, and occasionally public inquiry. Then there are employment tribunals, they may be investigated by the Independent Police Complaints Commission or the Health and Safety Executive, or their own professional standards departments. Their actions are scrutinised by the surveillance, information and interception commissioners. In addition, we have Her Majesty's Inspectorate, police authorities, the Home Office, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Home Secretary, various auditors, in London the Mayor's office for policing and crime and the Greater London assembly, and now the policing panel. And as you will have seen, we see chief police officers summonsed to Select Committees much more frequently. The force performance, usually measured in numbers, is



scrutinised and published in legal tables. Local officers attend neighbourhood panels and police community consultative groups in a whole plethora of partnership boards. In addition, the media scrutinise more than ever before, and the Freedom of Information Act and modern communications give them more than ever to scrutinise. This all adds up to a rather complicated patchwork quilt, of overlapping and occasionally contradictory demands, advice and recommendations. And yet outside the police, although we feel held to account to a higher degree, outside the police, for those who are interested in the subject, there has been a general unease that perhaps the police are not accountable enough. For England and Wales, there seems to have been a political consensus that there was what was inelegantly called a democratic deficit. This has resulted in the changes from police authorities to a directly elected policing and crime commissioners, who will hold the Chief Constable to account, as well as, to quote the policemen itself, to lead the fight against crime, set the budget, set priorities and a number of other functions. In London, the policing and crime commissioner, the PCC, is the Mayor, although he can and in fact has delegated the function to a Deputy. The other PCCs will be elected later this year in November. They will no doubt come in a variety of shapes and sizes. There was a frisson amongst many of my colleagues when it was rumoured that Katie Price, also known as Jordan, a well-known and highly successful model, was to become a Policing and Crime Commissioner. Sadly this has proven to be untrue. The PCCs are designed to have the effect of making the police more responsive to the local public. For them to be really effective, there must be a good relationship between the PCC and the Chief Constable and clarity about their respective roles. The roles are laid out in the protocol which preserves the operational independence of the chief, and this is something my generation of senior police officers has been very keen to emphasise. We have prided ourselves on the impartiality of the police and we have also seen the hugely corrosive effects of perceptions of lack of impartiality. No man is above the law. And nothing is likely to undermine trust and confidence in the police more than a view that the police are partial. I think this is well accepted and understood. I, for example, have led or overseen some highly sensitive investigation where the very carrying out of the investigation was likely to have a profound effect on government relations, policy or on politicians themselves. Parliamentary expenses, corrupt Pakistan cricketers, allegations of complicity to torture by state agents spring to mind. On each occasion, I and my team came under no pressure whatsoever. There seems to be a general understanding by politicians and officials alike that police decisions must take their course unfettered. We have not suffered in recent times in this country from political corruption for police such as has happened in Australia and elsewhere. And broadly, the same applies to investigations in big business or other interests. They will, of course, hire the best lawyers and generally place every lawful defence game in the book, some of which may feel to the investigating officer a little bit like bullying but it is very rare indeed for there to be an attempt to use improper influence on the police officer or the investigation. Thankfully in this country it is relatively rare also, not



unheard of, for even organised criminals or gangsters to attempt to intimidate an officer or undermine an investigation, and such activities are taken immensely seriously by the courts when they are detected and proven. Long may our ability to investigate without fear or favour last. And just as politicians should not interfere with the police, so the police should not become embroiled in party politics. Our regulations prohibit us from doing so. When asked for our professional opinion on a subject, we have to be immensely careful about what we say and how we say it. I think most of us would look back and regard the furore surrounding identity cards, and 90 day terrorist detentions, when senior police views became part of the highly party politicised debate, as regrettable and perhaps easy to say now, avoidable. It may of course be very important to a political decision to know what police evidence and experience shows. As we enter into a world of PCCs we may need some more thinking and guidance about how police chiefs should behave in order to avoid seeming to support a political party. As a start, I would suggest we remember Sir Robert Mark's comment: there are some things about which it is best for a commissioner or a Chief Constable not to have a view. I think at the time he was talking about capital punishment. Secondly, in contentious areas, we should perhaps only speak on the basis of evidence and verifiable fact, when asked for a professional view, we should give just that, and try to ensure that where possible, that views is one that our other colleagues are likely to agree with. And we should be very, very clear about what decisions cannot be for us to make or to seek to influence. For example, where the law should draw the balance between liberty and security, or security and privacy, is not for the police to say. This is a fiendishly difficult area, we mustn't be timid, but we do have to be very careful. I think, for example, that it was entirely right, some of you will have heard the Commissioner spoke recently publicly about communications data. The extent to which we in the police use it now, the lives that are saved, the successful prosecutions brought because of it. These are facts. As is our inability to replace these techniques satisfactorily, should we lose access to the data, because of technological changes. These facts are poorly understood. Quite right for a senior police officer to state and explain them. What would be wrong for him or any of us is to suggest what future Parliamentary decisions should be. Meanwhile, as we face these changes in our economic and political environment, we are entering a time of unique operational challenge, as we have the great privilege of keeping the Diamond Jubilee and Olympic events and celebrations safe and secure. These will be the high point of our service careers, something most of us never dream that we will be involved in, truly a very great privilege. The operations we have been planning for over eight years have now begun. They are uniquely challenging in complexity and scale and our people will be working incredibly hard. All the normal London summer events, such as Notting Hill Carnival, Gay Pride, Wimbledon, will still take place. I could talk about this for hours, but rest assured I absolutely won't. Suffice to say, we are confident in our approach, we feel we have learnt everything we could from previous events, we feel well prepared, and the police that you will see will be friendly, happy and



professional. Behind them, there will be another army of others straining every sinew to ensure that the ceremonies, celebrations, the sport and the cultural events are secure. What does all this mean for police leaders? Leadership skills in the police are acquired and displayed at all levels, from the constable taking charge at the scene of a collision, to the Commissioner. In the future, leadership, though not command, will no doubt also be given by the PCCs. There has been an intermittent call by some throughout my service for improvements in police leadership, a constant crisis in police leadership. You would expect me to be defensive perhaps. But I do think some of the criticism has been deeply unfair, ill informed and unbalanced. Equally, the police must be open to suggestions for further improvements, and for any current leader, one of our greatest responsibilities is to recruit and nurture future leaders. Meanwhile, we need Chief Constables who are more aware than they ever were of the outside world and threats and opportunities there are. Who have excellent abilities to work with others, and will be able to build a productive relationship with the PCC. Who will be relentless in their desire for excellence and improvement, but humble and able to accept that sometimes things go wrong. Who are resilient, as the Archbishop of Canterbury said of the requirements of his successor: it's constitution of an ox and the skin of a rhinoceros. With the clearest possible view of what policing is about, where to be flexible, and where to hang on for grim death to a principle such as impartiality. Who will really care about the public and their staff, and will be able to inspire people to work together, and who have courage, moral courage, and what nap Napoleon called three o'clock in the morning courage. I have told you how I see things now, what is good in our ethos, our culture and practice and should be retained and I have outlined some of the problems and some of the challenges we face. I am quite confident about my services, and its leaders' abilities to meet these challenges, and to adapt to a more democratically accountable future. As I come to an end, perhaps there is one of you who thinks: I might volunteer to help the police, or become a Special. One of you who thinks that maybe, you will encourage a child to join us. Or one who thinks at least: I must remember to vote for my policing and crime commissioner. I hope that at least something of what I have said has touched a chord with some of you. If not, then I hope you have enjoyed sitting quietly in this most beautiful place while I have indulged myself. I thank you again for this extraordinary opportunity. (Applause).

