

VIOLENCE

The Home Secretary is concerned that the Seminar in January may expose the lack of Government policy to tackle violence. In the absence of Home Office suggestions, we offer a package of some or all of the ideas listed below which might form the basis of an announcement

Package of proposed options that could be "considered"

1. We could encourage more and better use of Neighbourhood Watches. They have been effective in assisting to fight crimes against property, but they could be more widely used as a good vehicle for information to be channelled to the police of other suspicious persons likely to be violent.
2. The police could have a programme of speaking in old peoples' homes as they do in Germany. They give practical advice to the elderly, eg use lighted streets and well lit public places at night.
3. Supply free alarms to the most vulnerable. There are a number of gadgets that could be purchased or supplied; eg a screech mechanism made by Racal Chubb which sounds off in case of attack. There is also a small form of radio transmitter worn at the moment by disabled people which could be used by the elderly to reach the neighbourhood warden or police station.
4. Install 'Iron Policemen'! Throughout Germany, in places such as parks and alleyways, an emergency public telephone in an iron shell called an 'Iron Policeman'

is installed. FGR has 25 years good experience of these.

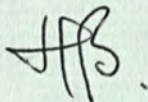
5. We could do more to help victim support schemes in practical ways, though not with moneybags.
6. We could mount a rescue mission to move or offer to move elderly people marooned in bad council blocks, and make sure they were rehoused in some of the good surplus council property owned by local authorities (eg, there are 6,000 in Hackney).
7. Existing Inspectors could do a study of the worst overcrowding and if we should insist on implementation of existing crowding rules.
8. We could supply locks, simple chains or even stronger front doors and window catches for the elderly - free for the most at risk.
9. We could publicise the research on television violence and shame the BBC and ITV into monitoring and reducing the level of violence shown.
10. With private sponsorship, prizes could be offered for good ideas to prevent violent crime, (one forthcoming from the insurance industry at our suggestion).
11. We must reintroduce Leon Brittan's sentencing proposal into the Commons to allow categories of sentence to be reviewed at the request of the prosecution by the Court of Appeal.

Conclusion

You have rightly said that explaining that crime statistics are deceptive is no help to those who are

suffering. We should leave that to Crime Prevention Officers speaking to groups around the country. But we should be aware that violent crime is only a small percentage of the total. However, because of media and public interest we must address it.

You may wish to raise these with Douglas Hurd on Monday. We attach a background summary.



HARTLEY BOOTH

APPENDIX

Summary of Research and Attitudes

In addition to studies of which you are aware, five ingredients should be included:

- It seems that the worst fear of violence is suffered by the elderly, who are marooned in poor council estates.

- You have been sent a book 'Television, Violence and the Adolescent Boy' by William A Belson. We are impressed with the serious research undertaken and it concludes that 'high exposure to TV violence increases the degree to which boys engage in serious violence'.

- Research in America and India is said to point to 'over-crowded living conditions' as a psychological constraint which leads both 'rats and humans to be abnormally violent'.

- Our findings from a visit to Germany last week by myself and John Wheeler.

- The continuing public disquiet on the lack of adequate sentencing, especially for rape.
