



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

20th December, 1985

Prime Minister's Crime Conference

Michael Alison kindly told me that I should be invited to this Conference. It seems likely that I shall be unable to attend due to a long-standing engagement to visit Hong Kong and Taiwan. I should nevertheless like to make two suggestions which, if it is convenient, I should be glad to elaborate orally to one of your senior officials.

- 1) The Public's Own Responsibility. The overwhelming majority of crimes affect property more than persons. It would help the police to concentrate on crimes against people if the public as a whole could be induced to pay far more attention to elementary methods of safe-guarding their own possessions against criminal attack. This can be done in a variety of ways - from marking personal possessions to locking cars, installing burglar alarms in homes and alerting the police to suspicious happenings, e.g. through Crime Watch Organizations.

Virtually all these techniques are well known: but they badly need to be conveyed to the public in more effective ways. Our present arrangements for mobilising public help in these areas are hopelessly inadequate.

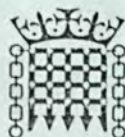
- 2) Public Education Programme. To enlist the public's support for the police in regard to property crimes, I suggest an intensive "public education campaign" along the lines of the seat belt campaign spearheaded by Jimmy Saville when I was a Minister at DOE. This needs to include:

- (i) television advertisements,
- (ii) newspaper campaign,
- (iii) video tapes.

The latter - video tapes - can prove highly effective.

Specifically, I have in mind a specially made system of videos available to the public through local police stations. These videos, say 15-17 minutes in length, could be available to neighbourhood watch groups, schools and voluntary organizations of all kinds.

/If as



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If as I recommend, the protection of households were to have top priority, the campaign should start with three particular topics:

- a) the idea of general awareness - in the street and at home - of the best means of protecting neighbourhoods against criminal attack,
- b) specific protection for small houses and flats,
- c) protection for larger houses with gardens.

The next priority would be vehicles, general common sense protection, special alarms, locks, etc.

A third area could be business premises. There would need to be tailor made videos for small shops and their special problems; for small businesses and workshops, etc. employing up to 10-20 people, and possibly a third on the protection of larger premises which need internal as well as external surveillance.

Assuming the campaign were to be police-led, tapes and material would need to be made available to police stations each of which would need a television set and a video cassette recorder.

Organization and Method: I have discussed such a campaign with the Services Sound and Vision Corporation whose Managing Director, John Grist, is enthusiastic about it. SSVC, as you know, makes training videos for the Armed Forces and has both the expertise and facilities at Chalfont Grove to make films and videos on a whole variety of topics in the security area. Its crews are cleared to work in sensitive areas. During a recent visit to SSVC, I was impressed by its computer based delivery system, printing capability and multi-copying tape facility. John Grist estimates that, whereas a 30 second TV commercial costs to produce say £250,000 plus the TV time, videos made with well-known TV actors, presenters and personalities can be made at a reasonable cost in the region of £50,000 for 15 minutes.

With SSVC already "plugged in" to the Services video production needs, I have no doubt that John Grist and his people could and would contribute helpfully to a national campaign on crime prevention. May I suggest that at an early stage, a meeting be arranged (which I should like to attend) between Mr. Grist and his staff, representatives of ACPO and the Police Federation together with your officials and others concerned with the Prime Minister's Conference.

The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, QC, MP,
Secretary of State for the Home Department,
50 Queen Anne's Gate,
London, SW1H 9AT.

C.C. Michael Alison, M.P.

HOME AFFAIRS

CRIME SEMINAR

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