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18.3.86

Your ref: POL/86 1087/1/2

NEW IDEAS IN SECURITY

Dear Mr. Cole,

Thank you for your reply to my original enquiry and for the transcript of the Prime Minister's seminar which I found most useful.

Nevertheless it has reinforced my belief that there is a considerable gap in our security effort both in research and application. But let me explain my interest.

For twenty years I was manager of the BBC's television special effects department having progressed from research and development at the Air Ministry, various engineering firms and the BBC's own research establishment. I retired early to take up freelance writing and directing in Germany while at the same time writing text books in the UK.

I am currently preparing material for a book titled 'New Ideas in Security' for an American publisher.

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During my research for this book it became very clear that security in this country was divided into two components, the commercial interests devoted to the design and marketing of equipment and the police forces concerned with investigation and prevention. Between these two there is a substantial void.

As an example take the average multi-storey car-park where the lifts are covered in graffiti and are constantly vandalised. Whose responsibility was it to advise the architects that had these been built facing outwards and well illuminated they would have suffered less damage than when hidden in dark recesses in the building? Such mistakes cost local councils millions of pounds a year.

And even the security firms have taken a quarter of a century to discover that it is better to transport cash in mobile safes than in reinforced vans.

If you read the enclosed notes which form the preface to my book I think you'll see the angle I adopt.

I believe that this country needs a special research establishment comparable in size and scale of operation to that of the Road Research Laboratory, but devoted to all aspects of crime. Funded by the security organisations and insurance companies (whose annual losses would finance it for at least ten years) it could easily become a profit-making institution by selling its knowledge and statistics to other countries.

I believe this to be a most important subject and I would welcome your comments.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Wilkie

Copies to:-

The Prime Minister,
The Right Hon. Douglas Hurd MP
The Right Hon. Norman Tebbit MP
The Right Hon. Jeffery Archer MP.

NEW IDEAS IN SECURITY

PREFACE

During the second world war considerable work was carried out on the development of camouflage and the deployment of dummy weapons.

Both sides, although well aware that this was going on, were nevertheless often uncertain whether the opposing tanks, guns and planes were real or counterfeit.

This had a salutary effect as no commander would dare to launch a major offensive where there were elements of uncertainty. The use of phoney weapons and dummy vehicles was therefore shown to be a highly successful ploy which undoubtedly played an important part in the tactics of either side.

There is an obvious parallel with modern times. Faced with something he doesn't understand the average criminal will back off; the odds are against him. With limited time to investigate and often working under stress he will usually decide that his liberty is more important to him than pursuing his current aims.

Security must therefore benefit from those factors that increase the elements of uncertainty or prolong the time needed for the criminal to achieve his objective. Hence the purpose of this book - to demonstrate new ideas and different tactics.

Conventional methods and equipment are dealt with in any number of other publications. This one sets out to show that there are sometimes less orthodox ways of achieving protection and personal safety.

