



Peter Clarke

Learning from experience

Counter Terrorism in the UK since 9/11



The Inaugural
Colin Cramphorn
Memorial Lecture

policy
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Think Tank of the Year 2006/2007

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Counter-terrorism in the UK since 9/11

Peter Clarke

Head of the Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command

The Colin Cramphorn Memorial Lecture 2007



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The Colin Cramphorn Memorial Lecture

The Colin Cramphorn Memorial Lecture was established by Policy Exchange in 2007, in memory of the former Chief Constable of West Yorkshire who died of cancer last November aged 50. Its purpose is to enhance public understanding of policing, intelligence and national security issues facing this country. The inaugural lecture – an edited version of which is published here – was delivered at Policy Exchange on 24 April 2007 by Peter Clarke, Head of the Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command.

Following discussions with Colin's widow, Lynne, and with Peter Clarke, we have decided to donate any proceeds from the sale of this publication to the Men Against Cancer Foundation, a prostate cancer charity in Northern Ireland.

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Top: Peter Clarke at the Policy Exchange lecture © Graham Trott
Bottom: Colin Cramphorn talks to the media on 13 July 2005, at the edge of the exclusion zone, Burley, Leeds, when detectives were investigating the 7/7 suicide attacks on London. © Yorkshire Post Newspapers.

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Biographies

Peter Clarke was born in 1955 and joined the Metropolitan Police in 1977 after graduating in Law from Bristol University. In the early part of his career he worked at a number of locations in London in both uniformed and detective roles, including periods on murder enquiries and in international drugs intelligence. After postings in strategic planning and as operations head in a central London division, he served as Staff Officer to the then Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon. In 1994 he became the commander of Brixton Division in South London and was in post during an outbreak of serious public disorder. In 1997 he assumed command of the Royalty and Diplomatic Protection Department, with responsibility for the protection and security of the Royal Family and their residences, the diplomatic community in London and the Houses of Parliament. In June 2000 he became the Deputy Director of Personnel for the Metropolitan Police, and in June 2002 was appointed as head of the Anti Terrorist Branch at New Scotland Yard and National Coordinator of Terrorist Investigations. Since 2006, he has been head of the newly designated Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command. He attended the Royal College of Defence Studies in 2002. He was appointed a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in 2001 and OBE in 2006. Additionally, he received the Queen's Police Medal in 2003.

Colin Cramphorn was born in 1956 in Berkshire and grew up in Egham, Surrey, where he attended Strodes School. After joining Surrey Constabulary in 1975, he returned to full time education, receiving an LLB from King's College, London. He became a Superintendent in the Greater

Manchester Police in 1990 and from 1995-98 served as Assistant Chief Constable of West Mercia. After a stint at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London he was appointed Deputy Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) in 1998 – the last man to hold that position prior to the Patten reforms – and in 2001 became the first Deputy Chief Constable of the new Police Service of Northern Ireland. Between the retirement of Sir Ronnie Flanagan and the arrival of the new Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde, he was acting Chief Constable of the PSNI. In 2002, he became Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police, serving in that role until a few weeks before his death on 30 November 2006. He was awarded the QPM in 2004 and was appointed CBE posthumously in the New Year's Honours List for 2007.

Sir Ronnie Flanagan was born in 1949 and joined the RUC in 1970, serving as a Constable and Sergeant in his native Belfast in uniformed and CID roles. Upon promotion to Inspector in 1976, he was transferred to Londonderry and then Strabane. In 1983 he was appointed Chief Inspector and made responsible for the selection, training and operational control of specialist uniformed anti-terrorist units. He was transferred to Armagh in 1987 upon promotion to Detective Superintendent. After becoming Chief Superintendent in 1990, he was appointed as an instructor at the Police Staff College at Bramshill. Returning to Northern Ireland in 1992 as Assistant Chief Constable, he headed the Operations Department; in 1993 he was appointed as commander for the Belfast region; and in 1994 rose to the Head of Special Branch. He became Deputy Chief Constable in 1996 and conducted a fundamental review of the organisation. Later that year, he became Chief Constable of the RUC and continued in that job until the

RUC was renamed the Police Service of Northern Ireland in 2001. Thereupon, he served as the first Chief Constable of the new force until his retirement in March 2002. He was then made Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for London and the East Region and in 2005 became Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary. He was appointed OBE in 1996 and was knighted in 1998. In 2002 he was appointed a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire and received the QPM earlier this year.

Introduction

Dean Godson

Research Director, Policy Exchange

Colin Cramphorn occupied some of the hottest seats in British policing over the past decade. With characteristic self-deprecation, he used to joke that like Forrest Gump, he was the fool who somehow managed to turn up at moments of maximum historical importance. Of course, Cramphorn was anything but a fool. He possessed that rare combination – abundant academic intelligence with “street smarts”. He exerted a wonderfully calming influence on those big events. Like the old Norwich Union advert, he never made a drama out of a crisis.

And what crises those were. Within weeks of taking over the job of Deputy Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Cramphorn was on hand to assist Sir Ronnie Flanagan, his boss, with the aftermath of the Omagh bomb of August 1998 – the largest single terrorist atrocity of the Northern Ireland Troubles. Then he helped shepherd the organisation through the trauma of the Patten report of 1999, which transformed the old force beyond recognition into the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

After Sir Ronnie’s all-too-rapid departure in early 2002, Cramphorn became the first acting Chief Constable of the PSNI, in which capacity he superintended the initial (and critical) stages of the investigation in the alleged republican spy ring at the heart of government in Northern Ireland, known colloquially as “Stormontgate”. In consequence of this, the devolved executive in Belfast was suspended for more than four-and-a-half years.¹

1. For obituaries of Cramphorn, see *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 December 2006; *Yorkshire Post*, 2 December 2006; *The Guardian*, 4 December 2006; *The Times*, 7 December 2006. For further tributes to Cramphorn see the West Yorkshire Police Authority website, available at, <http://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/sectionstem.asp?sid=12&iid=2778>.

Cramphorn was swiftly disabused of any notions he may have entertained about returning to provincial obscurity upon his appointment as Chief Constable of West Yorkshire in 2002. In 2003 he had to cope with the murder of PC Ian Broadhurst, the first killing of an officer in that force in more than 20 years, and in 2005 with the brutal slaying of WPC Sharon Beshenivsky. And, of course, in 2005 Cramphorn became a key figure in the investigations into the 7/7 atrocity when it emerged that three of the four London suicide bombers came from West Yorkshire.

“ His struggle against the disease was an epic of human courage which his friends and colleagues will never forget ”

Cramphorn managed all this in the knowledge that what at first had seemed like a routine and containable case of prostate cancer had spread to his spine. He even looked forward to the radiotherapy treatments in those days: he could at least stick on his earphones, lie back and listen to Vivaldi. It was about the only peace he enjoyed in that maelstrom.² His struggle against the disease was an epic of human courage which his friends and colleagues will never forget – and was movingly recounted by Sir Ronnie Flanagan in his address at the funeral service in Wakefield Cathedral last December. Policy Exchange is delighted to be able to transcribe that eulogy for the first time and to reprint it as an appendix to the inaugural Colin Cramphorn Memorial Lecture.

Cramphorn was the most modest – and, in a quiet way, the most patriotic – of men. But as he lay dying, we discussed the broader lessons of his career for his county and country. After

2. See Cramphorn's interview in *The Spectator*, 12 August 2005.

all, the later phases of Cramphorn's professional life in both Ulster and West Yorkshire were defined by two of the most crucial topics in contemporary Britain: counter-terrorism and community cohesion. What might future generations be able to learn so that the security forces could continue their primary mission – protecting and saving lives? And to achieve that, what is the appropriate mix of “hard” and “soft” power?

The Colin Cramphorn Memorial Lecture represents Policy Exchange's contribution to the process of bringing the meaning of his professional life to a wider audience. It will become a permanent fixture in our calendar as part of our mission to educate the public about counter-terrorism and community cohesion. There was, in my mind, no doubt as to who the first lecturer should be: Peter Clarke, Head of the Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command and National Co-ordinator for Terrorist Investigations. The two men had become firm friends while studying on the senior command course at Bramshill in 1994. Cramphorn had the highest regard for Clarke, a sentiment that was heartily reciprocated. This bond of trust and mutual respect proved critical on the day after 7/7, when Clarke told Cramphorn the bad news – that his own patch was very much in the frame. The division of labour agreed by the two men there and then proved critical to the success of the ensuing anti-terrorist raids (see p.36).

Two themes recurred time and again in Cramphorn's career – and form the backdrop to the Clarke lecture. The first theme was the task of maintaining an autonomous space for policemen amid the political pressures of the era. As Cramphorn observed to me, chief constables as a breed too often fell into one of two categories: they were either militantly apolitical to the point of recklessness, or else they were such dedicated followers of political fashion as to con-

stitute another kind of risk to their officers and to society! Cramphorn managed the perfect balance between these two extremes. As Clarke has said: “Colin accepted the inevitability of politics but was never affected by it”.³

There exists a large and growing – even fashionable – literature on civilian-military relations.⁴ There is, however, far less on relations between politicians and policemen. The reason for this comparative paucity is not hard to see: most observers of politics are not much interested in policing governance, and most analysts of policing tend not to be much interested in politics. But it is a gap that needs to be filled. After all, since 9/11, we have been engaged in a conflict that is very different from any in which we have previously fought. It is a battle in which figures such as the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, the head of the Metropolitan Police Anti-Terrorist Branch and the Director General of MI5 are at least as important as the First Sea Lord or the Chief of the Air Staff. That is not something that could have been said of any of the great conventional armed struggles of the 20th century. The degree of operational independence afforded men such as Cramphorn thus assumes a very considerable significance in these times.

How, then, did Cramphorn succeed in preserving this independence? Partly, it must be said, through his very understated intellectual self-confidence. Cramphorn knew his business better than almost any other chief constable. “I’m the sad, tragic bastard who reads Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary reports in bed,” he once quipped.⁵ But he was no mere anorak, and his purpose in immersing himself in the minutiae of policing bureaucracy was both serious and highly practical: just as Enoch Powell acquired a mastery of Erskine May’s guide to parliamentary practice to achieve a greater freedom of manoeuvre, so

3. See the *Belfast Telegraph*, 1 December 2006

4. For a select bibliography on this subject, see, for example, P. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, 2003).

5. See *The Spectator*, 11 August 2005

Cramphorn acquired unparalleled expertise in the highways and byways of Whitehall and Westminster to afford himself extra space. All of this was underwritten by a phenomenal capacity for general reading, which spanned the gamut from Bernard Lewis to C.S.Lewis. *The Screwtape Letters* – on the nature of evil – were a particular consolation to him after 7/7.

“ Once he had weighed the options in his own mind, and decided upon the right course of action, he was not easily deflected ”

Indeed, Cramphorn’s contribution to Policy Exchange’s study *Replacing the Routemaster: How to undo Ken Livingstone’s destruction of London’s best ever bus* showed how conversant he was with the key texts in criminological and sociological literature (and was skilfully and swiftly written shortly after 7/7 when he had a plethora of other worries). He identified the demise of bus conductors as being part of a broader trend towards the disappearance of authority figures that had seemed to be present in his youth, such as “parkies” in public gardens. Not many chief constables would have spoken out on this subject, especially after elements of the disabled lobby had set their hearts on scrapping the Routemaster.⁶ Such was his curiosity and knowledge that he also co-authored with a Dutch-based friend, Dr Maurice Punch, an essay entitled *The Murder of Theo van Gogh and the Islamic Jihad Division in the Netherlands*. This useful piece of research, comparing radicalisation in Britain and the Netherlands, was published posthumously in several respected academic and professional journals.⁷ Again, his more conventional colleagues would have shied away from such a topic.

6. C. Cramphorn, 'The Security of the Routemaster', in D. Godson (ed.), *Replacing the Routemaster: How to undo Ken Livingstone's destruction of London's best ever bus* (London: Policy Exchange, 2005).

7. M. Punch & C. Cramphorn, 'The Murder of Theo van Gogh, and the Islamic Jihad Division ('Divisie Islamitische Jihad') in the Netherlands', *Police Research & Management*, Vol. 6-3 (2006), pp. 11-32. The article will be re-published (under a slightly revised title) in a forthcoming volume of the *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*.

The other key to Cramphorn's capacity to maintain his own operational independence was his first-rate character. Once he had weighed the options in his own mind, and decided upon the right course of action, he was not easily deflected. Perhaps it owed something to his firm religious faith (which this former theology student typically played down). His doggedness became most apparent in his stewardship of the "Stormontgate" investigation of 2002. Despite pressure from elements in Government and others to soft-pedal this inquiry, Cramphorn let it run its course. He was utterly unrepentant: his first duty was to the law. And like most impartial "peelers" in Northern Ireland, Cramphorn earned brickbats from both loyalists and republicans for his decisions. As acting Chief Constable of the RUC during the internal loyalist feud on the Shankill in 2000, he played a key part in supplying the intelligence that led to the decision of the Ulster Secretary, Peter Mandelson, to return the renegade UDA commander Johnny Adair to prison.

Indeed, Cramphorn had another remarkable ability that politicians could learn from: the capacity to raise highly controversial issues without giving great offence. Thus, during the disturbances on the sectarian interface at Cluan Place in east Belfast during the summer of 2002, he flagged up that the new PSNI was close to "breaking point" having downsized and lost so many experienced officers because of the Patten redundancy packages. He baldly stated that the "benign environment" envisaged by the former Hong Kong governor simply did not exist in the province then. And he doubted that the Government and the Policing Board would ultimately give the kind of backing that he believed was necessary to do the job.⁸

This explained Cramphorn's decision not to apply for the post of chief constable in succession to Sir Ronnie and to go

8. See 'A frank critique of policing needs', *Belfast Telegraph*, 23 August 2002.

for West Yorkshire instead. Most prospective employers would have taken fright at so free a spirit; it was to the credit of West Yorkshire Police Authority that it took a risk on him, and was duly vindicated. Again, he did not disappoint in the controversy stakes: in a *Spectator* interview in 2005, he alleged the existence of movable terrorist indoctrination “camps” in some national parks.⁹ In the same year he also predicted that a united Ireland would emerge in about 15 years time, but that it “will be like Sicily” with “self-policing” by Mafia-type organisations; not exactly what the powers at be wanted to hear.¹⁰ Although a *Guardian* reader for much of his life, and a man of distinctly liberal and even “PC” opinions (it would, for example, have been hard to catch him out not implementing the post-Macpherson norms of policing “best practice”) he was nonetheless realistic enough to recognise that there had been a “paradigm shift” in the radical Islamist threat and that the judiciary had to respond accordingly. As a key member of the Association of Chief Police Officers’ Terrorism and Allied Matters Committee (ACPO TAM), his was a powerful voice in favour of increasing the period that terrorist suspects could be held in custody from 14 to 90 days: he contended that what was needed in Britain was something closer to Northern Ireland’s old Emergency Powers Acts, with Ulster-style holding centres.

The other great theme of Cramphorn’s career was articulated by him with customary succinctness. He was keen on pointing out “I’m a provincial copper in an era of global terrorism”. One of his key challenges was maintaining a global overview of what was going on in the jihadi world while at the same time keeping a hawk’s eye on the telling local details. How did the big picture or the “macro” impact upon the little picture or the “micro” in Leeds and Bradford, and vice

9. *The Spectator*, 13 August 2005.

10. A. Pickles, ‘IRA: to fight another day?’, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 2 August 2005. See also, F. Millar, ‘Police chief predicts a united Ireland plagued by gangsters’, *Irish Times*, 13 August 2005.

versa? How did those responsible in London for the grand strategic issues work with the beat policemen and “branchmen” on the ground and integrate each other’s insights into their respective thinking – and what structures could best accommodate that aspiration? How could the actions, for good or ill, of a single community constable reverberate around the world in an era of instant global images – the policing equivalent of what is known to the American military as “the strategic corporal”? In short, to use the fashionable phrase, how was “connectivity” to be maintained between both ends of the security apparatus?

Cramphorn had his own distinctive ideas on how this might be done. Many of them found their way into Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)’s thematic report on police capabilities nationally, *Intercepting Terrorism*, completed last year by Denis O’Connor – another colleague whom Cramphorn greatly admired. (Unfortunately, this study has not been published: who knows what it might reveal?) Much of Cramphorn’s energy was consumed by the task of cajoling West Yorkshire Police into the 21st century so that it could cope more effectively with the increased national security threats; until recently, its HMIC ratings in this area were not high. Moreover, before 7/7, residual turf-consciousness between the component parts of the security system meant that the exchange of information was not what it has become since.¹¹ Sometimes, the barriers between the various Special Branches and MI5 were lower than within the police itself – for not every high-ranking officer necessarily saw counter-terrorism as the highest priority, preferring too often to focus on what used to be described in Northern Ireland as “ordinary, decent crime”. From his years in Ulster, Cramphorn became an even more convinced supporter of “jointery” – of greater cooperation between the police and

11. See *The Spectator*,
5 May 2007

other agencies, notably the Security Service. His enthusiastic embrace of a role in the regions for Thames House would not necessarily have been shared by the more turf-conscious of colleagues, but nonetheless became an example to other forces. Indeed, MI5 currently has eight regional offices across Great Britain.¹² Appropriately, one of the largest is located round the counter-terrorism “hub” in West Yorkshire.¹³

That said, the difficulties which Cramphorn encountered could not solely be ascribed to a stubborn, long-established culture within a force that had failed to keep pace with the times. For despite the Government’s often robust rhetoric, Whitehall was remarkably slow after 9/11 and even after 7/7 in providing forces such as West Yorkshire with the resources they needed to build their own in-house anti-terrorist investigative capacities. (Only the Metropolitan Police used to possess such a capacity, descending like the US cavalry whenever there was an atrocity in the provinces.) And once central Government did agree to supply further funds, the extra money was stuck in the ACPO TAM bureaucracy until such time as it decided how the additional resources would best be spent. It brought Cramphorn much pleasure in the closing weeks of his life to learn from O’Connor that this project had finally come to fruition.

What remains to be done – the unfinished bits, as it were, of Cramphorn’s legacy? He was deeply conscious of the tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims in his area. After all, 7/7 took place four years to the day after the Bradford riots and followed a string of BNP successes in municipal elections. Indeed, he recalled that when he was in the hospital waiting room before one of his sessions of cancer treatment in the days following the suicide attacks, the casual conversation among white Englishmen was miles removed from the “Londoners United” rhetoric of some of the capital’s

12. A ninth is planned for later this year in Northern Ireland. Reference to its development can be found in the Intelligence and Security Committee Annual Report 2005-2006, available at, <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/publications/reports/intelligence/annualir0506.pdf>.

13. For more on these regional hubs, see the ‘Countering International Terrorism’ section on the MI5 website, <http://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/Page561.html> and the response of then Home Secretary Charles Clarke to a question from David Gauke MP, Commons Hansard Written Answers, 4 May 2006 (pt 33), available at, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/cm060504/text/60504w33.htm>.

politicians. It was, in part, a tribute to his diplomatic skills and to his appreciation of microscopic local knowledge – both of which had been honed on the peace lines in Belfast – that there were so few reprisals against local Muslims. But at the end of his life, after the fashion of Bernard Lewis, he kept asking himself, “What went wrong?” and “How did we get to this?” Despite his unstinting efforts to reach out to local Muslims, it was striking that relatively few of them were present in Wakefield Cathedral for his funeral, or at the reception afterwards at the Force Training and Development Centre. Cramphorn would not have been surprised by Clarke’s crucial statement in his lecture that hardly any of the successes achieved by the security forces – such as the triumphant conclusion to the “Crevice” trial in recent days – owed anything to “community intelligence” coming out of sections of the Muslim population. Cramphorn greatly feared the prospect of some Muslim communities turning in on themselves. Because he was a wise man, he knew that there were no easy answers.

It is part of Policy Exchange’s role to further the process of identifying better responses to Cramphorn’s questions. Peter Clarke’s lecture is an admirable contribution to that goal – and is certainly worthy of the memory of Colin Cramphorn. It sets the highest of standards for all who will deliver that talk here in the years to come.

London, May 2007

Learning from experience

Counter-terrorism in the UK since 9/11

Peter Clarke

Deputy Assistant Commissioner for the Counter Terrorism

Command of the Metropolitan Police and National

Co-ordinator of Terrorist Investigations

I cannot begin to describe how great a privilege it is, indeed an honour, to be invited to deliver this, the first Colin Cramphorn Memorial Lecture. I was delighted when Dean Godson asked me, but only later realised the enormity of the task. The challenge of putting together some thoughts that could in any way do justice to Colin's memory was daunting. Colin, as everyone who knew him can testify, was a man of enormous knowledge of his chosen profession. That said, it was not simply a bookish knowledge. He had an instinctive feel for policing. He understood police officers, their thoughts, their hopes and fears. But he also understood communities. He knew what people wanted and expected from their police service. He was always able to see policing in a broader context, to understand the links and dependencies between the act of policing, if I can put it like that, and the communities and institutions that we as police officers serve. He knew that the relationship between the police and citizens is delicate, indeed often fragile. He also knew that maintaining that relationship depends not only on what happens on the street. He realised that if the public are to have confidence, it is vital that policing is properly understood by those who represent the interests of citizens at both local and national level, by local and central government, by the judi-

cial system and, of course, by the media. This often feels like a complex web of sometimes competing interests, and it is that very complexity that Colin understood so well.

In a sense Colin has chosen my subject for me this evening. He knew that when dealing with terrorism, almost above all other areas of policing, we have to learn from experience. By its very nature it is political – in origins and impact. The police response to terrorism can, and sometimes does, have a severe impact on communities. And as we have seen over the past few years, we are often working at the very limits of our capacity and capabilities. Our success or failure sometimes rests in the hands of other agencies, or indeed overseas. And, of course, we are wrestling with all of this at a time when the threat appears to be increasing in both scale and intensity.

My ambition tonight is to set out my personal view of developments in counter-terrorism in the United Kingdom since September 2001. And perhaps unsurprisingly, it will be from the perspective of a law enforcement practitioner.

First I would like to reflect on what has actually happened in the UK since 9/11. What is the scale and reality of the threat? How is it different from the threat that we faced for many years from Irish terrorism – and if it is different, why is that important? Second, what has British policing done to respond? Third, I shall try to describe some of the broader context in which we operate. What has been happening in the law, in politics, in the media and in the communities we police? What impact has this had on our ability to protect the public?

So what has happened since 9/11? I think it is no exaggeration to say that there has been a complete change in our understanding of the terrorist threat. For 30 years or more we had been facing a deadly campaign of terrorism conducted by utterly ruthless people intent on wreaking death and destruction. But it was different to that which we now face.

Colleagues from around the world often say to me that the long experience that we have in the United Kingdom of combating a terrorist threat must have stood us in good stead; that the experience gained during some 30 years of an Irish republican terrorist campaign would have equipped us for the new challenges presented by Al-Qaeda and its associated groups. To an extent that is true – but only to an extent. The fact remains that the Irish campaign operated within a set of parameters that helped to shape our response to it.

It was essentially a domestic campaign using conventional weaponry, carried out by terrorists in tightly-knit networks who were desperate to avoid capture and certainly had no wish to die. The use of warnings restricted the scale of the carnage, dreadful though it was. The warnings were cynical and often misleading, but by restricting casualties were a factor in ultimately enabling the political process to move forward, however haltingly.

“ There are no warnings given and the evidence suggests that, on the contrary, the intention frequently is to kill as many people as possible ”

I believe that if you take the reverse of many of these characteristics, you are not far away from describing the threat we face today. It is global in origin, reach and ambition. The networks are large, fluid, mobile and incredibly resilient. We have seen how Al-Qaeda has been able to survive a prolonged multinational assault on its structures, personnel and logistics. It has certainly retained its ability to deliver centrally

directed attacks here in the UK. In case after case, the hand of core Al-Qaeda can be clearly seen. Arrested leaders or key players are quickly replaced, and disrupted networks re-form quickly. Suicide has been a frequent feature of attack planning and delivery – a stark contrast with the Irish determination to avoid capture. There is no evidence of looking to restrict casualties. There are no warnings given and the evidence suggests that, on the contrary, the intention frequently is to kill as many people as possible. We have seen both conventional and unconventional weaponry, and to date, although perhaps this is not for me to judge, there has not been an obvious political agenda around which meaningful negotiations can be built.

But it is important to understand that this analysis of the changing nature of terrorism did not come to us in a flash of inspiration on 12 September 2001. It came about as a result of us doing exactly what the title of this lecture suggests we should – learning from experience.

I came into my current role in counter-terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11, in the early part of 2002. At that time we were still struggling to understand the precise nature of the threat in the UK. Was it real? Was there any intention to attack us here? During the 1990s many people believed that the extremists and dissidents from overseas regimes who were active in the UK were, if anything, pursuing agendas against foreign governments, and posed little or no threat to the UK. Certainly, in 2002 the perception was that if there were a threat to the UK, its origins were overseas. The spectre of a home-grown terrorist threat was not yet with us.

During that year, 2002, we focused on groups of North Africans, mainly Algerians, to find out whether they were engaged solely in support, fund raising and the like, of terrorism overseas, or whether they posed a real threat to the UK itself. We

followed a trail of petty fraud and false identity documents across the country. Eventually that trail took us to Thetford where, in the unlikely surroundings of rural Norfolk, we found the first real indication since 9/11 of operational terrorist activity in the UK – recipes for ricin and other poisons. That led us eventually to Wood Green and the chemicals, the Finsbury Park mosque and, of course, the terrible murder of Detective Constable Stephen Oake in Manchester in January 2003.

That case taught us many things, not least about our ability to operate across borders, both within the UK and overseas. It showed us the difficulties that international terrorist conspiracies pose for our domestic judicial system. For the police, it also marked the beginning of our understanding of the impact that the emerging distrust of intelligence in early 2003 would have on our relationship with the media and therefore the public. This was the first time, in my experience, that the police service had been accused of exaggerating the threat posed by terrorists in order, it was alleged, to help the Government to justify its foreign policy.

But 2003 was notable not only for the scepticism with which some commentators described the terrorist threat. What 2003 also brought was the realisation that British citizens had been trained and recruited as terrorists. In April 2003, Asif Hanif, from Hounslow, and Omar Sharif, from Derby, launched a suicide bomb attack on a beachfront bar in Tel Aviv. That same year, Sajid Badat was arrested in Gloucester, still in possession of the component parts of his shoebomb, from where he had been planning, with Richard Reid, to bring down airliners in 2001. These and others had been recruited to the jihadi cause, but there was still no indication that there were plans for British citizens to mount attacks in the UK. By and large, in 2003 the UK was a net exporter of terrorism.

That of course all changed in early 2004 when we investigated the “fertiliser bomb” plot.¹ Later that year, a convert to Islam, Dhiren Barot, was arrested for planning attacks both in the US and in the UK. In the latter case there are still current judicial proceedings, but I am able to say that these investigations marked the beginning of a trend that has now been repeated on several other occasions – groups of British citizens travelling to Pakistan to receive training and instructions, then returning to the UK and building up their networks here as they move towards launching attacks. This, of course, is the pattern we saw with the July 2005 attacks in London, and as other cases reach the courts, a similar profile of the networks we are facing will emerge.

In terms of the broad development of the threat, it is frustrating that I cannot describe in more detail much of what we have discovered during the course of investigations, but suffice it to say that the alleged plot to bring down airliners last year was yet another step in what seems an inexorable trend towards more ambitious and more destructive attack planning.

So what impact has all this had on our response from a law enforcement perspective? The simple answer is that it has changed everything. That is not to say that we have forgotten the lessons of dealing with 30 years of Irish terrorism – far from it. But the change in the nature of the threat has meant that, in turn, we have had to change the way in which we do business.

No longer can the police service feed off the crumbs falling from the end of the intelligence table. In the past a case would sometimes come to the police after there had been a great deal of investigation by the intelligence agencies. Sometimes we would have little insight into what lay behind the case, and this was often deliberately the case – to protect

1. The outcome of this investigation saw five men (Omar Khyam, Jawad Akbar, Salahuddin Amin, Waheed Mahmood and Anthony Garcia) convicted of conspiracy to cause explosions and each given life sentences on 30 April 2007. For more information on the trial outcome see, 'Five get life over UK plot', BBC News Online, 30 April 2007, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6195914.stm> and "Fertiliser bomb plot" one of biggest terrorism trials for Crown Prosecution Service', Crown Prosecution Service Press Release, 30 April 2007, available at, http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/pressreleases/128_07.html. For the reaction of the Metropolitan Police Service to the trial (as delivered by Peter Clarke), see 'Operation Crevice: MPS Statement', Metropolitan Police Service website, 30 April 2007, available at, http://cms.met.police.uk/news/convictions/terrorism/operation_crevice_mps_statement. For more on Clarke's view of Operation Crevice, see his interview with *The Spectator*, 5 May 2007.

the evidential investigators from knowledge that could lead them into difficulties when giving their evidence in court. This is no longer acceptable for very sound legal reasons, but it is also not acceptable in terms of public safety. We can no longer wait until the terrorist is at or near the point of attack before intervening. It might give us the strongest evidence to do so – to capture the terrorist with the gun or the bomb. But the risk to the public, in the age of suicide bombers and no-notice attacks, is simply too great. So what we have done is to develop a new way of working. The police and Security Service now work together in every case from a much earlier stage than would ever have happened in the past. The intelligence that is gathered and assessed by the Security Service is in large part the lifeblood of counter-terrorism in the UK. Exploiting it is a shared endeavour. Setting joint objectives and agreeing investigative strategies is not exceptional. It has become the daily routine.

So how does this work? Well, in every case we strike a conscious balance between developing evidence and public safety. We cannot take risks with public safety, and so sometimes, if we cannot be sure how far advanced an attack plan is, or if however hard we investigate we cannot bottom out the intelligence, we have to intervene. Sometimes this inevitably means that there will not be enough evidence to prosecute, and then we face the criticism that we are being indiscriminate in our activities. The operation in Forest Gate in June 2006 is often held up as an example of this. If anyone seriously believes that we, and here I mean the police, would embark on an operation such as that lightly, or not genuinely believing it to be necessary, they are quite simply wrong. Sadly, I cannot go into the full background of the case, but if anyone is interested I would refer them to the Independent Police Complaints Commission report on the Forest Gate

operation.² The commission came to the clear conclusion, having seen the intelligence, that the operation was necessary and proportionate.

The point of all this is that we have got to give ourselves the best possible chance to intervene before the public can come to harm. This means we have to be able to attack terrorist finances, their logistics, their hostile reconnaissance, their planning at every stage. To achieve this, we need to work with the Security Service in a way that would have been unimaginable only a few years ago.

There can be no doubt that the most important change in counter-terrorism in the UK in recent years has been the development of the relationship between the police and the Security Service. In my role as National Co-ordinator of Terrorist Investigations I act as the bridge between the world of intelligence and the world of law enforcement. In fact the metaphor is probably obsolete – it would now be more accurate to describe it not as a bridge but a very wide two-way street, and my job is to make sure the traffic flows freely. It is no exaggeration to say that the joint working between the police and MI5 has become recognised as a beacon of good practice. Colleagues from across the globe, in law enforcement and intelligence, look to the UK as a model, and many of them are, quite frankly, envious. That is why it is sometimes frustrating to hear and read the same tired old comments about MI5 and the police not working together. That is out of date. It is wrong, and is a lie that deserves to be well and truly nailed.

So what has the British police service done to respond to the escalation in terrorist activity? Are we relying on our traditional county, municipal and other structures to give us the global reach we need? The answer, I hope you are reassured to hear is “no”. But I have to say that my personal view is that

2. The full reports of the Independent Police Complaints Commission's inquiries into the Forest Gate operation can be found at, <http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/report.pdf> & http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/forest_gate_2_3report.pdf

we are still very much in a transitional phase. British policing has always drawn its strengths from its local roots and links into communities, and this of course must be preserved. In the past, when terrorist activity was taking place outside London, what tended to happen was that the Metropolitan Police would gird up its loins and become an expeditionary force. The simple fact was that there was no unit on the UK mainland dedicated to the investigation of terrorism outside London. This worked well enough until, I would say, about 2002 when during the ricin investigation we found ourselves spread across the UK. Then over the ensuing years the footprint of terrorism in the UK spread ever wider, and it was simply unsustainable, in terms of either scale or geography, for the Metropolitan Police to continue in its traditional role.

The recent creation of regional counter-terrorism units is a major step forward, and will definitely increase our ability to respond to the intelligence generated by the Security Service, and to investigate acts of terrorism. Colin Cramphorn was one of the first to see what would be needed in the future, and the nascent counter-terrorist unit in West Yorkshire is testimony to his vision.

One of the challenges for counter-terrorist policing is to give ourselves the ability to operate internationally (for every case takes us across the world), but at the same time not lose our local connections within communities. This is not going to be easy. We must increase the flow of intelligence coming from communities. Almost all of our prosecutions have had their origins in intelligence that came from overseas, the intelligence agencies or from technical means. Few have yet originated from what is sometimes called “community intelligence”. This is something we are working hard to change. In London, for instance, most boroughs now have dedicated counter-terrorism intelligence officers, working hand-in-

glove with local uniformed police. I welcome the creation of the regional units, but I do sometimes wonder whether we have been quite bold enough. Did we, in our first move into developing the necessary capacity, achieve the clarity around governance and accountability that will surely be needed in the future? Time will tell, but I am certain we are headed in the right direction.

“ What I am saying is that public safety will take precedence over evidence gathering, at all stages of an investigation ”

I think what all this amounts to is that through learning from the experiences of the past few years, we have developed a new concept of operations. We have moved away from intervening when the evidence for prosecution became available, to intervening when the risk to the public becomes unacceptable. You could call this a risk-management model of counter-terrorism. If that sounds like “consultant speak”, I apologise. Let me immediately revert to English. What I am saying is that public safety will take precedence over evidence gathering, at all stages of an investigation.

I can illustrate this model in operation with the two cases I mentioned earlier from 2004. In the first, Operation Crevice, it was clear to us, bearing in mind the criticism we had received in 2003 for allegedly exaggerating the threat, and the impact this was having on our relationships with Muslim communities, that we needed to gather as much evidence as possible before making arrests.³ Not to do so would invite inevitable criticism and the subsequent distrust this would generate could have an impact on our ability to con-

3. The Operation Crevice arrests were undertaken by the Metropolitan Police and other forces on 30 March 2004, targeting a terrorist cell believed to be operating in the Thames Valley, Sussex, Surrey and Bedfordshire areas. At the time it was the biggest counter-terrorist operation ever conducted in the UK.

duct such operations in the future. In order to be as sure as we could that there was no imminent threat to the public, we and the Security Service mounted a surveillance operation that was unprecedented in its scale. This was a classic case, if you like, of “running a case long”.

By contrast, the case of Dhiren Barot later that year was one where we simply could not control the risk. The intelligence rightly told us that he was involved in attack planning, but we did not know how far advanced he was. We did not know whether he posed an imminent threat or not. Surveillance could not give us the answers we needed and so the decision was made that we had to arrest him straightaway. It is no exaggeration to say that at the time of the arrest there was not one shred of admissible evidence against Barot. The arrest was perfectly lawful – there were more than sufficient grounds – but in terms of evidence to put before a court, there was nothing. There then began the race against time to retrieve evidence from the mass of computers and other IT equipment that we had seized. It was only at the very end of the permitted period of detention that sufficient evidence was found to justify charges. I know that some in the media were sharpening their pencils and that if we had been unable to bring charges in that case, there would have been a wave of criticism about the arrests. Barot himself, of course, eventually pleaded guilty last year and received a 40-year sentence for conspiracy to murder.

One of the difficulties is that when we do intervene and charges are not brought, the prevailing scepticism, indeed suspicion, of anything that is described as intelligence is such that it has been rare to receive the benefit of the doubt from either communities or the media. And this is crucial. I think it is no exaggeration to say that the lack of public trust in intelligence is in danger of infecting the relationship between the police

and the communities we serve. Trust and consent are two concepts that lie at the heart of the relationship between the British police and the public. We must maintain that trust. But how to do so? I have no doubt that the operational and political independence of the police is the key to this. The communities must believe, and it must be reality, that the police stand aside from politics in the exercise of their powers. That is why the allegations of political partiality that seem to have been made so lightly in recent times are so damaging. They undermine the relationship between police and public. They undoubtedly inhibit the flow of intelligence, and in doing so actually increase the risk to the public.

This whole question of trust in intelligence is enormously important. There is much that must remain secret, for obvious reasons. The difficulty is that when an event like the operation in Forest Gate last year occurs, distrust of the intelligence has led to demands for it to be scrutinised by community representatives, not only after an operation, but even before it. I am the first to agree that we must find ways to increase confidence in police activity, but we must be careful not to raise unrealistic expectations within the community. In some areas of crime it has been possible to share intelligence with independent observers and advisory groups. But terrorist intelligence is very different. The sources, methods and equities are such that it is often not in the gift of the police service to share it, even if we wished to. We must find a way to make progress so that confidence can be built, but I do not predict that it will be easy.

The next area I want to look at tonight is what could be called the operating context – those things which we have to take into account when conducting operations, but over which we may have more or less influence.

The legal context is obviously critical for us, as it governs so much of what we do. Legislation that is specifically

designed to counter the modern terrorist threat has proved to be highly controversial – and so it should be. Some of the legislation we now have is very powerful. That places a responsibility on the police to use it wisely, with discrimination, and in a way that will withstand the closest scrutiny. This is essential if the public are to have confidence in what we are doing.

My personal view is that we now have a strong body of counter-terrorist legislation that, by and large, meets our needs in investigating these crimes and bringing prosecutions. Prosecution through the courts, using judicial process that is recognised and understood by the public, is by far the preferred method of dealing with terrorism. The Government has responded to reasoned cases put forward for change to bring aspects of modern terrorism and support activity within the remit of the criminal law. The new offence of “acts preparatory to terrorism”, included in the Terrorism Act 2006, is a good example. It closed a gap in our defences and I am sure will prove its worth in several forthcoming trials. Prior to its introduction, the law was inadequate. The common law of England was not designed to defend us against people who wish to poison or irradiate the public. So we had the somewhat bizarre spectacle of Kamel Bourgass, in the “ricin case” of 2003, standing trial for conspiracy to cause a public nuisance (for which he received a sentence of 17 years in April 2005). There was no other offence that could properly reflect his behaviour and give the courts adequate sentencing power. I shall repeat what I have said before, that shoe-horning 21st-century terrorism into 19th-century criminal law cannot be the best way to protect the public. I hope we have seen the last of this somewhat quaint offence, described by one eminent lawyer as a “rag bag of odds and ends”, being used in terrorist cases.

And yet there are still those who argue that we do not need specialist terrorist legislation, that the ordinary criminal law is sufficient. Well, if that were the case, how would we deal with those who undertake terrorist training? Or encourage others to do so? Or who set out to influence youngsters and draw them into terrorism? Or who reconnoitre targets? Or who collect information for others to mount attacks? Or who know that terrorists are going to mount an attack but fail to notify the authorities? It cannot be in the public interest for these things not to fall within the ambit of the law. Parliament has decided that there should be specific offences to deal with these activities, and that must be right.

But it is not only specific offences that are important – the surrounding legal framework that enables us to investigate and prosecute modern terrorism has to be in place. And developing this framework has at times been controversial, to say the least.

Take the provisions for increasing the maximum period of pre-charge detention to 28 days before a suspect must be either charged or released. I shall dwell for a few moments on this episode, because it is important in several ways. The police service was asked in 2005 to put forward suggestions to update and improve counter-terrorist legislation – a perfectly normal consultative process. Among a range of other measures, we made a case for extending the period of pre-charge detention beyond 14 days, because the trends that had led to the increase from 7 to 14 days the previous year were continuing, and if anything accelerating. When asked by how much the period of detention should be increased, we suggested a maximum of 90 days, subject to judicial oversight. We were asking not for a police power, but for a power to be vested in the courts on application from the police or the Crown Prosecution Service.⁴

4. The case for a 90-day maximum detention period was put forward by Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Andy Hayman, in a public letter to the Home Office on 6 October 2005. The Prime Minister referred extensively to this letter in the House of Commons debate on 9 November 2005 over the proposed changes in legislation included in the Terrorism Bill (later the Terrorism Act 2006). See House of Commons Hansard Debates for 9 November 2005, available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo051109/deb-text/51109-03.htm>.

As we all know, the ensuing debate, both in Parliament and elsewhere, was a little lively. I know there have been concerns expressed about the role of the police service in that debate, and whether we overstepped the mark in terms of political neutrality – but I find this slightly puzzling. If we are asked for our professional opinion, and we express it, and the Government brings forward legislation, are we supposed to be silent the moment a draft Bill is published? We were accused of being politically partial, but I reject that. I think what happened was that there was a breakdown of the cross-party consensus that had generally prevailed in matters of counter-terrorism. The result of that breakdown was that it became impossible for us to express our professional opinion without being open to the allegation of political partiality. This must be unhealthy. Counter-terrorism is political, of course it is, and properly so. The problems start when the subject becomes politicised and that is what has happened. It is now difficult for the police service to express its professional opinion on the subject without being accused of falling one side or other of a political divide.

The political impartiality of the police service, inextricably linked as it is to our operational independence, is of course one of the bedrocks of British policing. This is nothing new, and no one was more aware of this than Colin Cramphorn. He completely understood the need to recognise, indeed acknowledge, the politics of any situation, but at the same time to remain resolutely independent. My point is that this implacable independence is more important than ever when we are dealing with terrorism. The subject is inevitably linked to politics at every level – local, national and international. As police officers our role must be to acknowledge the sensitivities that this brings with it, but not allow it to govern our operational decision-making.

The allegation that the police have lost their political impartiality is easy to make and profound in its impact. As I said a few moments ago, the trust that exists between police and public is critical to all we do and is absolutely vital in counter-terrorism. It fundamentally affects the level of support and, of course, intelligence that we receive from communities. My plea therefore is that before anyone alleges that the police are not acting or speaking with political impartiality, they should think carefully about the potential impact of their words.

The current terrorist threat is of such a scale and intractability that we must not only defeat the men (for it is predominantly men) who plot and carry out appalling acts of violence. We must also find a way of defeating the ideas that drive them. The corrosive ideologies that are used to justify terrorism must be confronted. The fact is that there are many young men in the United Kingdom who are vulnerable to being drawn into extremism and violence. The influence of the “preachers of hate” and their fellow-travellers is pernicious. Of all the things I have seen over the past few years, one of the most worrying has been the speed and apparent ease with which young men can be turned into suicidal terrorists, prepared to kill themselves and hundreds of others – indoctrinated to believe that there are no such things as innocent victims.

We must find a way to address this, and one of the things I think we need to work harder at is diversion – how to turn people away from the extremists. I can think of a case, and it is not unique, where worried parents came to the police concerned that their teenage son was falling prey to the influence of extremists. Now if parents come to us and say they are worried about their children getting involved in drugs, for instance, there are ways of dealing with the problem without

the youngster becoming criminalised. There are rehabilitation and diversion schemes. There is not enough of this in the field of radicalisation and extremism. I have discussed this with colleagues in Muslim countries, both in law enforcement and in government, and they are surprised that we do not do more to counter the extremists, to support imams who can, with authority, denounce the twisted version of Islam the extremists put forward. We must find a way of undermining the ideology that drives extremism. But obviously this is not something that can come from the police service alone. It needs wider commitment and support if it is to be credible and effective.

I hope a theme that emerges from my remarks tonight is the absolute need for public understanding and support for our counter-terrorist policies. And I do not just mean police efforts here, but the whole cross-government effort. Public understanding is an area where, collectively, I think we have much to do. I have already mentioned the breakdown in trust that affects the public's willingness to accept intelligence assessments.

“ I wonder, in the era of global communications, whether it is sensible for us to pretend that potential jurors will not have access to the internet ”

But if the public are sceptical about intelligence, what other sources of information do they have? There are more than 100 people awaiting trial in terrorism cases in the UK. That should, one would think, be the source of a wealth of information, cleansed through the integrity of the criminal

justice system, publicly tested through the process of cross-examination, and validated or otherwise by the verdict of the jury. Well, so far terrorist trials have not been as informative as we could wish, for a number of reasons. First, it is taking anything up to two years, and in some cases more, for cases to reach the courts. During that time little can be said about what the investigation has uncovered. Then there is the issue of evidence that emerges in one case potentially prejudicing jurors in another. Because terrorist cells and networks are inevitably linked, this has meant that over the past five years I can hardly remember a time when there were not court orders in place restricting what could be published about terrorist cases. It was three years before we could tell the public what we had found in the Finsbury Park mosque. For well over a year the public did not know that Kamel Bourgass had been convicted of murdering DC Stephen Oake. And there are other examples – but as if to illustrate my point, I cannot tell you about them.

I understand why we need to protect juries from prejudicial material, but I wonder, in the era of global communications, whether it is sensible for us to pretend that potential jurors will not have access to the internet. Last summer *The New York Times* published a very full account of the airlines plot on its website, but the article was blocked to UK users of the internet, with “legal reasons” being cited. Even I, with my feeble IT literacy, was able to find the piece within a couple of minutes. I understand the difficulties in all this, but I just wonder if we could be bolder and, dare I say it, trust juries to distinguish the prejudicial from the probative. That is why, last summer, in respect of the airlines plot I went further than ever before, in setting out at least some of the evidence that we will eventually produce at the trial.⁵ I felt it was important for the public to understand that the allegations were sup-

5. For the full text of Clarke's statement in August 2006 on the airlines plot, see http://cms.met.police.uk/news/arrests_and_charges/terrorism_charges.

ported by tangible evidence, that the plot was real. Is it not important for government, business, community leaders and the wider public to be able to consider, in an informed way, what the impact of such an attack would be if it had actually happened? Should we not be considering the political and economic consequences, or the potentially devastating impact on community cohesion? Apart from anything else, I honestly believe that the public are entitled to know why airport security is becoming ever more intrusive and inconvenient. I have to say I was relieved in the autumn of 2006 when, following Dhiren Barot's plea of guilty, reporting restrictions were lifted and the public could be told what he had been planning. This was an important step forward and I applaud the media organisations that took a robust stance in successfully challenging the restrictions.

The relationship between the police and the media could be the subject of an entire lecture in itself, but tonight I would like to focus on two particular issues. First, the media strategy we developed in response to the attacks in London in July 2005 and secondly, the impact of leaks.

To start with July 2005. I remember back in 1993, I was Paul Condon's staff officer when the Bishopsgate bomb exploded.⁶ In an aside he said to me something that I have never forgotten and that has stood me in good stead ever since. He said something along the lines of, "Peter, the reporting of this will unfold like this. Day one will be 'Gawd blimey it's the Blitz!' Day two will be 'What happened and who did it?' and Day three will be 'Who's to blame?'" With slight variations, this has been proved pretty accurate time and again. July 2005 was no exception. Immediately after the attack, my uniformed colleagues took the lead in describing the search-and-rescue efforts. They explained to the public the enormity of what had happened and looked to reassure

6. Lord Condon was Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police from 1993 to 2000.

them that everything that could possibly be done, was being done. This phase passed quite quickly as the investigation revealed first that these had been suicide attacks, and secondly took us towards Leeds.

One of the first things to do was to speak to Colin Cramphorn. He was now facing one of the most difficult challenges with which any chief constable could be confronted. The implications of the emerging truth that the first suicide bombers to attack and commit mass murder in the UK came from communities in his force area were immense. I can tell you that when the time came for me to pick up the phone and discuss how we were going to handle this, I was mightily relieved that it was Colin at the other end. We were immediately able to agree that any media work on issues of community reassurance and local contact were unequivocally his responsibility as the chief constable. He suggested that he and his colleagues would not comment on the investigation and what it was revealing: he would leave that to me. This was a bold suggestion, because by then my officers from the Met were in West Yorkshire in large numbers, examining the bomb factory, executing search warrants, interviewing potential witnesses. The world's media were in West Yorkshire in strength and there was an insatiable thirst for information about the investigation. But Colin was immediately able to see the long-term value of this division of responsibility in avoiding mixed messages, and retaining the essential links between local police and the communities they serve. It is a model we have used on many other occasions and it has stood the test of time.

What it also meant was that, for better or worse, I became the “face of the investigation”. As an investigator, I saw my role as explaining to the public what had happened. Not speculating, but describing the facts as I knew them, but only

when we knew them to provable standards. It was important for the public to have a consistently reliable, and one hopes reassuring, source of information. There was, of course, a mass of speculation, with strap-lines carrying all sorts of bizarre rumours and theories. I set a rule that we would not respond to speculation unless there was an overriding public interest in doing so. I believed that our strategy should be driven by the needs of the investigation and not by the wishes of the media: we would not make public appeals unless the investigation demanded it, and we would not release visual material unless it supported the investigation to do so. Thus it is that we have hundreds, if not thousands, of images from CCTV systems and elsewhere that we have not released.

Sticking to the rule that we would release information only when we knew for an absolute certainty that it was true to evidential standards did carry with it some problems – as it meant that at times the media were ahead of us in releasing information. I think that was a price worth paying in order to retain our credibility as a source of accurate information. But this takes me on to a subject that gives me great concern, and it is that of leaks.

The simple fact is that it is incredibly difficult to keep information confidential. The circle of knowledge, even on the most sensitive of operations, inevitably becomes wider than one would wish, particularly when those operations are protracted for the reasons I explained earlier. But let me make it absolutely clear what I am talking about. I am not referring to the normal day-to-day discourse that occurs between journalists and their contacts. What I am talking about is the deliberate leaking of highly sensitive operational intelligence, often classified, the unauthorised release of which can be a criminal offence. I make no allegations about the source of leaks or about individual cases. What is clear is that there are

a number, a small number I am sure, of misguided individuals who betray confidences. Perhaps they look to curry favour with certain journalists or to squeeze out some short-term presentational advantage – I do not know what motivates them. The people who do this either do not know or do not care what damage they do. If they do know, then they are beneath contempt. If they do not know, then let me tell them. They compromise investigations. They reveal sources of life-saving intelligence. In the worst cases they put lives at risk. I wonder if they simply do not care.

“ On the morning of the arrests, almost before the detainees had arrived at the police stations to which they were being taken for questioning, it was clear that key details of the investigation and the evidence had been leaked ”

The recent investigation in Birmingham into an allegation that a British serviceman had been targeted by a terrorist network is but one example of this. On the morning of the arrests, almost before the detainees had arrived at the police stations to which they were being taken for questioning, it was clear that key details of the investigation and the evidence had been leaked. This damaged the interview strategy of the investigators and undoubtedly raised community tensions. I have no idea where the leaks came from, but whoever was responsible should be thoroughly ashamed. There are many other examples that I shall not itemise for fear of giving credence to those very leaks.

So, to take stock and attempt to summarise where we are nearly six years after the attacks of September 2001; from a

police perspective – and I emphasise that this is from a police perspective – what has been achieved and what remains to be done?

Well, the process of investigation has certainly improved our knowledge of the threat we face. At the strategic level we can be in no doubt that the threat is deadly, enduring and to a significant extent targeted at the United Kingdom. Within the country we have people who are sympathetic to the terrorist cause and prepared to carry out attacks against their fellow citizens. Working closely with the Security Service, a number of attacks have been prevented, and more than 100 people are now awaiting trial on terrorist-related charges. Nevertheless, we suffered the appalling attacks of July 2005, and the only sensible assumption is that we shall be attacked again.

This is a depressing prospect but is no more than a realistic assessment of the complexity of the threat we face. We are not looking at discrete terrorist cells that can be investigated, isolated and dismantled. We are seeing networks within networks, connections within connections, and links between individuals that cross local, national and international boundaries.

In response to this, British policing has changed its approach to terrorist investigation, and built both capacity and capability in the regions. This is a huge step forward. But there is still much to do. We need to redouble our efforts in working with the various Muslim communities. Last week's Gallup poll showing that Muslims in London had higher levels of confidence in the police than the wider population was reassuring, and confirms what we all know and have been saying for years – that the vast majority of Muslims totally reject extremism and violence.⁷ But we must not be complacent. The extremists have a momentum that must be stopped.

On the international stage, the levels of co-operation are unprecedented, and some of our most important operations have depended upon multinational co-operation in agreeing the timing of arrests in different jurisdictions, and the like. An interesting and important task for the future will be to clarify the appropriate roles for bilateral and multilateral linkages.

Perhaps most importantly, I honestly believe that the safety of the British public will be secured as much by improving their understanding of the challenges we face, as by any individual policy initiative or piece of legislation. We must build, and where necessary rebuild, trust. We must certainly be resolute, as our opponents will exploit any weakness. Indeed their strategy is built around exploiting what they perceive to be the vulnerabilities of free societies. Colin Cramphorn was a master at understanding the complexities of policing, and never more so than in the field of counter-terrorism where he had so much experience and foresight. Above all, Colin was someone who was prepared to learn from experience. I would therefore like to thank Policy Exchange for giving me the opportunity to dedicate this lecture to the memory of Colin Cramphorn.

Colin Cramphorn in pictures



Lieutenant Colin Cramphorn (left) of the Royal Marine Reserves and Surrey Constabulary wins the 1986 McCarrol Trophy for making the most significant contribution to the Marine Cadets throughout the country. Photo courtesy of Lynne Cramphorn.



The Senior Command Course at the Police Staff College, Bramshill, 1994: Colin Cramphorn is on the far left, Peter Clarke is third from the left. © Jim Farrar.



RUC RIP: the Queen comes to present the George Cross to the RUC before its reconstitution as the PSNI. Sir Ronnie Flanagan, last Chief Constable of the RUC is second from the left; Colin Cramphorn, last Deputy Chief Constable, is second from the right. The then Secretary of State, Peter Mandelson, is on the far right. Photo courtesy of Lynne Cramphorn and Sir Ronnie Flanagan.



Colin Cramphorn talks to a PSNI water cannon crew during the Whiterock parade, Belfast, 2002.
Photo courtesy of Lynne Cramphorn and Sir Ronnie Flanagan.



Colin Cramphorn returns to Northern Ireland as the reviewing officer for the PSNI graduating class at the Police College at Garnerville, 28 May 2004. © Bobbie Harvey.



The international dimension: a British delegation tours a police station in southern Iraq, May 2005. Left to right: Paul Kernaghan QPM, CBE, Chief Constable of Hampshire (ex-UDR and RUC), ACPO lead on international policing matters; Sir Ronnie Flanagan, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary; Sir Hugh Orde OBE, Chief Constable, PSNI; Ian Quinton, then staff officer to Sir Ronnie Flanagan; and Colin Cramphorn. Photo courtesy of Lynne Cramphorn and Sir Ronnie Flanagan.



Colin Cramphorn visits the site of the shooting of WPC Sharon Beshenivsky, 18 November 2005.
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Lynne Cramphorn with
Peter Clarke at Policy
Exchange, 24 April 2007.
© Graham Trott.



Sir Ronnie Flanagan, GBE,
Her Majesty's Chief
Inspector of Constabulary
at Policy Exchange, 24
April 2007.
© Graham Trott.



Eulogy of Colin Cramphorn

Delivered at the funeral service
in Wakefield Cathedral, 7 December 2006

Sir Ronnie Flanagan

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

At a time when policing most needs people of outstanding policing professional ability, most needs people of the utmost integrity and of the highest principle, most needs people of great physical and moral courage, most needs people of utter dedication to others, people who care more about the needs of others than who are concerned about themselves – at such a time policing can least afford to lose someone like Colin Cramphorn, because Colin was all these things and much more, and his loss is a tremendous one to policing.

But that loss to policing pales, of course, into insignificance compared to the loss that his wife Lynne, and his sons Edward and Iain, and the members of the wider family circle are feeling. Edward and Iain, your dad will be brimming with pride as we all are. Colin, you know, was insistent that this be a service of celebration. He didn't want any of us to feel down. And I know that he will truly be brimming with pride at his two wonderful sons just as they will be proud of him forever; I think we should acknowledge their beautiful music this morning [Colin Cramphorn's sons had just completed playing two of his favourite tunes on the saxophone].

I first got to know Colin Cramphorn some eight-and-a-half years ago, when he applied to be Deputy Chief Constable of what was then the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

And as we do in such circumstances, on receiving his application I phoned his then Chief Constable, a dear friend of mine, David Blakey in West Mercia. As we say in Belfast, I said, “David, what sort of boy is this young fella Cramphorn?” He said, “Well Ronnie, if you want a deputy who will give you an easy life, who’ll give you peace and who will leave you alone, Colin is not your man.” And I said, “Well, I’m not looking for an easy life, I don’t want peace, and I don’t want to be left alone.” And it very soon became clear that Colin was someone of absolutely boundless energy, infectious enthusiasm and limitless new ideas.

“ Very quickly we realised in Northern Ireland that not only had we an absolutely outstanding Deputy Chief Constable, we had someone who would be an outstanding Chief Constable ”

When he was appointed I have to say it was in the face of stiff competition from absolutely outstanding colleagues, but very quickly we realised in Northern Ireland that not only had we an absolutely outstanding Deputy Chief Constable, we had someone who would be an outstanding Chief Constable. I never considered Colin to be my deputy; I considered that he and I were partners in a common enterprise.

I think it speaks volumes that on his appointment, he and Lynne and the boys were heading off on a family holiday to Hungary with a friend of Colin’s whom he had shared the Royal College of Defence Studies course with, and Colin and Lynne were so determined to immediately become part of Northern Ireland life they asked me if I could find temporary accommodation for them; when I spoke to Colin he said,

“Look I trust you. If it’s good enough for you, it’ll be good enough for us.” And we very quickly, while Colin and Lynne were in Hungary, found a rented house and they immediately came over so that the boys would not miss a day of their new term in their new school.

It wasn’t Colin’s first touch with Northern Ireland, of course: as a member of the special course as a young sergeant he spent a short secondment with the Royal Ulster Constabulary and at that time his inspector was Cliff McIlwraith. Now Cliff and his wife Billie are here today with their daughter Erin because they have been friends with Colin and Lynne, dear friends ever since. Cliff and Billie both had distinguished careers in the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Cliff still works with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, as does their daughter Erin, as indeed does Erin’s husband (and that’s not uncommon in Northern Ireland).

I know all Colin’s colleagues and friends on this side of the water won’t mind me paying a special tribute and saying a word of welcome and thanks to those colleagues and friends who have travelled from Northern Ireland; there’s a big contingent from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, led by Sir Hugh Orde the Chief Constable, Paul Leighton, the Deputy Chief Constable, and indeed Suzanne. She was not only an absolutely outstanding personal secretary to Colin, but a dear friend, as she was to me before that and she still is to Hugh. I know it meant a lot to Suzanne to be able to visit and spend some time with Colin last Monday and I know that meant a lot to Colin as well. As well as the strong contingent from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Sir Desmond Rea and his deputy chair and Chief Executive of the Policing Board are here as well. Mrs Nuala O’Loan the Ombudsman is here. Indeed, the Widow’s Association represented by Wilma and Phyllis are

here too; and Freddie Hall and Jim McDonald of the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Association and Mr Nick Perry representing the Northern Ireland Office. Colin will be so pleased that you have all found the time to be with us this morning.

I would like to say just a couple of things about Colin, one on the social side of life and one on the professional side of life, in relation to his time in Northern Ireland and then in relation to his time here in West Yorkshire. Colin was a person of great fun and every year we used to have quite a massive raft race in a place called Portrush on the north coast of Ireland. Police forces from all over the country would send crews of six people to compete in this raft race, and it raised a lot of money for charity. I would attend each year and enjoy the revelry, and present the prizes; not only the prizes to the winner, the runners-up, etc but all sorts of prizes for the craziest raft, the craziest dress, the craziest crew. Of course one year they said, "Why don't you enter a team from headquarters next year?" and I said, "Of course." (Next year seemed a long time away at that stage.) It came round rather too quickly, and Colin was there. I said, "Colin, by the way, we have to put a team in this raft race." "No problem," he said. "Boss, I'll get a team together."

Now some of these people took it rather seriously, it's a bit like the marathon, you have the serious runners and then you have the fun runners. Some people get dressed up in crazy costumes, and just bob in and out of the water, and that's exactly what I had in mind. Not Colin. He put together a crew, and some of them are here today, former Assistant Chief Constable Steven White, myself and Colin. Our "land lubber", Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland, was our non-floating team manager, but he lit the barbecue and prepared a wonderful picnic for us all afterwards. Lynne

and the two boys were there, and I see them smiling because they remember the event well.

The race took the form of a standing start, with each crew carrying its raft, and on the sound of the claxon, making perhaps a 50-yard dash to the water, plunging into the water, and then having to paddle for some 300 metres to a buoy, and then round the buoy to return. Colin's experience of the sea, and his absolute determination in keeping us paddling rhythmically, meant that we won our first heat, which meant that we had to do it all again! And again! Only to be narrowly pipped, by one of our own Special Support teams, who we learned later, had been practising for weeks on end – I'm assured, on their own time. Colin was thus an outstanding friend, as well as an outstanding colleague.

“ Colin was immediately recognised by the public at large, as someone of utmost integrity, and of the highest professional ability as a police officer ”

Professionally I think I can't sum up any more accurately what I thought about Colin, than to quote what I wrote in my assessment to the Police Authority of West Yorkshire, when he applied to be their Chief Constable. Having given Colin an overall grading of "Outstanding" (how could anyone do other?), I wrote that:

Mr Cramphorn has derived wide experience, serving in all types of policing environments, and on central service with the Home Office. He has excelled in all the major police courses, and was selected to attend the prestigious Royal College of Defence Studies in 1997, where overall he

was assessed to be an exceptional member of that course. Colin has been my Deputy Chief Constable since September 1998, and throughout this period, he has proved himself as an inspirational leader in what has been a most testing period for all members of the organisation. He is held in the highest esteem, by all officers and civilian colleagues, and indeed throughout Northern Ireland's society.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland is currently going through what has been described as the most complex and far reaching change in the modern history of policing. Colin has direct responsibility for managing this change. His ability to lead, and motivate all members of staff during this period, has been of the very highest order. He has worked extremely hard to develop in the organisation a performance culture, which has positively impacted in all aspects of our performance. Our public confidence levels are now of the order of towards 80%. No mean achievement in such a sadly divided society.

Mr Cramphorn attends the monthly meetings of what was the Police Authority, (what is now the Policing Board), and many other sub-committees of the Authority wherein he addresses those issues which are his specific responsibility, as well as on occasion standing in for me. He did enjoy the full confidence of the Authority, whose members held him in the same high regard as I do. He is currently building relationships with the new Policing Board, so that we can play a full part in the new oversight mechanisms put in place by the board to further ensure openness, transparency, and accountability in all the policing arrangements for Northern Ireland.

Immediately upon appointment three years ago, Mr Cramphorn and his family took up residence in Northern Ireland. They quickly became well known, and Colin was immediately recognised by the public at large, as someone of utmost integrity, and of the highest professional ability as a police officer. He has both inspired public confidence, and he enjoys the trust and respect of the many diverse communities which comprise Northern Ireland's society.

As a leader, he related to those under his command in ways whereby they know they are trusted and valued, and they feel empowered so as

invariably to be able to give of their best. Team building is a particular strength of his, so that colleagues are focused and harnessed in their efforts towards common purpose. Colin has thus demonstrated both experience and aptitude across the entire range of policing roles a Chief Constable must fill. I accordingly highly commend him to you, for your most important office.

Not surprisingly, Colin was appointed as Chief Constable of West Yorkshire. And I think we can say he was appointed at a challenging time, because perhaps the performance of the force, just at that time, wasn't perhaps all that it might have been. Anyone who doubts Colin's professional ability should turn to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary website, and read last month's "baseline assessment" of West Yorkshire: among the very highest performing forces in this country, and exemplars of good practice in many areas of policing activity – so others can benefit from that.

Just over two years ago, I remember it well, I was in Newcastle upon Tyne when I received a phone call from Colin, and he told me that tests back just that day had indicated that he was suffering from prostate cancer. But he was very upbeat and confident and, in fact, having had some experience with his grandfather, he said, "Well you know this can be very slow moving; my grandfather lived until he was 78." Sadly, in Colin's case, it was not to be. It was to prove much more aggressive. But the courage and resilience he demonstrated in dealing with that, was typical of the courage and resilience of how he approached life in general. In September last year, he ran the Great North Run, and in doing so, through sponsorship, raised a lot of money for Cancer Research. In fact I think when he reached the same time this year, when sadly he was confined to the wheelchair, he was for a period even considering doing it again in the wheelchair! But sadly again, that again was not to be.

In May this year, as president of the police Mutual Assurance Society, I hosted our annual conference in Harrogate, and Colin and Lynne were there, with many other Chief Constables as our guests. And on that evening we had a black-tie function, to close the conference. The entertainment that was arranged was to be a surprise for the guests, because there were three people in black ties, who were acting as waiters on the table. But suddenly without warning, they produced a microphone, and began to sing. Suddenly they became Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis Jr. And they wandered among the tables singing all the famous songs, and occasionally handing the microphone to someone sat at the table. That produced a variety of responses. Some people shyly declined, others took the microphone and nervously sang a few bars. When Frank Sinatra unwittingly approached Colin Cramphorn, and he had just sung a few bars of “I Did It My Way”, and he handed the mike to Colin, Colin grasped it, stood up, and with great gusto, sang the entire rest of the song, insisting that we all sang with him. And he sat down to thunderous applause from us all.

“ Those searches were conducted in a way that was most professional, in a way that yielded evidence, but in a way that avoided the potential for community strife. And that’s typical of Colin ”

Colin enjoyed fun, enjoyed fun with his family, and fun with his friends. But throughout, he was the consummate police officer. I remember after the murderous attacks in London, on Thursday 7 July last year, when I have to say

through world-class investigation by the Metropolitan Police service, by Monday, we knew that three of those four bombers came from Beeston, very much in Colin's patch, we knew that we had to engage in searches, very quickly, rather than risk losing evidence. I spoke to Colin on that Monday evening, and we discussed how the searches should be carried out, and he said he would be there at 5.30 the following morning to personally brief the team. I knew he had an appointment at something like 11.30 to receive chemotherapy, and I made Colin promise that he would keep that appointment. He did that, but notwithstanding that, he was there at 5.30. And I remember on that morning, he and I having a chuckle over the phone, I said, "Colin let me get this right, you're out this morning to head a very sensitive policing operation, and to make sure that as a result of that operation, there is no community strife; there is hopefully no public disorder." He said, "That's right boss." I said, "Colin, this is the twelfth of July, Hugh Orde will be doing the same thing in Northern Ireland!" (The twelfth of July is not an insignificant date in Northern Ireland). Those searches were conducted in a way that was most professional, in a way that yielded evidence, but in a way that avoided the potential for community strife. And that's typical of Colin.

He and I used to joke because we would attend many functions together in Northern Ireland, and in going to them, getting ready to go to them, Colin would say, "What bit of William Butler Yeats are you going to bore us with tonight boss?" So Colin, I know you'll be expecting some poetry, but you may be surprised that William Butler Yeats is actually not my first choice. Colin loved the work of Rudyard Kipling. He and I used to talk about the absolute appropriateness of every line of the most famous poem, *If...*, but there's a much less famous poem by Kipling, and because

Colin is a man in at least a thousand, I thought I'd mark that
by reading bits of Kipling's poem *The Thousandth Man*:

*One man in a thousand, Solomon says,
Will stick more close than a brother.
And it's worth while seeking him half your days
If you find him before the other.
Nine hundred and ninety-nine depend
On what the world sees in you,
But the Thousandth Man will stand your friend
With the whole round world agin you.*

*'Tis neither promise nor prayer nor show
Will settle the finding for 'ee.
Nine hundred and ninety-nine of 'em go
By your looks, or your acts, or your glory.
But if he finds you and you find him.
The rest of the world don't matter;
For the Thousandth Man will sink or swim
With you in any water.*

*Nine hundred and ninety-nine of 'em call
For silver and gold in their dealings;
But the Thousandth Man, he's worth 'em all,
Because you can show him your feelings.*

*Nine hundred and ninety-nine can't bide
The shame or mocking or laughter,
But the Thousandth Man will stand by your side
To the gallows-foot – and after!*

Colin Cramphorn is certainly a man in a thousand. Colin was a member of the Society for Arts, Manufacturers and

Commerce; a member of the Institute for Business Ethics and the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies. He was also a patron of the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital Research and Equipment Fund. And much more. He had two honorary doctorates, one from the University of Bradford and one from the University of Huddersfield. He was delighted quite recently to receive that honorary doctorate because of the close relationship between the West Yorkshire force and Huddersfield University. It's a doctorate in civil law, and when I was speaking to him last Wednesday he said, "Actually it's the first time I've ever been called civil!"

Now Colin organised every element of this service. I think I must offer a word of explanation, particularly about the last piece of music, which is "Killaloe". It's a very rousing march, and it's the theme tune of the Royal Irish Regiment, as it was the theme tune of other Irish regiments before. But Colin associated it with their motto, the motto which they devised after the battle of Barossa, in the Peninsula War in 1811. Their motto is *Faugh A Ballagh*, which in Irish means "Clear the Way". And Colin says, "I want that played, and I want 'Clear the Way' because I'm making the most incredible journey that any of us will ever make." And Colin said: "As everyone leaves the cathedral, they will be going on in their earthly journey as well, most of them in the wonderful and weird world of policing, so I want the way cleared for me, and I want the way cleared for them all." I said, "Colin, you remember 'Killaloe', it has a certain stage where everybody shouts aloud and goes 'Yo!'" And he said, "Yes, and I hold you responsible for making sure that happens." I said – and here I have to offer a word of warning to the congregation – "Colin what if they get it wrong?" (Paul, the padre, was with me at Colin's bedside at the time) and he said, "Paul, it's dead easy, if they get it wrong, you keep them there until they get it right."

Lynne, Edward, Iain, it's a privilege to know you. It was a real privilege to know your dad. I won't disappoint him by leaving out Yeats, because Yeats, towards the end of his life, was wandering round the municipal gallery in Dublin, and almost by accident, he came across a row of portraits, most of which were of his former friends, many of whom had sadly passed on. He was so moved by the occasion that he wrote a poem, *The Municipal Gallery Revisited*. He finishes that poem by a question in the final couplet:

*Think where man's glory most begins and ends,
And say, my glory was, I had such friends.*

The glory of us all here today, is that we have had such a friend as Colin Cramphorn. Colin, thank you for that privilege.

Acknowledgements

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Ian Day, Picture Editor of the *Yorkshire Post*, did superb work in digging up some of the best images of Cramphorn. Thanks are likewise due to Bobbie Hanvey – an old friend and, in my view, the finest photographer in Northern Ireland – for so generously opening up his marvellous collection. Graham Trott displayed his customary professionalism and courtesy.

Above all, Policy Exchange has been blessed with an outstanding team who did the lion's share of the leg work. I am deeply

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Dean Godson
Research Director
Policy Exchange

“Peter Clarke’s lecture is one of the most impressive statements of police thinking that I have seen from any practitioner. What is striking above all is its combination of professionalism and humility – namely the recognition that New Scotland Yard and other constabularies must constantly re-examine the lessons of the recent past so as to improve their performance”.

Professor Christopher Andrew,
co-author, The Mitrokhin Archive

“This remarkable talk gave fresh context to the role and frustrations of policing the terrorist threat. Peter Clarke demonstrated the paramount and corresponding needs for greater and responsible public information alongside authorities free from damaging leaks. He provided justification for stronger national policing to support national security. The talk is required reading – and represents a most welcome addition to Policy Exchange’s admirably non-partisan approach towards educating the public on national security issues”.

Lord Carlile of Berriew, QC,
Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation

Peter Clarke is Head of the Metropolitan Police
Counter Terrorism Command

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Policy Exchange
Clutha House
10 Storey’s Gate
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