



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

British style of policing 'lost in deluge of New Labour targets'

Daily mail By Rebecca Camber 26th November 2009

British policing has 'lost its way' under an avalanche of Government targets, the chief inspector of police has said.

Denis O'Connor, Her Majesty's chief Inspector of Constabulary hit out at the 'noise and clutter' of new laws, benchmarks and initiatives under Labour which have destroyed the ethos of frontline policing. He said too many new laws had left police officers confused about their duties and uncertain about when to use force.

In an astonishing broadside at the Government, he told The Daily Telegraph: *'The principles of policing get drowned out in the noise. You need to look at the number of units and departments at the Home Office, all the officials and the different committees and ask this question: **'Do they think about the principles and values of the British model of policing?'***

'You have got a whole series of interests. If you add it all together and put on a piece of paper the links to show who is providing information, who is asking for information, who is suggesting new initiatives ... it makes the London Underground map look like a walk in the park.'

Mr O'Connor spoke out as he unveiled a critical report by his Inspectorate into protest policing following the controversial G20 demonstrations in April. During clashes with riot police, 46-year-old newspaper vendor Ian Tomlinson died after being pushed to the ground and struck with a baton.

A member of the Met's Territorial Support Group is also facing trial for assault after allegedly beating a woman in the legs.

The inspector told the newspaper the police should be **approachable, impartial and accountable**, as in the early days of policing under Sir Robert Peel in **1829**.

'That was an ideal but there's been some drift away from that. We have lost our way', he said. 'I think the whole thing needs rationalising significantly. That will hopefully give a better connection between the police and the people.'

There have been 61 amendments to In public order law legislation in the past six years, the report disclosed, concluding: 'Police are uncertain of their duties and the powers they may exercise'.

The Home Office has recently introduced a target for police for improving public confidence, putting increased pressure on forces which are already bogged down in paperwork to centrally imposed targets.

Mr O'Connor accused the Government - which has created crimes at a rate of nearly one per day since 1997 - of **'too many knee jerk reactions'** in law and order.

He said centrally-imposed targets were a 'well intentioned' measure to tackle problems such as anti-social behaviour but had become a problem when 'the machinery came to dominate what police officers did' and took away their discretion.

The report claimed police training and tactics for protests were treated like a 'Cinderella subject' by force chiefs, and they risked losing public support with aggressive tactics.

Mr O'Connor said many officers failed to understand their obligations under the Human Rights Act and the law surrounding the use of force during protests and **inappropriate use of stop and search powers.**

Sir Paul Stephenson, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, requested a review into the £7.5million operation after police were heavily criticised for their conduct at the demonstrations by 35,000 people during the visit of world leaders to London.

The report published yesterday examined protests in London, including the City and Blackheath, Kingsnorth, Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham.

Yesterday Mr O'Connor called for officers to tackle even the most inflammatory events using the minimum of force. The chief inspector said that he is working with officials at the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) who want to reform practices.

He said: *'At some fairly highly charged events, the tactics and way police go about it seems to have been overtaken in some way by the world we are in. This harms not just the reputation of the officers concerned but the police service as a whole. It's time to modernise.'*

Chief Constable Meredydd Hughes, of South Yorkshire Police, said work to write a new manual on public order operations and training is under way.

Mr Hughes, who is the ACPO lead for uniformed operations, said: *'This report will shape the future of national public order policing. It represents the first time that British policing has examined modern protest in such a public way.'*

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1230835/G20-style-policing-risks-eroding-public-support-force.html#ixzz0YaERjOMk>

The PPP comments ... For many years we have been critical of the knee jerk reaction and slavish following of every **'initiative'** (another greatly devalued word) from every new Home Secretary by NWPF and NWPA. Their revenue budgets have reflected the micro management of policing priorities. We believe that the Police Pledge (which does not include the word prevent, as in crime prevention) is so much hot air and with it the juvenile game of 'balance your bobbies!' If they would just follow the Policing Principles of 1829 which O'Connor was reminded of by our website at

www.properpolicing.org.uk/articles-policingnorthwales.php?search=principles all would be well.

We have no real faith in the disingenuous **Meredydd Hughes** who was a public failure at road policing for ACPO

One key failing at the G20 was allowing frontline officers to remove their IDs, an invitation to use excessive force. Those chiefs responsible should be sacked.