

**Chairman:** As you can see, we are already joined by our guest for this final session, your very own John Reid, of course, the Home Secretary and indeed, Ken Jones, President of ACPO. I am not going to say any more because again, we are up against time but before we get into the discussion and the keynote speeches, I sit here in awe and amazement every year at the bravery of you and your fellow officers. I am astounded by some of the things you do as an everyday occurrence. This year is not exception, so we are going to look first of all at the nominations for the bravery awards. [*Pause – music and video*]

## **PRESENTATION**

### **Jan Berry**

Home Secretary – or should I say currently Home Secretary? – you are very welcome. Every year we take this opportunity to celebrate our brave officer nominations and I am proud to call every one of the nominees in that video a colleague.

P C Richard Gray's brutal murder, just ten days ago, serves as a tragic reminder if ever one were needed of the shocking regularity with which police officers pay the ultimate price for their heroism. Ricky was much liked, a decorated officer and devoted to his duty and an absolute credit to the service. We are not going to forget him, nor will we forget that the streets are safer because of people like him and the 140,000 colleagues he left behind.

Home Secretary, may I thank you once again for coming to what is your second and final conference? Also, for agreeing to answer questions – we always encourage politicians to answer police officers' questions. I should point out any mention of 'cash' or 'honours' will be about our cash and our honour. [*Applause*] They tell me the view is better from the back benches, so I am sure you will have plenty of time to reflect on decisions you have and critically, have not made, over the course of what has been a very busy year. Despite all the challenges we have faced, police officers have done what they always do: they have given 110 per cent.

The reaction to the terrible murders in Ipswich was a first class example of forces sharing skills, knowledge, experience and equipment. Although somewhat obscured by other decisions you have made, I want to recognise your composure following this year's various terrorist operations. It may only be a footnote in the story of the Forest Gate raids, but the fact is, you understood the complexity of the situation and did not jump to any snap conclusions, unlike some of your predecessors. You also understand the need for the wider roll out of TAZAR, so given the press this morning, we trust that this is one issue we are not going to have to raise with your successor.

For years, we have policed using commonsense, but this is now under serious threat. As a result of government diktat, the service has been reduced to a bureaucratic, target chasing, points obsessed arm of Whitehall, debasing what was once a sensible police service. There is no better example of the control freakery that is eroding commonsense than penalty notices for disorder. When PNDs were first mooted, we acknowledged that, used properly, they could bring some benefits. But we were also absolutely adamant that PNDs could never and would never deliver a faster, more effective justice system on their own. A child who throws buns at a bus, a man who threw water over his girlfriend and a man caught in possession of an egg – ‘with intent to throw’ [*Applause*] – hardly weapons of mass destruction! But all these cases should have been dealt with by a quiet word and good, old fashioned commonsense. [*Applause*]

As we heard yesterday from Sgt Sam Roberts, it is madness but an officer gets 30 points if he or she issues a penalty notice, but only 20 for charging and pursuing a case through the courts. Sam told us about an officer who arrested someone for shoplifting but, rather than chase points and rather than follow what officers are pressured to do, the officer investigated further. It turned out that the offender had over 2,500 TICs, his home an Aladdin’s cave of stolen property; and that is not to mention a lucrative business selling it on line. How can we have a system that discourages police officers from investigating crimes properly, from doing what they know and believe is right and that encourages them to take short cuts and issue PNDs like confetti? Discretion has been at the very heart of British policing since the days of Sir Robert Peel. It is the very essence of policing by consent, of our relationship with the public and their relationship with us. The most astonishing thing is that these principles of policing by consent were born here in Britain. But right now, as I speak, there are literally hundreds of police officers, serving overseas in Rumania, Jordan, Jamaica, training forces to replicate our ethos and our values. At the very same time, however, government ministers and chief officers are collaborating in their destruction. [*Applause*]

Last year, I described how the police reform programme was like a juggernaut, careering downhill, out of control. We appealed to you to take the wheel and apply the brakes. You must have misheard the instructions. Not only did you fail to apply the brakes, you are jumping out of the cab and handing the wheel over to a new driver! [*Applause*] We can laugh but there is actually nothing funny about it because we have to live with the consequences. The police service is being dismantled piece by piece, eroding the office of constable in the process and my greatest fear is that, when the failed experiment is over and you are busy writing your memoirs, it will be impossible to put the service back together again. What we need is some honesty about police reform. Chief officers are trying to pull

the wool over politicians' and the public's eyes with flawed policies. They are telling you, Home Secretary, that it is more effective to have a mixture of sworn and unsworn, skilled and unskilled staff. But most of these people only do one job. They are like a one club golfer and meanwhile, those of us with a broader range of skills are starved of the resources to do the job the public expect. As a result, our flexibility and our resilience is reduced. The chiefs call it modernisation. We call it fragmentation. The result is that the government is presiding over the systematic de-skilling of the entire police service. It is time for chief constables to stand up for what is right, for a politically independent and impartial professional police service, best enshrined in the office of constable. *[Applause]*

There is another plank of the modernisation platform that is also failing. You will have noticed that community support officers are helping with security here today. We have never doubted their commitment. But the government have repeatedly assured us that CSOs would support, not supplant, police officers. I am afraid we do not believe you. What is clear is that CSO numbers have gone up and police numbers have gone down. And why? Because you cannot afford both. To add insult to injury, your announcement in December will lead to even fewer police officers on the street. The crime fighting fund once protected police officer numbers, but you have now scrapped it and the thin blue line is getting even thinner. Predictably, it is not just us and the law abiding public that understand the real difference real police officers make. Yobs and criminals see right through CSOs too. We have even had police officers dressing up in CSO uniforms in order to stop yobs taking the Mickey. The yobs goad CSOs because they know they have no powers. They know that without a police officer around, they are untouchable. So when it comes to choosing between community support officers and police officers, I know which I would choose: somebody with the training, the skills and the experience to exercise their discretion, whether that be through the power of persuasion or the power of arrest. And the only person who can do both is the fully sworn, attested police officer. They are the best value for money. *[Applause]*

Sadly, it is not just workforce modernisation that is in a mess. Amalgamation may be on the Home Office back burner, but the replacement – collaborative arrangements – are already raising all sorts of questions. Where is the accountability? What are the government's arrangements? And where does the buck stop if a joint operation goes wrong? The principle of collaborative arrangements is absolutely right, but these issues have to be sorted out before, not after, the changes. The split of the Home Office is yet another distraction. It could even end up as a messy divorce with neither side talking to the other. The limited review to be conducted by Sir Ronnie Flanagan will merely accelerate plans to de-skill the police service.

Before you accuse me of exaggerating: this is not the first time that ministers have ignored warnings from front line officers. In the eighties, we championed the need for better safety equipment, in the nineties, we stressed the need for a visible police presence, and in the new Millennium, we warned of the growing level 2 policing gap – all deeply unfashionable at the time, but all accepted wisdom today. There still remains, however, an urgent need for a comprehensive, an independent and a politically impartial examination of policing, which is why we have repeatedly called for a Royal Commission. We are not asking for it just for the sake of it. We need it to examine the function of the police service, a hard headed look, not a vague vision. We need it to define the role of a constable. We need it to take a holistic look at how we best tackle all forms of crime, whether it be antisocial behaviour or right through to counter terrorism. Moreover, we need to look at where the money is going to come from.

Today, I am asking you once again for a Royal Commission and if the answer is No, the Federation will look to conduct its own. It would be independent; it would take evidence; and it would consult the public we serve. Home Secretary, I want to touch on a subject that is as much about honour as it is about cash: police pay. Last year, just eleven days into your new position, you assured us that you were not going to decide lightly on pay and conditions. We understood. You had just joined a Home Office that was attempting to undermine PNB and our long standing indexation agreement. In November, when the Police Arbitration Tribunal found in our favour, you immediately ratified that finding. So far, so good.

However, having ratified the PAT's finding, you launched headlong into your own review, a review where you chose the terms and conditions, you chose the timetable and you chose a Labour party stalwart to conduct it. Do not try to kid us and pretend that it is 'independent'. [Applause] It may have seemed astute politics but it has been a masterclass in how to undermine the morale of 140,000 police officers. No wonder trust, the father of confidence and goodwill, was gone long before Booth made your, or even his, recommendations. According to Booth, police pay should no longer be linked to private sector salaries, but instead to an index of ten, hand-picked, public sector pay deals, already frozen by Gordon Brown. That is scandalous. [Applause] For years, our pay has been linked to private sector salaries, but the very second private sector pay overtakes public sector pay, Booth argues that we should be forced to switch indices. In effect, Booth picked a figure and then selected a formula to reach it. How is this consistent with a government policy that states it will not impose the same award on every group?

It gets worse. Booth's pot of money would be distributed in a divisive way, just like SBPs. How can you even contemplate doing this before we have an effective accreditation and qualification framework and, for that matter, a PDR system in which police officers have

faith? The argument that police pay must be reduced in order to meet the government's inflation target of two per cent is utterly fatuous. The Bank of England states that increases in earnings of 4.5 per cent are consistent with meeting that inflation target. So who do we believe? The independent Bank of England? Or a government department that, someone once said, is not fit for purpose? *[Applause]*

You will no doubt say, 'I can't talk about negotiations here. They're for the PNB and for the PNB alone'. If you believe that so strongly and you believe in the sanctity of fair negotiations, why, on 10 April, did you not only direct PNB to discuss those recommendations, but instructed them to agree to Booth's recommendations? That is totally contrary to the spirit and the constitution of the Police Negotiating Board. *[Applause]* What is more, you are still trying to use the PNB to re-engineer the police service, rather than take our offer of a proper, wide ranging review of policing.

Home Secretary, the prospect of police picket lines was something I never thought was imaginable, let alone possible. We take our duties seriously. We put ourselves in the line of fire. We give our time willingly. And we are never off duty. All we are asking for is fair reward. But, start treating officers like public sector workers and do not be surprised if 140,000 police officers start demanding the same industrial rights enjoyed by others. *[Prolonged applause]*

Personally, I believe it would be an absolute tragedy for policing if police officers were ever forced to go on strike so I want to reassure you that it is the last thing that police officers want. Push them any further though, and the last thing that they want might just become their only option. *[Applause]* Only last week, Tony Blair said that human capital is the greatest of the nation's assets. Police officers are the police service's greatest asset. So why do officers feel that they are being treated as anything but an asset?

'Demoralised. Disillusioned. Depressed'. That is how a new in-service officer described how he felt to me. Demoralised at their lack of discretion and having to chase targets, not criminals. Disillusioned at the farce that is police reform. Depressed at the prospect of yet another looming pay battle. This is a sad by-product of the government's record on policing. Multiply that frustration by 140,000 and the government and chief officers face a massive challenge.

So we have some words of advice. Gordon Brown may not be in Number Ten quite yet but he is already saying that he will listen and that he will learn. Enough of the promises and the platitudes; enough of Annual Conference echo; the government and ACPO have got to start listening and inject a healthy dose of the one commodity that has been so lacking – honesty. We are all proud to be police officers but the police service and the public deserve

so much better. We will leave the politics to the politicians, but leave the policing to us.  
[Applause]

Home Secretary, can I now invite you to address Conference?

## **ADDRESS**

**John Reid**  
**Home Secretary**

Thank you, Jan, for that warm welcome. [Laughter] I will now present the case for the defence. May I be so bold as to say that I know the one thing that police officers and their representatives in the Federation want is an argument and discussion based on the facts? I would like to correct two – I do not intend to go through everything.

First of all, I did not say that the Home Office was fit or unfit for purpose. I said 'elements of it' were unfit for purpose and one of the elements that I specifically excluded from that accusation was the police service. I continue to believe that. I do not say it is perfect, any more than politicians are perfect but I do not agree with some of the criticisms that are made of it and certainly have never postulated that it is unfit for purpose. Secondly, it is just not true that there are fewer police officers than there were when this government came in. There are not five, ten or 1,000 or 4,000 more. There are 40,000 more police officers than when this Labour government came in. Furthermore, we are not at the lowest ever level of police officers; we are at the highest ever level of police officers – 140,035 last September. You may feel that that is still inadequate. You may feel that we ought to have more. You may feel that there are complaints about the way they are deployed. But let us have the facts straight: there are more police than ever before and, in terms of all of the challenges we face, I want to try to face them, together.

I have taken the reason to step down from politics on the front line not because of the police or the Home department, but because of strategic reasons which lie above that. It is appropriate, sometimes, for politicians to step back rather than continually to follow their own career. Given that the normal accusation against us is that we are interested in nothing other than self promotion, and continual escalation, I would have thought it might be refreshing when somebody says, 'No, it's for the benefit of others that I step back'. That may not be the case; it just shows that you cannot win.

Let me start by paying the same tribute that you did, Jan, to the bravery of so many of the police officers – not only the 71 mentioned earlier but the thousands and thousands that they represent, because for every one of those incidents that is highlighted, you and I know

that there are many which are just as valorous, just as courageous but do not get the headlines every day. Among those 71 and the others mentioned, of course, there are none more so than those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice. So whatever differences we have to resolve, let us agree in our common respect and admiration for them and their families, not only Ricky Graves – mentioned by Jan – whose death earlier this month was a terrible shock and a terrible tragedy, but also David Shreeve, Debbie Harman, Joe Carroll, Alan Short, Richard Gostage, Connor Hills and Stacey Pike, all of whom lost their lives this year alone. That commitment and bravery is an example to all of us, not just inside the police or public service, but much wider. It is, ultimately, what makes our service so respected throughout the world, and Jan mentioned that as well.

Let me mention one name that she did not mention, but I said last year when this was raised with me, I would go and have a look at it. So while we are in the north west, it is also appropriate to remember Detective Constable Stephen Oake, who gave his life four years ago in the fight against terrorism. I said then, Jan, that this was news to me – the depth of feeling about Stephen Oake – but I would take it away and look at it. What I discovered, in terms of the bad news, is that these decisions are not within my remit, I have been told. They are not left to politicians. You may be glad to know that, given your comments earlier. Nevertheless, it does mean that it is impossible for me to intervene in this case. However, I do know from enquiries that I have made that Sir Ronnie Flanagan, who is still examining this case and the grounds on which the matter might be reconsidered and perhaps, given that I am going off from this position, as you have been kind enough to point out, then I have the freedom to say that, certainly from my point of view, Stephen Oake was an extremely brave officer and I, for one, hope that that bravery will be recognised in due course. *[Applause]*

Now, in my usual emollient fashion, let me return to some of the challenges that you have thrown out for me, Jan. You were kind enough to point out that, when I came to the Conference last year, I had only been Secretary of State for eleven days. I have to tell you that even then, I was not the shortest serving Secretary of State at the Home Office. It is an Office which seems to deal with its occupants more roughly than some. The shortest serving, you may be interested to know, was Lord Granville, who I understand in 1783 served for the full term of 48 hours as Home Secretary. I have no idea what happened. Perhaps the Federation Conference came early that year or something! *[Laughter]* Anyway, after two days, he decided then that he had enough.

I have now been in the job for just over a year, during which time we have – on some cases you have – firstly, cut crime; secondly, elsewhere in the Home Office, introduced new systems to manage migration effectively and fairly and of course, we have managed, within the limitations that anyone faces when countering terrorism, to diminish so far as we can and

to counter terrorism as far as we can with some notable successes. I have to say I entirely disagree with what you said about refocusing the Home Office, for reasons I will go on to later on.

The refocusing of the Home Office is nothing to do with any problems that have arisen in the past and everything to do with the changed world in which we face challenges in managing migration that are higher than ever before in the world in which we live, challenges in countering terrorism which are exponentially growing – a thousand times greater than they were only ten years ago – and challenges also in fighting crime and international crime. The extent and growth of those challenges is precisely why I have decided that it would be better to refocus non issues. Incidentally, it is not because the world has changed only but also because they are the highest priority of the British people. You ask people in this country now – as opposed to ten years ago, when they were talking about economy, or unemployment, or insecurity of jobs – what their highest priorities and they will say, ‘managing immigration fairly and effectively’, they will say, ‘countering crime, domestic and international, and anti-social behaviour’, and they will say, ‘countering terrorism’.

That is the reason that we have refocused the Home Office, because the magnitude of the challenges that we face are hugely greater than they were even ten or 15 years ago. So, while I respect the views of Secretaries of State, including many of those in the previous government, I have to say to them, ‘You have no idea of the extent of the threat which we face. Don’t take my word for it. Take the word of the Director General of MI5, who’s just left, or the present Security Forces, or the people in the police who are fighting this’. One of the things that it does is make sure that when we are fighting them, we are not just concentrating resources on the security services – for instance, in fighting terrorism – but recognising that you cannot increase the security services if you do not have a leverage and increase the police capacity at the same time, to fight alongside our security services.

That is one of the reasons and one of the benefits why an Office of Security and Counter terrorism, developed in the Home Office, will mean we are more effective at meeting that. That is why we have refocused the Home Office, to concentrate on protecting the public and securing our future. It brings together the responsibilities for personal, community and national security which naturally lie together and which now, taken together, constitute such a magnitude of challenge to us that it is appropriate that we concentrate all our efforts in one department on them. That means in turn that perhaps we will do that better than we have done some things in the past; and we saw the elements of the problems with foreign national prisoners and so on.

So, if I might put it as fraternally and bluntly as you have, Jan, I said at the time that refocusing the Home Office was nothing to do with job security for John Reid and everything to do with the national security of this nation. That is why I did it. That is why we need it. And I said time would prove that. So, going for a position, where I was accused of doing this in order to secure my own future in the Cabinet and being criticised for that, it now appears, now that it is plain that I am doing it for reasons for national security, it has become a grounds for criticism as well. All I will say to you is that we face a threat in this country that is far more significant than most people realise, but you should be the first to realise that because you are in the front line fighting it. By concentrating all our efforts in supporting you on the official side and the political side, I believe we have done the right thing, rather than leave you to get on with the job of fighting international crime as well as domestic crime and terrorism without giving you the necessary back up. That is why we have refocused the Home Office. Of course, it has now transpired, as Jan said, that I will be stepping down and I will be going along with the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and perhaps a lot of people who do not know they are going yet! When George Robertson was appointed General Secretary of NATO, he at least had a few months' advance warning and I remember him saying at the Cabinet, before he went – when he was invited to say a few words on his elevation to be General Secretary – he said, 'Prime Minister, this is my last Cabinet meeting'. Then he looked round the Cabinet and said, 'That is something very few of you will ever be in a position to say'. Because these things visit us with a degree of surprise which is probably similar to the surprise you get when re-allocated to other tasks as well.

Nevertheless, I want to say two things. Firstly, I will be here to see through the implementation ...

*[tape turn – no overlap]*

... security and counter terrorism and around it, the refocused Home Office. That will be embedded by the end of June. That has always been my timescale and that is why I want that embedded in there, so that a new Prime Minister and ministers who come in, whoever they are, will have the blueprint entrenched with the purpose of refocusing the Home Office on personal, community and national security.

Secondly, this new structure is not only good for the nation. It is good for policing. Things have changed a bit, since Lord Granville's time. The only thing that is constant in this life is change. And if we do not change, not unnecessarily, in a way that puts us in line with the present challenges – not those of ten or 20 or 30 years ago – then none of us do our job effectively. We do not do it as politicians. We do not do it as officials and we do not do it as police officers either. So in the midst of all of this, the constant is the responsibility of the

Home Secretary. The responsibility of the Home Secretary is to protect the public. Today, that duty spans antisocial behaviour in local communities, right through to the protection of the nation from those global threats that I mentioned earlier. From the local doorstep to the international stage, it is my responsibility, but it is also from the local to the global, the police service who will be the crucial element in meeting the challenge at all levels. Yes, you will be supplemented as police officers, from PCSOs – and I know that is controversial in some areas – and by civilian staff, and at the other end, you will be supplemented and work alongside the security service in terms of international counter-terrorism. But all of that will have as a constant police officers themselves as the thread that runs through all of that effort.

As our challenges evolve, so must the government's response and that of the police service, to become respected nationally and trusted locally. That means that there will be controversial changes and I will come on to the generality of those in a moment and to this question about whether these are a matter of party politics or not. I do not believe they are and I am glad you have got David Cameron and Menzies Campbell coming here tomorrow. I am genuinely glad. Because if other people can give us practical proposals that make sense and we can carry people with us on that, I will be only too happy to embrace them. But I also have to derive from two elements: one is from the public and one is my experience of police officers themselves. During this year, I have been privileged to meet many of your members throughout the country. I do not just come here and hear your views, important though that is. I also meet constantly with police from the Association of Chief Police Officers, right through individual police officers, right down to police constables and police officers working on the streets. And I meet them, on average, at least once a week for some form of discussion on the front line. So I have met a lot of them, from neighbourhood team, in Lambeth, Telford and Nottingham, to policy custody staff – and I know that is another area of controversy Tony McNulty was speaking about – and areas like Charing Cross and specialist teams tackling organised financial crime, or fraud, and those who work in Special Branch and liaison with the Security Services.

On every single visit, I can honestly say to you that I have been deeply impressed with the commitment and professionalism of our police service. I may have had to say that last year when I was coming in. I do not have to say it this year. But actually, I mean it. I have been deeply, deeply impressed by the commitment right across the range of specialisms. When I speak to officers – many of them officers like yourselves – then it should not surprise you that I have some idea of your frustrations and the themes that you would like developed. I noted some of them this morning that come up constantly. One of them is how we can meet the unprecedented challenges that you face, that I have

mentioned, obviously. But others are the need to cut bureaucracy, the need to focus resources on front line policing and the future of your pay arrangements.

I am going to say something on all of them, because you would expect me to be honest with you about all of them. I want just to mention briefly all of them, then we will go back to questions.

Let me deal with the challenges. In a sense, I do not have to tell you about the level of challenges we face. From being the service of the last resort, very often you must feel now you are the service of the first resort, that people come to you constantly, that in a world of 24/7 media there is also 24/7 policing now. The world does not seem to sleep relative to maybe ten, 20, 30, 40 years ago. So even though crime has fallen over the past ten years, then for Goodness' sake, take credit for that, because if you concentrate only on the problems that remain, we will fail to convince the public of the one manifestly obvious fact: that there has been a 34 per cent reduction in crime over the last decade. That has not been done by a Secretary of State sitting in Whitehall. That has been done by police officers like yourselves and you should take credit for that. Despite the fact that has happened, the demands for your assistance, for your work and for your attention have gone through the roof. I understand that. The fact that there has been a huge reduction in crime, that there has been an increased number of police officers, is balanced by the fact that the demands that we place upon you are greater than ever before. That is the challenge, not the fact that there are fewer police officers but that there is a greater demand being placed on the increased number than ever before. And to that, the challenge of dealing with an enhanced terrorist threat is to be added. Therefore, it is no wonder that you are feeling squeezed from both sides, from the side of the public and from the side of the demand placed upon you. The great question is: how do we manage it? This is basically what comes home to me when I meet police officers throughout the country.

One thing I am obviously going to say is that the service is going to stop the excellent work it is doing in the areas that it does. That has to continue, so on low volume crime, on antisocial behaviour. There is an argument about whether they should be given the highest priority but with the public, they are fantastically important. I can tell you, there were a lot of people at Westminster, a lot of politicians, who sneered at the idea that government ministers, statesmen, should regard low level antisocial behaviour somehow as worthy of their interest. There were people in the Westminster bubble who never had to live in communities ridden with antisocial elements, who looked down their nose at those of us who said this is important. I can tell you, the response from the public on these issues is incredibly positive. In areas where antisocial behaviour is being tackled, there is a whole new perception and whole new appreciation of the neighbourhood policing teams in

particular, which raises the status of the police service in the eyes of the public and every single indicator that is being studied illustrates that. So I am not one of those who say that the police service should focus only on so-called serious crime. That means that you are going to have to deal with both. That in a sense is the double challenge: that there is volume crime, there is antisocial, there is so-called 'low level' crime but then there is serious crime as well, and the public want us to try to deal with both. Because they want that, that is in a sense what I want as well and because they want that, it surely is what you ought to be wanting to attend to as well.

I will say something else. A criminal justice system that supports victims and works for the law abiding majority is what the people of this country want. I am sometimes criticised for saying that we ought to be on the side of the law abiding majority but I do not think I understand what other side we ought to be on, if it is not on the side of the hard working, decent, law abiding majority. That is where the criminal justice system should operate as well, for the protection of the majority and for the penalising of the minority who upset the lives of the majority. So rebalancing that criminal justice system has been a key priority in the time I have spent at the Home Office.

That is why last year, for instance, we raised the sentence for carrying a knife – the maximum sentence – from two to four years. That is why we banned the sale and import of imitation firearms. That is why we created a new offence of minding a dangerous weapon and that is why I ordered 8,000 additional prison places within two months of coming in as Home Secretary, because all of those were necessary elements in rebalancing the criminal justice system to support the work that you are doing at the front line. That is why this year, we will be introducing a new Criminal Justice Bill, to extend your powers to close all premises generating yobbish behaviour – not just crack dens, though that has been hugely welcomed as well by the public and the communities afflicted by them – and also to give you more powers to restrict the behaviour of dangerous offenders, like where they can live and who they can associate with. This is not because this is a figment of my fertile imagination. It is because it is the problems which the public want us to address and it is the social cohesion which came with communities that never changed, where people stayed in the same social class, the same geographical area, married and stayed in the same marriages, or worked in the same factories.

As that has changed radically in the last 40 years, it has given us a set of local problems in handling, in substituting the glue that used to hold communities together, which has resulted in the efforts to tackle antisocial behaviour. That is why it is happening. It is the demand that is rising from the communities themselves but also, the public demand higher standards. These cannot be met by forces acting alone. One of the areas where we still

have a gap – and I accept this – is that by doing what I thought was the right thing, by postponing the enforced mergers last year, and I think that that process was wrong, it was not going to work, nevertheless it does not mean that there is not a gap there that has to be filled. We have to find a way of filling that by other than compulsion. It is also why we are establishing stronger national and regional capabilities. In all of those challenges, we have the opportunity to work together. In fact, we have the requirement to work together because it is what the public want.

Let me go on then to discuss the relationship between local police and their communities and national government as well. This is a current debate that is not going to go away in the political sphere. It does not matter what party, it does not matter what shade of politics, people are responding to demand for local accountability and it is legitimate for politicians to disagree. You have David Cameron and Menzies here tomorrow. There are some areas I agree and some areas I disagree. I do not agree with David Cameron when he says the police is the last great unreformed institution in this country. I think there are a couple of political parties that might fit that definition but I certainly do not agree that it is necessarily applicable to the police, because there have been great reforms going on. We have worked together.

I do agree with him, and others, when we say that we have to improve the efficiency, the effectiveness and the local accountability. That is something that is being demanded of politicians, it is being demanded of those who work in all sections of the public sector and the police service cannot remain immune from that. I do not disagree with David Cameron that we need fresh thinking about strong local accountability, what it looks like, what it feels like, whether that is a vigorous debate about the pros and cons of elected police commissioners, or whether it is looking hard at the contributions being made by our most effective police authorities, trying to find a way of saying we will diminish central direction of the police service, which is what you are looking for, a reduction in central direction through targets and performance indicators. But if we are going to do that, we have to discuss openly, honestly, courageously. What do we substitute then for local accountability? How do local people have control that you do not want to lie in the centre? So I do not disagree with David Cameron. Indeed, if I may say so, I introduced that subject slightly before he did.

But I do disagree with him that you ask the questions and announce the solutions at the same time! It seems to me that we ought to have a discussion and debate before we say the answer – ‘Here is a question and the answer is automatically, police commissioners’. So what I say to you is that the government will not propose solutions without engaging with you first. When I was asked who I should put in charge of that, I did not pick an official. I did not pick a minister. I did not even pick a Royal Commission or Privy Council. I picked somebody

who has been and remains in Her Majesty's Inspectorate, a copper – Ronnie Flanagan. I asked Ronnie to look at these areas, including reducing bureaucracy, increasing accountability and efficiency and embedding police neighbourhood policing and said, 'You go back and within a few months report on the first two and within nine months report on the second and that will give us the basis for discussion and if necessary, argumentation about how we do it'. So, asking the right questions is one thing – and I think we are, however controversial they are – but jumping to conclusions before we ask even the questions is the wrong thing.

What is it we have to do to help you meet these standards, which are increasingly being demanded by the public? First, by helping you capitalise on the additional resources which have come to policing since 1997. Let me put some simple facts to you. This is not to say the challenges that you have got have not risen at an even greater rate. But first, there are, as I said earlier, 14,000 more uniformed police officers. They serve alongside 16,000 PCSOs but it is not the case we have had only PCSOs. We have had 14,000 police officers as well. I will come back to this in questioning but I believe that the combination of them and neighbourhood policing team, which now take up about ten per cent of officers, has been a welcome reversal of taking police officers off the street and is the beginnings of putting neighbourhood teams back into the communities and they are certainly very popular indeed with local communities.

**John Stapleton:** Home Secretary, at the risk of sounding rude, could I just remind you that you have a deadline and we have lots of questions? I am not wishing to be rude, I am just trying to play fair to everybody else. *[Applause]*

**Home Secretary:** Thank you, John, and if I was to conclude my speech without addressing the very points that have been raised by Jan, then no doubt you would be pointing out I have not answered the questions. So just allow me to answer those. *[Mild heckling]* If you would rather have me just answer questions, I am happy to do it but I thought you would want me to just say something about pay? Do you want to vote on it? I am quite happy to sit down now, but if you want me to continue, I will say something about pay. Would you rather I said something about pay?

Let me just jump over bureaucracy because I was going to say something about that. I will put it very briefly. I have issued how many targets to the police? Too many? How many is 'too many'? I have issued three targets to the police. Three. Do you want to know what they are? They are cutting crime – is the first one that I have issued; they are getting a higher proportion of crimes solved; and they are increasing the appreciation of the police among the public. That is the three targets I have issued. Now, there were, in addition to

that, 32 performance indicators. We have reduced them to 13 and I promised you at last year's Conference that I would halve them again and I can tell you, that process will start from next year, halving again. So in short, I have issued three targets. They do not include lifting people who are about to throw cucumber sandwiches, or who are about to share with someone's bus a cream bun. They are actually about cutting crime. They are about bringing more criminals to justice as a proportion and increasing the perception of the public who think the police are doing a good job. I think they are all quite important targets and I happen to work together with you but I do agree that in terms of bureaucracy, if we have performance indicators that are hitting a target but missing the point, that are taking you away from the job you are doing, tell us about them. That is why I have asked Ronnie Flanagan to carry out the review and we will get rid of them. We have started that process already.

Let me just say, on the question of pay, last year – I have an apology to make for you – I did not indicate early enough where we were positioned on pay. That is the first thing. Last year I was criticised for doing that and I apologise because we did not make clear our position early enough. This year, I have made our position absolutely clear very early and I am now being criticised for dictating to people. What I want is a genuine negotiation, but let me just make one point about last year's. Last year, I did accept the arbitration and the pay was paid to the police and it was done in the way the arbitration committee said it ought to be done, and it was not staged. Every subsequent pay award that was put out last year – I will stand corrected – was staged. So the police were, last year, given a settlement that you may not regard as much as it ought to have been, but it was done in a way that was different from the other ones. I am not complaining about that. I argued for that. I said that we ought to accept the arbitration in full and the arbitration was paid in full.

Now, this year, having apologised last year for the massive uncertainty caused by the official side failing to table specific proposals – that was unacceptable last year and I have apologised for that – but this year, I have made no secret of how tight the financial situation will be in the coming years. It will be very easy for me, going in several weeks' time, to come here and to make a cheap, popular gesture, knowing that it will be fulfilled by my successor. But it would be an insult to your integrity and to your intelligence for me to do that. It is going to be tighter all over the public sector than it has been in previous years. I have made no secret of that. I have explained it to the Chief Constables. I explain it to you. But let me make it clear. I am committed, as are the government, Jan, to genuine negotiations. We can only do this with genuine negotiations. We cannot do it by diktat. We have to make clear our starting point with you, because not to do it last year caused confusion and you said it was unacceptable and I have agreed with that. This year, I have made it as clear as I can that I do want to get genuine negotiations out of it.

I will, John, therefore conclude on that point. I will just say to you, improving protection, another thing you had asked for, I was going to say today, you believe there are circumstances where it is appropriate that TASERS should be used – not just when firearms are involved or being issued. I agree with you. Subject to the medical reports which we are awaiting, which will come in in the near future, I hope that by September of this year, we will put in plans so that the pilot schemes will be put out. I will conclude there in order that I can answer some questions before I go. Can I genuinely say to you, thank you? Whatever differences we have had – and it is in the nature of a Federation or trade union that you will have differences with employers – let me tell you that it has been a pleasure and an honour and a privilege to work with you in what is the highest priorities of the British people, that is giving personal, community and national protection. We could not do it without you. We will not do it without you. I hope we can do it together, not without differences and not without challenges but with a common purpose, which is serving the people of this country, which is what the police service has always done and I am absolutely certain will continue to do.

Thank you very much for your invite today. [*Applause*]

**John Stapleton:** Thank you, John. My apologies for rushing you but as you can see, they are clearly keen to ask questions and I am simply trying to keep everyone happy. Jan, a quick response to what Sir John said.

**Jan Berry:** I just want to make maybe three very quick points, starting with the point you finished with, which is around pay and PNB. PNB cannot redefine roles and functions within the police service which it is attempting to do. It has to be left to negotiate the rates of pay, so you have to allow maybe another body, which is why we suggest a Royal Commission or an independent inquiry, because you need to have that thorough review of policing to know what pay you are going to apply to it. At the moment, PNB's hands are being tied and the Home Office, on occasions, is being less than helpful in that body.

My second, very quick, point is: everybody in this room knows that we are facing new challenges. What we are not seeing is the solution to how we are going to deal with those challenges and we drastically need to sit down with a clean sheet and work out how we are going to do that. We need to make sure it is the right change, not just something that looks good and which will get good headlines for a short period while not working out so effectively in the end.

I welcome the comments you made about Stephen Oakes. I know how hard you have been trying to do that.

Finally, on officer numbers: you are right, we have more officers now than when you came into power. We went up to 142,500 but we are now coming down. We only have about 140,000 and, even at best guesstimates, we are looking at reducing by up to 25,000 over the next few years because the sums just do not add up. You cannot have all the things that you want – your PCSOs and your police officers – and unfortunately, one is being selected at the moment. If you go on to most of the web sites of the forces in this country, they are encouraging people to become PCSOs. They are not encouraging them to become police officers.

**John Stapleton:** Can we just hope some of those points will come up and you will respond to them? We have been waiting a long time.

**Brian Sheehan (Greater Manchester Police):** Three quick points, Home Secretary – they are kind of questions but I am not expecting you to answer them because you have not answered any as yet. [Applause] First of all, you are quite right to point out that we have got a raised terror threat. You omitted to mention that that might just have something to do with the unjust war your mob got us all involved in. [Applause]

Secondly, you are quite right to stress the value of PCSOs. What percentage of PCSOs form part of your own closed protection team, and the Prime Minister's? [Applause] Because if it is good enough for the public, surely it is good enough for you?

Thirdly – and this is the point I really want you to listen to – is it really a good idea to mess about with the pay and conditions of the people who are going to protect the nation from the mess you created? [Applause]

**Home Secretary:** I am not going to go through the history of international terrorism, Brian. Basically, I work on the basis that 2006 comes after 2005, comes after 2004. For your own interest, the first terrorist plot, which was a pretty big one here, that we – when I say 'we', including police officers – solved, was in Birmingham, before Iraq, before Afghanistan. The idea that the French, who last week foiled a plot, or the Canadians who lifted 17, 17 months ago, that somehow they have been involved in international terrorist attacks because they were involved in Iraq – you may not know this but they were absolutely opposed to Iraq – they are still suffering from it. So I am afraid the simplified equation that says, if we did not go into Iraq to remove a Fascist dictator, we would not have international Muslim terrorism is a very naïve and incorrect supposition –

**John Stapleton:** I think immediately of more concern to people is the ... [Applause]

**Home Secretary:** So I hope we continue to fight terrorism wherever it is, either here or abroad and let me tell you, if we do not fight it everywhere, it will come here anyway, that is I have refocused the Home Office. On the second question – I will miss out the second question. I do not know whether it was serious or just a personal jibe. I have no pride in the fact that I have got protection. It is not me who decides that. There are apparently a number of people who want to kill me. That is life. I have accepted that. All I would say about that is one of my protection officers made a comment of the bureaucracy the last time my threat level went up. Matt said to me, ‘Let me tell you, Secretary of State, if you go down, I’m going down with you. I couldn’t face the paperwork!’ [Laughter] [Applause]

**John Stapleton:** Right. Shall we go on to the pay? Why are you dabbling in it? That is his point.

**Home Secretary:** I am kind of caught between a rock and a hard place because, as Jan said, there are negotiations going on and those negotiations are going on by one side, which is not just me. It is partly my officials but it is also the local authorities and so on. I have made it as plain as I can that I want genuine negotiations but because last year I was told that we had upset everybody by delaying till the last minute before making our view known – and actually, I do not want to get into it here but one of the reasons we delayed is that I thought it was better in terms of placing us to get an outcome that we could then accept when I knew everybody else was going to be staged –

**John Stapleton:** But you did interfere?

**Home Secretary:** Not last year. We accepted the arbitration last year, but I waited so long before making our position known that we were heavily criticised. This year, I said, ‘Make our position known early and at the start. And then, once everybody knows our position we want genuine negotiations’. And that is as much as I can say. I want genuine negotiations but I cannot promise you – it would be easy for me to walk out in four weeks’ time having said it is all going to be fine – what I cannot promise you is that anybody in the public sector is going to be able to negotiate as though it is absolutely immaterial what the public sector pay bill is. It is not. Because if the public sector pay bill – I am not talking about you specifically – is not contained within a given limit – and we can argue about what that limit is, and Jan mentioned conflicting ideas about what it should be – inflation takes off. If inflation takes off, interest rates go up again. If interest rates go up to the 15 or 20 per cent, God forbid, that they were under the last government, it is your members who pay that in their mortgages, who pay that in inflation. So what we have got to make sure is that there are genuine negotiations but without me untruthfully telling you, ‘And the sky’s the limit in

this'. It is not. There will be an overall public sector amount which can be paid. Short of that, there will be genuine negotiations and I cannot go into the detail of that because they are under way at present.

**Ian Poynton (Kent):** Home Secretary, call it what you will – police reform or workforce modernisation – they can be translated as you wanting more for less, more meaningless tick box targets creating more wasteful bureaucracy, creating more worthless bean counters and, in return for this, it would appear, less pay, fewer police officers and less quality of service to the public. How many millions of pounds are wasted on collected and analysing meaningless figures that neither police officers nor the public believe, figures that are used solely by politicians to pat themselves on the back? Would that money not be better spent on providing front line police officers? [*Applause*]

**John Stapleton:** Before I bring you in to answer that directly, I want just to ask for Ken's views on that. You are a manager, a boss man in this regard. We have heard endless complaints about this issue for the last three days here. Why are you not doing more to satisfy or to respond to the sort of criticisms that have just been made?

**Ken Jones:** I have been in this job a year and from day 1, making the same points that you are making. I have to say, this Home Secretary has been listening about reduction of targets, bureaucracy, releasing some of the central strictures that are on us. But the machine is very slow and too slow to move. Believe me, though: things are changing. We are going to get a new framework in the next year and it will cut down the targets. It will cut down the collection of data. I have also argued for the concept of a foundation force, because I fundamentally believe if we release totally these controls, performance will fly anyway and the public will get much more out of policing than it does currently. We are pushing with you and we sit at the centre sharing much of the same agenda I have heard this morning, so believe me when I say that. There is going to be change and change is coming, but we have collectively got to make it happen.

Federation is a very powerful organisation but it would be much more powerful if we could somehow share these agendas. Pointing fingers at one another occasionally does not help. I have heard things this morning about chiefs. They do not come from Mars. They come from Federation members, believe it or not! I was in the Federation for nearly 24 years and I did not take this job on to see the office of constable diminish, to see police officers decimated. It is not going to happen on my watch but we have to work in the democracy that we are in. We make our arguments as powerful and persuasive as possible but we have to make them in a constructive, productive way.

A long answer to your question, but, Yes, things are changing –

**Jan Berry:** Can I interrupt there? We have more people counting out there than we have doing. To wait another year for another formal framework - *[Applause]*

**Ken Jones:** You are absolutely right –

**Jan Berry:** And to blame police officers for the state we are in is totally unacceptable. At the moment, the only thing we can do are things that you can count; you cannot value the things that you do not count. It is down to Chief Officers to start telling people - *[Speaking together]* *[Applause]*

**John Stapleton:** They get points for ticking off and reporting kids who are chalking pavements or throwing cream buns at each other. They do not get points at all for sitting with victims of violence, for consoling bereaved relatives and one has to ask, is this kind of target chasing a part of police work at all?

**Ken Jones:** No, it is not. Points around productivity are wrong. That is my personal view and that of most chief officers. There is someone waiting to ask a question here who I think would agree as well. But before we run away with the notion that your members, our cops, are not dealing with serious crime, we have 80,000 people locked up in prison. We have reached the capacity of our prisons. And they are serious offenders. I have looked at the categories of people who you are locking up and convicting. Despite all the pressures, therefore, you are tackling serious offences. We are seeing a reduction in serious crimes. There has been a reduction in most of the serious categories of crimes, so despite everything, we are getting on with it, but I do accept that at the periphery some things are being tackled in a bureaucratic way. We have to find a way of making those interventions and they need to be made efficient. I am doing everything I can. Accuse me of being incompetent perhaps but I am doing the best I can. I got into this job to do exactly that.

**John Stapleton:** Is this not all a waste of money, is effectively what he was saying.

**Home Secretary:** First of all, Ian was saying we are not putting resources in. Let us be quite straight. You have got a good case to make. Do not spoil it by exaggeration. It is not true there are fewer resources going into the police, say, than ten years ago. It was actually 77 per cent more going in, 39 per cent in real terms, out of an £11 billion budget it is about £4.8 billion more than it was a few years ago. That may not be enough, it may not be in the right place, but do not say there is fewer going in.

The second thing is – I give you this advice, it is up to you whether you take it or not – make your case robustly but do not caricature it. If you go around telling people the only

thing you are doing is lifting people with eggs and cream buns, the public might believe that. It is not true. The only statistic I used today – I gave you numbers but the only statistic was not for the glorification of politicians – I said, ‘Take credit for the 34 per cent reduction in crime’. ‘You have done that’, I said, ‘specifically’ – not me. I went out of my way to say it was not done by politicians sitting in Whitehall. So do not caricature that. There has been a 34 per cent reduction in crime. There has been a 34 per cent reduction in violent crime. Yes, there are new crimes coming on – mobile thefts, muggings and so on as we get new inventions – but let us get the balance right. There has been a fantastically successful attack on crime by the British police service. Take credit for that. Then say, ‘However, part of driving that, like any system, will have mistakes and faults in it’.

The welfare system in this country – we do not want to see children starving but we always knew people who misused the welfare system, people who will not work and take it. It does not mean the system is wrong. It means we have to root out the things that are wrong and if you are telling me we need to reduce the targets, to make sure that they do not interfere with good policing, I will do what I can to get rid of those elements that are spoiling the overall good picture.

**John Stapleton:** We have only ten minutes left so I am going to get a flavour of the feeling on the floor. So we will go around several of them, so that you go away from here with an idea of what these guys are feeling.

**Patrick Smythe (West Midlands):** I have a slightly different topic. You made mention that antisocial behaviour and violence were key targets for you. I must congratulate the government on an Act that was passed last year – the Violence Crime Reduction Act. However, chapters 1 to 3 have huge implications as tools for us to reduce antisocial behaviour, have not yet received a commencement order. Can you tell us when you will be giving a commencement order for Articles 1 to 3 of the VCR?

**Glen Smyth:** I am no relative to the previous speaker, that is definitely my name! First of all, it appears to us, certainly in the Metropolitan, that this government intends to cut police officers’ pay, their earnings in real terms, every year, perhaps for an unspecified period which could extend well into the future. This process is described as ‘pay modernisation’. Over many years, we have experience of where police pay has not kept pace with the market place and that has resulted in the police force becoming chronically understaffed. Not only was it understaffed, the public were seriously under protected, and that has never been more important, as you have recognised already. It seems to us,

however, that this government is hell-bent on recreating a state of affairs that has existed from time to time in the past and could be revisited upon us now. Can you, Home Secretary, please tell us at this Conference how you, or your Department – whoever is involved in this – managed to conjure the word ‘modernisation’ to describe what we only see as a plan to return the country to the dark ages of policing?

**Carol Pierce (Avon and Somerset Constabulary):** I am still waiting, Home Secretary, for your personal response to my question last year regarding the Home Office policy preventing the police from detaining those illegal immigrants who self present at police stations. You promised me a reply. Rather than detaining them, we have to ask them to make their own way to Croydon, undoubtedly never to be seen again. How do we know they are not terrorists, our next 7/7 bomber? No detention, no public safety, no national security and no discretion to work outside of your rules.

**Brian Sutton (Sussex):** Home Secretary, last year I praised your humour and in fact, many of us are sorry to see you go. We thought there would be an emerging battle between the Braveheart Scot and the Tight Fiscal Scot and we wanted to see that, but it has not developed either as we hoped or expected. By what process have we arrived where we are now on pay? If you go back to Edmund Davis, “Just their individual responsibility is more onerous than any delegated to or assumed by a member of any comparable profession or occupation”. Where you are now undermines the unique and special status of the police service. Even in your speech today you have referred to the public sector. The police service has a unique and special status, confirmed in the Royal Commission of 1662 and in Edmund Davis. Before you emerge on to the lifeboat from the *Titanic*, can you warn your successor and probably the future leader of the Labour party? I am in my thirtieth year. I joined early in 1978. The anger amongst my colleagues now at being undermined is as great as it was early in 1978 before this was published. [*Applause*]

**John Stapleton:** If you could respond to those?

**Home Secretary:** I will try to be as quick as I can. On the Articles 1 to 3, I think that is within six months – I am looking for advice over here. The easiest thing is to make up an answer for you but I am reluctant to do that, even as I am going, which might surprise you given the cynicism of politicians. If someone can pass me a note about that?

Let me look at this question of what we want with productivity. Again, the case is undermined when you exaggerate, with talk about the Dark Ages. There are three things you need if we are going to have better outcomes in policing. The first – and this assumes all other things being equal, reasonable numbers and so on – is surely new technology. To

talk about the Dark Ages when we are bringing in electronic fingerprinting, which reduces the time needed for fingerprinting considerably and, even in that, we are bringing in mobile devices that will allow you to take fingerprints on the scene rather than bringing things back and so on. New technology – airwave which is becoming available – is not moving us back to the old, Dark Ages. It is assisting people with the same number of human beings to get a bigger outcome. So that is what productivity is called.

The second thing is efficient ways of working and one of the things we are trying to do – and sometimes, if you will forgive me for saying it, we all like to have it both ways. The poor old PCSOs – not only do I read the website but it may amaze you to know I read the blogs, not that I hold it against anybody who writes in but I just assume they are police officers – and I know the controversy over the PCSOs but on the one hand, we are told by police officers, ‘You’re asking us to do all this rubbish stuff down there’. Well, actually that ‘rubbish stuff’ down there’ that you think you ought not to be doing, the public think has to be done. So we are trying to bring in civilians and PCSOs to do the sorts of thing that will free you up to do the more serious type. It may not be working but that is the idea behind it.

New productivity comes from new technology, it comes from new ways of working and thirdly – where we will all agree – from resources. I have already said that we are putting in more resources even this year, even with things getting tighter. How we actually work them out is a matter, so far as it can be allowed, not of central direction, because I am trying to reduce that, but of discussion between the local police chiefs and the local forces.

**John Stapleton:** That first person was talking about cut in pay, cut in earnings in real terms.

**Home Secretary:** There is no plan to cut pay in real terms. Can I be blunt with you? The last ten years has seen more resources going into policing and better pay settlements than any previous decade. You can check the facts on that. I am telling you honestly that those sort of increases in resources and in pay are going to get tougher and tighter across the whole of the public sector, because to do anything else would be an insult to your intelligence. But there is no plan to cut, in real terms, pay. Even this year, the resources going in are greater than the inflation rate. The key thing, however, is also to keep the inflation rate down, because that is what means that a big pay – if you were getting a five per cent pay rise 15 years ago, it was a two per cent cut, because inflation was sitting at seven per cent – and that is one of the problems, that you cannot see this just by the increase in the amount that you get in your wage packet. You have to compare it to the prevailing rate of inflation.

**John Stapleton:** What about illegal immigrants, John?

**Home Secretary:** I agree entirely. I am sorry, I do not know if there was a letter we are supposed to have replied to but if what you were wanting was action based on giving better enforcement powers to everyone, especially to the officials at the front line of board enforcement, that has been done. That has been incorporated in law. We have doubled the amount of money going into enforcement. We have not only put the immigration officers in uniform, we have also given them the powers of detention. That is going through at present, because the point you made about this big gap is absolutely right –

**Bill Riches (Metropolitan, Hackney Borough):** I will really be brief, Home Secretary. A question for you: if you really are so very deeply impressed with the service that we deliver, why have you seen fit to attack our pay structure?

**John Stapleton:** That is the same subject. I will get him to respond directly after the next gentleman.

**Mark Gale (Wiltshire):** You mentioned earlier that you have met many of our colleagues around the country and also, you have talked a lot of lies, damned lies and statistics. It is true to say that we did have an increase in officer numbers but what you have also done to us, and your government over the last year, is given us a massive increase in specialist departments – such as Child Protection Units, Vulnerable Adult Units, to name but two – which have actually taken more of our officers off the front line. Moreover, these departments used to be supportive departments, allegedly taking some of the work away from us. What they now do is cause us more work than they ...

*[tape turn – no overlap]*

... statistics. 140,000 sounds great but I can tell you now that I work with fewer officers than I used to many years ago. *[Applause]*

**John Stapleton:** Again, John, in the three days I have been here, that is a point that has been made in various forms time and again: the numbers may sound great, may be great, but they do not reflect the true picture on the ground.

**Home Secretary:** Look, with great respect to your colleague and mine, let us do a deal. I will not insult you, I do not think you are telling me lies, you are using statistics legitimately and yes, it is true. It is possible in this world both to have an increasing number yet a degree of specialisation within that. Not only is it possible, but it is the nature of the modern world that that happens. It happens in every one of the public services. And yes, the police are unique. So, incidentally, are the Armed Forces unique. All groups in the

public service have their own characteristics. I have never said that there is not an increase in the burden of the work that is being done. Indeed, if you listened to what I have said today and did me the courtesy of that, I said explicitly I understand that though there may have been a greater number, the demand may have been even greater than the increase in numbers.

So the statistics are usually useful, because they are the facts with which we have to conduct the dialogue, but it does not make it any easier if you portray the other side of the argument as just being deceitful, because it is not. There is a legitimate argument here. Changes are going to be required. Greater output is required from everyone in this country every year that passes. Jan will, no doubt, have a greater burden in her representative function as the years pass, Ken will have it, ministers have it, you will have it. It is the nature of modern life that we try to get a greater output, a greater increase in productivity with every year that passes. That means how we come together, the specialisms you mention. It means technology and it means resources.

I cannot promise you that that is not going to happen. It is going to happen and I fully understand that the role of the Federation, like any good representative body, is to maximise your input into that process. I have been committed all my life to do that, as it happens. I have been an active member of a trade union, so I understand the benefits of employers taking into account what people like the Federation say. What I cannot say is that you will get your way any more than I will always get my way.

**Simon Fuller (South Wales):** Home Secretary, I understand that apart from being a politician, you are a historian. I have a history book here. It is the 1966 Annual Report into Cardiff City Police. In 1966, there were 750 officers in Cardiff; their names are all in this book. Today, there are 700 – 50 fewer than there were 40 years ago. The population has increased by 38 per cent; crime has gone up by 73 per cent; and demand on police officers has gone up by 300 per cent. Your figures, I am afraid, Sir, do not add up. Thank you. [*Applause*]

**Home Secretary:** I am sorry to say that I have to repeat what I have just said. [*Heckling*] I would like to promise you that you can have an increasing number of police officers doing what was done previously. That is not the nature of the world. People are being asked to do more. What you did not mention was whether the 700 officers now are giving a far higher output in terms of reduction in crime to the public than they were 40 years ago and I will bet you (a) that they are and (b) that you should take credit for it, in just the same way that public services and private industry are now achieving a far bigger and better

output with the same number of people. That is the definition of increasing productivity and it is happening right across the country and I cannot promise you that the only exception to that will not be the police service. What I do promise you is that the best way to achieve that increase in productivity is to put in more resources, to equip you with the technology that makes your job more efficient and better and to work with you in negotiating the form of efficient relationships which give you better outcome for the same number of people.

**John Stapleton:** Let's try to find some different areas where you do not have to repeat yourself.

**Des Keene (Metropolitan):** Thank you for your help here this morning in treating us to an exhibition of the art of the filibuster but truthfully, would you accept that, since we are a unique body with a unique service and a unique role in society, perhaps our pay ought to be paid to another unique body, and if you would give us a link to MPs' pay and conditions and pensions, we will go with you. [*Prolonged applause*]

**Home Secretary:** Let me just explain, since you have asked me about my pension. I do not know when you started earning your pension. I started earning it when I was 41 years of age. I had no pension until I was 41. I do not expect you to applaud that but I just put that into perspective because I had spent the first 23 years doing jobs that did not provide me with a pension, including working for a political party, I accept that. All I say is that we are not going to solve this problem by trading personal insults. The best way is to work together to negotiate so that we get a reasonable outcome.

**Brian Finn (?No 1 Region, Treasurer of the National Federation Office):** You believe in fact. Here is a fact for you. We have lost 572 members as of 31 December, and that number is going down. So I do not know who is giving you figures in the Home Office, Sir, but numbers are going down and, as a colleague said earlier, in 2008/2009, with the seventies blip coming up, you are going to lose more. So what you are saying is not taking in what everybody here is telling you. We are going back to the Dark Ages of the seventies on numbers and recruiting and retention. If something is not done the situation is not going to be very good when we are fighting terrorism.

**John Stapleton:** I do not want to keep banging on about numbers although it does keep coming back and it obviously concerns people, but coupled with that was the implicit threat from Jan in her speech earlier that if this situation is not improved, they are considering or may well consider something they have never done before, which is strike action. I do not think it is sabre rattling. How concerned are you by it?

**Home Secretary:** This decision that the Fed has to make, I agree with Jan that it would be a tragic course to take. I do not think the public would understand it but the only way to solve these things is through negotiation round a table. That is all I can say on that. I have done all I can to secure resources. My predecessors have secured for the police service resources that are far higher than any other decade previously. It is true that the numbers have fallen by several hundred in the recent year but it is absolutely true that on the ten years of this government, there are 14,000 more police numbers and we have a record number –

**John Stapleton:** Let's get away from numbers if we can.

**Home Secretary:** [*Passes information about Articles 1 to 3 to Patrick Smythe*]

**Neil Marsh (South Yorkshire):** Mr Reid, I know that it will come as no surprise to you that the immigration policy in this country is not working but I want to tell you about a disturbing aspect of it that is affecting some of our most vulnerable citizens. In South Yorkshire we have large numbers of Iraqi Kurd men claiming political asylum. These men after often single, aged between 18 and 30. About 20 of these men in Sheffield and a smaller number in Doncaster are part of a paedophile ring. They prey upon young and vulnerable girls, grooming them at ten, 11 and 12 years of age. They target girls who, in a lot of cases, have a troubled upbringing. They have often been missing from home, from single parent families, with other, younger siblings and parents who for different reasons find it difficult to cope. The men buy them gifts, give them drugs and alcohol. The girls then find themselves in situations where they are subject to very serious sexual abuse. The men pass the girls on to associates in different towns round the country. In one case, a girl of 14 was placed in secure accommodation to prevent her being continually sexually abused by these people. The girls are encouraged by the men to introduce friends or younger sisters to them. The girls are used until they get older, then the men lend them money and, when the girls cannot pay the money back, they force them into prostitution.

**John Stapleton:** Neil, this is very disturbing. It is shocking, dramatic stuff, but there are other people. What is the question and what is the point?

**Neil Marsh:** The question – and what I was going to go on to say – is that in the end, there are a lot of these people claiming political asylum, saying that to go back to Iraq or Kurdistan they will be subject to torture or inhuman treatment. These same people go back home on holidays. That cannot be right. They come to our country claiming to be in fear of their life if they go back, then go back on holidays. That must be stopped. They

cannot be allowed to float in and out of the country, backwards and forwards, when they are committing these sorts of crimes.

**Home Secretary:** You probably know that I have a great deal of sympathy for what you say. One of my frustrations and Home Secretary has been putting cases up to the courts where I thought that in some way the country was being endangered and being told that I just cannot deport people. I have to abide by the law as everyone else does and I am not allowed to criticise specific cases as long as I am Home Secretary, but I think you will have seen some of my views on this. On the operational side, I am utterly convinced and the last year has convinced me more than ever, is that one of the key technological changes we need to all of this, whether it is countering terrorism, fighting crime and fraud or managing immigration – people coming in and out, checking criminal records – is biometric ID management. That is why, from next year, all foreigners who come here will have to have an ID card. Their visas, by the end of this year, from 100 of the 200 countries of the world will have to have a fingerprint on them, so that we can check that. We know who is here, we can track them in and out. I am absolutely committed to ID cards and I cannot for the life of me understand why anybody should be opposed to it but there is a great deal of opposition to it. I have great sympathy with what you say, Neil –

**Andy White (West Mercia):** Last year you commented on the fact that I look like my dad and I commented back to you that you look like him too and it is his birthday tomorrow, not today. What I wanted to say is that I do not think that you or the people who work with you have gauged the feeling of about 140,000 officers. When you mess around with our pay and our conditions as you are doing, there has been a multitude of ideas that we have circulated around Federations as to how we can combat that or deal with it. One of the comments made was that we should all walk up the Mall and go and speak to the Queen, who is our employer. We are Crown servants. I do not think we ought to be doing this but if you do not gauge the feeling of all the people here, we might resort to that. We are not the lapdogs of you or of any members of your Home Office. We are here to serve the public.

**John Stapleton:** All right, we will take that thought with us. Jan is going to report. Thank you very much, everyone. I think in fairness, John has covered that ground in other answers and I know he has to get away and he has extended his deadline quite significantly for us.

**Jan Berry:** I want to join in wishing Andy's dad a Happy Birthday for tomorrow! But I think, Home Secretary, you will have felt the frustration in this hall and you have known from discussions with me and John over the last 12 months that we have felt

pretty frustrated about where we are. You are absolutely right and we are absolutely right that robust debate is indeed good and it is important you understand the frustrations, but the solutions to this are about us working together in the future. We have to be involved. This is ACPO, the Superintendents Association, the Association of Police Authorities, and government. We have to work together to ensure that the police service that we are so proud of in this country is not destroyed. I know that is your wish but sometimes, the people who are delivering it are the last people who are involved in that discussion and you need to assure these people here that (a), there will be the discussions and that (b), you will not play politics with their pay.

**Home Secretary:** I am not sure that I know what you mean by playing politics with pay, since I have never known anybody to get involved in pay negotiations who comes out of it well, from the employer point of view. I can assure you that as far as I am concerned, there are two things. The first is that my own belief, in any organisation, is that if you want to know how to make something more efficient, you would be well advised to talk at some length to people who have to do the job on the ground floor. I have always believed that. If you feel that has not happened we need to find ways of doing that in a way that does not overrule the chain of command of chief police officers, because if I start getting involved in undermining the rights of chief police officers, I – or any Home Secretary – then would be accused of intervening in a politically incorrect fashion.

The second thing is that I genuinely do hope that there are genuine negotiations over this. I am trying to get a balance here between those who say that everything is a disaster and those who say that we have got it right. I do not think we have got it right. I think if you are going to sustain any great productivity revolution or change, you can start by giving out directives from the centre but they soon become self defeating. You have to find a way of sustaining it by making it local, by making it in people's own interest to do this in the right way. I hope we can find that way of doing it. I hope also, finally – thank you very much for the person who said that he is sad I am going. I am sure he speaks for everyone in the hall. And can I wish happy birthday to you dad as well – that this is conducted in a robust but a sensible fashion. I genuinely think – you take this as you see fit but I am probably not going to be here – that you are not going to get the best for your own cause if you go down some of the roads that I read about on your blogs – and I genuinely do read them so I know how strongly people feel about that.

Finally, can I just say a word to you about Jan? You are well served. You have a fantastic representative. She is a straight talker. She is pretty tough lady. It has not always been comfortable in our discussions, Jan, but I have always found you straight and

honourable and honest and I wish you well in the future and I wish all of you well as well, thank you. [*Applause*]

**Jan Berry:** Can I just thank the Home Secretary for coming here today? It has not been easy for him but I think he has felt what police officers on the ground feel. Thanks also to Ken Jones. But my last thanks: John Stapleton, as I announced at conference yesterday, is going to be leaving us at lunch time today and we thank you, John, for your assistance in helping us through several discussions yesterday and this morning. I hope everything goes well. [*Applause*]

Conference is adjourned until twenty to two.

[*Break*]