

# View from the chair

PC Yvonne Fletcher was gunned down in cold-blood outside the Libyan embassy. Paul McKeever asks why her killer is still free



Paul McKeever, chairman of the Police Federation

They say actions speak louder than words and there is no harsher action than taking the life of another. Nothing stuns the nation into such a chilled silence than a cold-blooded killing. The murder of police constable Yvonne Fletcher outside the Libyan embassy in 1984 was one of the most shocking in police history.

Twenty-five years on, Yvonne's killer still walks free. Why I ask? Is it because we are at the mercy of a government whose loyalty seems to lie with Libya?

I was shocked and appalled by the recent revelations in the press that the government knowingly agreed for UK police officers to train Libyan police to our world renowned standards. This shameful news coincided with revelations earlier in the week by the *Sunday Times* that the Libyan killer of PC Yvonne Fletcher will never be brought to justice in Britain following a deal struck by the government three years ago.

No words can even begin to explain away such deplorable actions, but on behalf of the 140,000 police officers I represent throughout England and Wales, I made clear my disgust in a letter to Gordon Brown.

Whilst I appreciate that this deal was secured under the watch of the previous Prime Minister and that it will take more than a strongly-worded letter to instil some

moral fibre in a government who values trade over life, police officers throughout this country need to know that the dangers they face are understood by the government of the day and that, if tragedy strikes, political leaders will do everything in their power to ensure that justice is served.

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Last year, the decision was made that David Bieber will now not serve a whole life sentence for the murder of PC Ian Broadhurst demonstrating yet again, the rights of a police killer outweigh the rights of a fallen officer's family, friends and colleagues. A smack in the face for the ultimate sacrifice these dedicated officers gave in protecting the public.

The timing of recent events is made even more poignant as last month was the sixth National Police Memorial Day. I joined a congregation of over 1,000 at St David's Hall in Cardiff to mark the occasion - a national tribute to police officers who have died or have been killed whilst on duty. We have lost too many and the pain of each and every loss is ever present. Indeed, some government officials joined me to pay homage to those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

I urge the government to look at their priorities, and to try and restore the serious loss of confidence police have recently experienced. I look forward to hearing what actions will be taken to bring Yvonne's killer to justice in the UK. This one way traffic with Libya, where we do all the giving and they just take, must stop.