



## **DON'T EVER THINK YOU'VE CRACKED IT!**

**Date:** November 25, 2021

*Disclaimer: This briefing note contains the encapsulation of views presented by the speaker and does not exclusively represent the views of the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies.*

### **KEY EVENTS**

On November 25, 2021, Mr. Ian Hopkins, former Chief Constable of the Greater Manchester Police, presented *Don't Ever Think You've Cracked It!* at the 2021 CASIS West Coast Security Conference. The presentation was followed by a question and answer period with questions from the audience and CASIS Vancouver executives. The main discussion topics included effective training and debriefing, diversity and inclusion, politicization, and personal resilience.

### **NATURE OF DISCUSSION**

#### **Presentation**

Mr. Hopkins' presentation focused on some of the aspects that need to be improved to future proof policing, including police well-being, debriefs and training, diversity and inclusion, and politicization within policing. How to build personal resilience and the importance of it in future proofing policing and were also discussed.

#### **Question Period**

During the question and answer period, Mr. Hopkins discussed the role of future proofing policing in improving diversity and inclusion in the criminal justice system, police workforce, and the broader community. Mr. Hopkins also explored the increasingly digital nature of terror threats and the challenges they bring for law enforcement, as well as the interoperability between legislators, policymakers, and law enforcement.

## BACKGROUND

### Presentation

Mr. Hopkins began by reflecting on some of the policing challenges he faced during his career, including the Manchester Arena attack on May 22nd, 2017. Mr. Hopkins noted that in such circumstances of human loss, it is imperative for police officials to humanize by focusing on the victims, not the murderer. Policing such events can be traumatic; therefore, the police's well-being should be supported through routine welfare provisions and make these provisions a part of police proceedings to better serve the public. For future proofing policing to work, clear expectations for the first 30 minutes of a terrorist attack are crucial. This would involve effective coordination with other emergency services, setting up a Rendezvous Point, and getting an initial scene assessment.

Mr. Hopkins noted that debriefs always pose significant challenges as they move into public inquiries. In his view, setting up an independent task force that conducts debriefs, supported by academia, could materialize the lessons in ways that are objective and operationalizable. Mr. Hopkins also pointed out that police actions and statements when dealing with major incidents are highly scrutinized even many years after the event, and he suggested that involving a legal team as early as possible is the best course of action. A legal team can help to ensure that documentation and assessment of evidence is done correctly.

When training for major attacks, it is challenging to recreate the pressure and dynamics from real terrorist incidents. In these situations, commanders need to make split second decisions. Mr. Hopkins noted that sportspeople train regularly with sports psychologists to be prepared for the psychological pressure that comes with performing in front of thousands of people. Similarly, he said, it would be ideal for police training to include psychologists to help train commanders to perform better when they are under immense pressure.

Mr. Hopkins then focused on the subject of inclusion and stated that diversity and inclusion are important principles because they uphold legitimacy to policing. If police services do not commit to these principles, other public agencies might not be willing to share intelligence or other necessary forms of support. These principles also pertain to the fulfillment of the police's moral commitment as community leaders, particularly given the powers that they hold over their fellow citizens. Operationalizing these values would involve getting all personnel at the same starting line for roles and promotions, engaging with communities, making sure that policies are fair and equitable, and being

proactive to call out the policies that are not. Lastly, the police must aim to assure the majority of personnel that a diversity and inclusion agenda is not disadvantageous to them. It is part of the police's role to explain and make sure everyone understands why and what the police services seek to pursue.

Further, there needs to be a deeper understanding of how police's remarkable powers might disproportionately impact marginalized communities. To further his point, Mr. Hopkins referenced Mr. David Lammy's speech at Western University in 2020, during which Mr. Lammy identified education and health as the main drivers of inequality in the criminal justice system. While Mr. Hopkin agreed, he addressed other factors that also play a role. For instance, he noted that in 2017 and 2018, 89% of all United Kingdom children in detention centres have been excluded from school. Among the 9 youth offending services that Her Majesty's Inspectorates have studied, 60% of the boys that were subject to court orders were also excluded from education, which led to a huge impact on their life chances afterwards. In particular, he said, Black and multiracial boys were overrepresented in the custodial cohorts. In one of the youth justice services, every child in custody was found to be Black or multiracial. The intersectionality between race and health inequalities was also found. The Mental Health Foundations found that the risk of psychosis in Black Caribbean communities was approximately 7 times higher than in the White community. Detention rates under the Mental Health Act in 2017 and 2018 were four times higher for Black people than for White people. In Mr. Hopkin's view, there is a disproportionate amount of focus on the police's interventions rather than the fundamental issues that lead to those interventions. While Mr. Hopkins did not suggest it is an either-or problem, he recommended that to future proof policing, the focus should be on the interventions and the structural factors that lead to those interventions, as well as improving the police's relationship with minority communities.

Part of policing involves working effectively with the authorities in housing, health, and other arrays of governance in society. However, Mr. Hopkins indicated that the role of Chief Constable remains silent to these relationships. Additionally, politics in policing pertain to influence and securing resources, and in the United Kingdom, the policing protocol sets Chief Constables accountable to a single individual in one political party instead of across the political divide. As a result, politicians hold a certain level of power over the Chief Constable, which can then create a power imbalance in the policing sector as a whole. Mr. Hopkins argued that in order to effectively build capabilities, the relationship between police chiefs and politicians needs to be rebalanced so that there is a

checks and balances system. Otherwise, a talent drain will persist from the top, which is the opposite to future proofing policing.

Mr. Hopkins stated that personal resilience is a very important element of future proofing policing because without resilience, leaders will not be mentally or physically fit to take on the most demanding leadership roles. Mr. Hopkins reflected on some of the things he has found helpful on building personal resilience. Generally, personal resilience is about having a positive outlook in life and at work and being persistent even when people say one cannot do things. Mr. Hopkins noted that understanding one's vision and values is very important because that becomes the touchstone that puts things into perspective in times of immense pressure. It is also important to keep in mind that there will be times when one is criticized publicly, but one should not take things personally. Having a trustworthy team can provide feedback and keep one grounded but having a support system—family and community—outside of that team is also important. Finally, taking time out for oneself helps to bring one back to their vision and values.

Mr. Hopkins concluded by emphasizing that learning through experience and practicing resilience will equip leaders with the necessary skills to lead effectively. It is not about the length of time one has been doing something, but about the personal drive to implement the lessons learned.

### **Question Period**

In the question and answer period, Mr. Hopkins touched upon the importance of reducing barriers while enhancing diversity and inclusion. It is necessary to understand that many individuals that come from minority communities do not consider policing as a career choice. The overrepresentation of these communities in the criminal justice system, can prevent them from making the choice to join. Mr. Hopkins argued that a more personal police engagement with these communities—speaking to them in their place alongside their peers and families—could be a good approach. Further, future proofing policing should account for the possibility of workplace microaggressions that could place minority communities further at a disadvantage. As such, empowerment and change must come from both, within the workforce and outside in the wider community.

Mr. Hopkins also addressed the terror threats that are increasingly taking place online and noted that the levels of encryption are disadvantageous for law enforcement to act in meaningful ways. Mr. Hopkins suggested that the

government should, therefore, consider allocating some powers to law enforcement agencies so that they can adequately prevent and counteract these security threats. This, however, would evoke the contention between individual privacy and public safety.

The discussion then progressed into the topic of interoperability between legislators, policymakers, and law enforcement, and its function for withholding the social contract. The diversity of jurisdictions, operations, and modes of threats have required a consensus surrounding the mission of future proofing policing. While in some jurisdictions policing is the last resort, in others, they serve as the first mode of response. Additionally, the modes of security threats and the police's response to them have changed over time. In the past decades, there has been a prevalent notion of physical criminality, and increasing police presence has been conceived to be the common counter-threat strategy. Recently, new threats have emerged in the private space—within private homes or in the cyberspace. In response, it is crucial to establish the mission for future proofing policing to reconcile with the complex conundrum of privacy, security, and policing.

Lastly, Mr. Hopkins addressed the importance of communicating with youth and stated that there needs to be a consensus on the mission of policing that is centred on community needs. Giving youth and other marginalized communities the confidence to communicate with police is important in shaping policing into what our society needs moving forward.

## KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

### Presentation

- Upon reflection of the Manchester Arena attack, humanization, police well-being, and effective training and debriefing are crucial aspects for future proofing policing.
- Diversity and inclusion are two very important principles because they uphold legitimacy to policing.
- To future proof policing, focus should be not only on police interventions but also on the fundamental issues that lead to those interventions.
- In order to effectively build capabilities, the relationship between police chiefs and politicians needs to be rebalanced so that there is a checks and balances system.
- Personal resilience can help police officials to cope with the physical and mental pressures they face and help them fulfill their roles as future

community leaders.

### **Question Period**

- The criminal justice system is overrepresented by minority communities, hampering the communities' confidence in the police and their choice to join the police force.
- Given the increasingly sophisticated security threats that occur online, the government should consider giving some powers to law enforcement agencies so that they can adequately counteract those security threats.
- For interoperability between legislators, policymakers, and law enforcement to be effective, it is crucial to build consensus surrounding the mission of policing that all actors in society can support and understand.
- Giving youth and marginalized communities the confidence to communicate their needs to the police is important in shaping policing into what society needs moving forward.



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