

## **PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH: 24 JANUARY 2011**

### **WHY CRIME PREVENTION DESERVES BETTER TREATMENT THAN WE HAVE BEEN GIVING IT!**

Fellow delegates, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to deliver this presidential speech at your conference. I am calling the title of my speech "why crime prevention deserves a better treatment than we have been giving it".

What I will seek to do in the next 30 minutes or so is to set a scene that shows why, in my opinion, the work all of us shall try to do today and over the next two days is critical for the future of civil society in the Asia-Pacific region, and thus the rest of the world. I make no excuses for putting this emphasis on our work because to provide a model for the rest of the world to follow it will need to be truly ground-breaking.

Some of you may be shocked that I state these things so explicitly and thereby put such a high priority on them. But I hope I shall explain that if we consider the problems we are trying to solve today, and then think about the obstacles we have to overcome to be effective now but also appreciate the pressures that are being placed to find suitable solutions over the next 40 years or so, I think you may come to appreciate one of the significant problems we are confronting. There are very serious implications for Crime Prevention in it all, I think.

In this speech I will firstly discuss some of the elements of crime prevention that seem important to me today and why I believe a civil society must work hard to try and solve the ongoing gaps between the fortunate and the unfortunate in our future societal mix. In the second part of the speech I will be looking at population and the demographic trends that will shape our future world over the next 40 years. I am clearly targeting the year 2050 as a benchmark against which we should shape future outcomes. Finally I hope to draw together my findings in these two areas to show you why our discussions over the next three days cannot be trivial and must have a clear-sighted view of the importance of our work in our communities today, and over the next four decades.

In whatever way I approach this question of crime prevention I am always driven to a decision that there are two main components of the problems that we need to think

about. On the one hand, and I don't think there would be very much argument against the idea, we need to understand how deprivation and the disparities that occur inside our societies create a situation which fosters criminal activity in our young, particularly dispossessed people, leading potentially to their leading lives of crime. While I know there are many people, with good hearts, working with others to try and alleviate this kind of problem I do say this does not seem to be enough. Moreover, it nearly always saddens my heart to hear of yet another program being supported by our federal or state governments in an intention to do good, and yet the announcement is nearly always framed in terms of dollars allocated for a particular "get well" program. Surely, it is time we stopped dealing in dollars and started to think in terms of dealing in people to people arrangements in our national psyche.

The second part of our focus on crime prevention would be on how we can reduce the certainty that any offender would re-offend once released from a correctional institution into mainstream society. Though I am not an expert I have been given to believe that even in Australia the percentage of re-offenders who find themselves back in correctional institutions is alarmingly high, and this outcome is of course very expensive to maintain both for the state, and the victims of crime. I am told that this picture looks even worse when we dissect the data by social and ethnic groupings.

So, what of the future? So let us cast our minds out and look to the next 10 years, or maybe 20 years, or even 40 years to 2050. Just four decades between now and 2050 and I suggest to you that much is going to change to make the world very different from what we see today. Whenever I indulge in such gazing towards the future I'm always reminded to take a step back, and to think about a similar passage of time in history. Our 40 years back takes us to the year 1970. 1970 does not seem that long ago in my mind. Much has changed. In 1970 who could have forecast in the intrusive nature of the Internet and web technologies in all our worlds, and as we bandy these terms around what cloud computing would mean and how we should grapple with its impact in our workplaces and our lives. Internet networking has undoubtedly provided all of us with opportunities in a connected world to make serious advances for the betterment of our society. Conversely the Internet has opened up a whole new spectrum of security issues and the very real possibility of

criminal activity on the Internet that will threaten the very underpinnings of our security.

In 1970, who would have conceived the nature and the dramatic consequences of mass flows of people escaping from war and famine to seek the betterment of their miserable lives in other countries, putting pressure on our basic perceptions of human rights and religious tolerance as we try to deal firstly with the problems they themselves present to our societies and secondly the criminals who seek to exploit their predicament to line their own pockets.

And while we are discussing the 1970s with relevance in today's world I would just remind you all that this year is the 10th anniversary of the 9/11, attacks. For this reason security concerns ought to have a prominent place in our thinking about Crime Prevention as we go forward.

Dealing in uncertainty and strategic ambiguity is our business in the military but it is difficult work because we are often wrong about the future. But, it is high time that a wider community started to take an interest in it, too. It is a task we must all undertake!

So let me be a little provocative on some possible futures...How will our world look if some of these eventualities occur:

The world fails to get to grips with dealing with the significant problems being thrust at us by the impact of technological change such as Climate Change. If one accepts the predictions of a former President of the Royal Society Lord Rees there is a 50 percent chance that human beings will not exist on this planet around 2100. His book, "Our Final Century" (2003) is serious food for thought. This is a time when my grand daughter ought to be 90 years old! This view is supported by Jared Diamond in his book "Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed (2004) which expounds on why over-population, globalization and endemic societal problems that prevent effective sustainment solutions can spell the end of the world as we know it.

China becomes the world's leader by 2050, followed closely by India, and maybe Brazil. If you want a good read on this topic I recommend Martin Jacques "When China Rules the World - The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World"(2009). It may make us get our heads-out-of-the-sand on the impact of this possibility and how we would have to rethink the assumptions that underpin our world.

Bearing in mind the present world population of some 6.8 billion people how will a world of 9.5 billion people, of whom 80 percent will live in cities and megacities, manage all the complexities of living closely together in relative harmony, and guaranteeing energy, food security, and safety for every one of us?

There will be an extraordinary level of racial mixing by 2050 as well - it is already underway - and it will not be possible to be able to rely on a simple look at someone to work out much about them thus making simple law enforcement and security management more complicated than now.

In the world after the internet, labelled the digisphere by a colleague of mine, what will technologies bring for us? Just look back at our own experience of the changes that have taken place in our lifetime...

With a world population of 6.7 billion people in 2008 we consumed 30 billion barrels of oil. Yet in 2050, with a population of about 10 billion people some experts predict that we shall have only 2 billion barrels of oil to distribute amongst us all. Do we think that energy security and the potential for energy crime will not get a great deal of attention in that time? Will we fight each other over the extremely limited availability of oil? Or water? Or food?

Apart from population increases the world demographic also undergoes a significant shift by 2050. According to UN estimates, one third of all the people on the globe will live in India and China. In China, as I speak to you, civil authorities are building five new cities for thirty million people each but how many more new cities of this size will China need? In Pakistan, by 2050 there will be four times the present population making this one of the most densely populated countries in earth.

I think it is likely that we will likely see a shift away from the conventional state-on-state conflict scenarios more towards General Rupert Smith's "war amongst the people", as we grapple with problems of physical security. This is not to suggest that old fashioned war will entirely disappear but that dealing with internal security problems will be the constant focus of our thinking.

Just think of the security pressures generated by the stresses created by higher density living and the greater sense of disadvantage that will motivate many of our under-privileged to turn to crime are going to give us a serious head ache.

And, though my list is not complete, how will the world look after the first nuclear exchange? Will this become a time when we can have a fundamental rethink of how the international system needs to work? Given that last year we carried out a review of the NPT I am still reminded of Robert McNamara's words on this topic when he said that the possession by states of nuclear weapons will one day lead inevitably to an exchange.

So, in the aftermath of two very major cataclysms on the past 10 years, i.e. 911 and the Global Financial Crisis, I do believe that our leaders do have a great deal to do to resolve these, and similar wicked problems.

In Crime Prevention we have a distinctive network. We are into risk thinking, and we like to head off problems before they occur because we know what the consequence may look like if we do not. Yet we struggle to get the traction we deserve.

I would argue that policy makers and decision makers face a tough set of choices in today's world and the future. Most of the challenging problems we confront are very wicked indeed and they will demand leaders who are prepared to challenge the fundamental assumptions that have underpinned our security, and who are determined to wrestle with appropriate solutions until they have set us on new courses that will give us a quantum of security that not so long ago we used to take for granted.

Even as we entered the new millennium ten years ago I doubt that any of us would have predicted the major calamities that have befallen us such as 911 and all of its consequences, and the global financial crisis. And wearing my risk policy hat I would also observe that the fundamentals that underpinned both these crises do not appear to have changed that much - and that ought to be a serious worry.

So now let me turn to dealing in what I call the "unthinkables" in the security business and hopefully entice you to consider whether or not we, as leaders, are doing sufficient to turn possible problems into opportunities.

My first tilt is at the question of what do we mean by national security? At present what I see is a whole plethora of activities taking place under the national security rubric but I sometimes wonder if we have truly thought through what we are setting about to do. For example, I was astonished as I suppose some of you were to learn of the claim by the Washington Post that over one million people were engaged in national security work in the United States as a direct consequence of growth in this new industry in the post 911 world. This aggregate sum included people working in contracted firms as well as government agencies. But I cannot help but wonder who is tripping over whom in the process.

Defence, of course also plays an important part in national security, as does Crime Prevention. But our mandate has the flexibility to enable growth into all sorts of areas of concern and if we are not careful this growth in taskings can undermine the very reason for our existence in the name of convenience. While I would never argue that the provision of basic security is very much part of our work I do have trouble extending that brief into taking on almost every problem we can see, yet that is where current trends and risk assessments are leading us.

Security as a concept concerns us all, and everybody has a role to play in delivering security to each other. Whereas many of our people have seen even the basic level of their own security diminish over time it is still surprising to me that we do not engage more fully in making the public more engaged in the process of its delivery. Steps that I think can be taken include comprehensive education at all levels in our

society, and training. While I think that some countries do somewhat better at this kind of work than we do in Australia I still assert that we are not doing enough.

A second area for my concern is about whether we are doing enough to put in place measures for dealing with all the population and demographic pressures we will face over the next 40 years.

I am sure that I do not need to remind anyone on this audience that by conservative estimates world population will reach about 9.5 billion in 2050, that is, about one third more people on the planet than we have now. Every one of these additional people will be consumers of the earth's resources just as we do now as well as potential criminals and victims of crime. But, of course, if we are having trouble solving the problems of climate change and just beginning to think about energy and food security problems then how will we go when the pressures and stresses are even greater?

Truly I believe that many of the freedoms my generation enjoyed all have to be given up in the years to come when a new generation of leaders is grappling with solutions to such problems. I am sure we will eventually see an era of collaborative decision making at national levels, rather than the competitive world we live in right now if we are to succeed.

Finally I want to wind up by referring to an excellent report from the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC) issued last year in which the connections between events, outcomes, and crime was highlighted quite emphatically and, I believe, could lay a good foundation for where we need to go during our discussions. I commend this Report to your reading.

In the President's message I noticed the following words that have resonance for us:

"Across the world, the striving for safe families, safe communities, safe societies and safe countries continues, in circumstances as different as the symptoms of unsafety that bedevil policy makers and ordinary citizens alike...three important themes are

covered in the Report; organized crime, trends in migration and drug and alcohol abuse. Sadly these themes link many communities reflecting the links between oppression and poverty, depression and substance abuse. (The) Report shifts our thinking towards action in the mitigation of problems that extend beyond the daily experience of crime and violence and into issues of quality of life; the way in which individuals and communities are targeted by power hungry and greedy others.”

"The Report moves on to interrogate the governance of security. „Security” is understood in different parts of the world to mean different things; for well-resourced communities, security is often about the ability to protect against known risks, the application of technology and manpower against criminal intent. In this instance, security is used to encompass “safety”; the prevention, reduction or removal of these risks for an environment in which ordinary citizens live and move free of fear. (We) apply a safety lens to working towards safe communities, understanding the mandates of the social sector, health, education, sports, arts, and culture in terms of their potential contribution to safety and makes the link to training and capacity building beyond the security sector."

Barbara Holtmann

Fellow delegates, I truly believe that in those words the mantle has been laid on our shoulders to make the Crime Prevention agenda everybody's business within our region in the years that lie ahead.