

Executive Summaries

2004 Canada Meeting Summary

ELEVENTH INTERNATIONAL POLICE EXECUTIVE SYMPOSIUM

CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada, May 16-20, 2004

Submitted by

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The Eleventh International Police Executive Symposium was held at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Pacific Training Center in Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada from May 16 through May 20, 2004, hosted and sponsored by University College of the Fraser Valley, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Abbotsford Police Department, the Vancouver Police, and the Justice Institute of British Columbia. The theme of the symposium was "Criminal Exploitation of Women and Children." In addition to the sessions held at the Training Center, a study tour included visits to the Pacific Institution and Regional Health Center, Matsqui Penitentiary, the campus of Fraser Valley Institution, and the Justice Institute of British Columbia. At the Justice Institute, the participants were welcomed by President Jack McGee and viewed presentations of the Minerva/Hydra: Critical Incident Simulations and the Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System. The Local Organizing Committee was chaired by Dr. Darryl Plecas, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University College of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford Campus, and included Dean Yvon Dandurand, University College of the Fraser Valley, Chief Ian Mackenzie, Abbotsford Police Department, Deputy Chief Paul Tinsley, Abbotsford Police Department, Chief Superintendent Dick Bent, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Inspector Axel Hovbrender, Vancouver Police Department, Mark LaLonde, Program Director, Law Enforcement and Regulatory Training

Programs, Police Academy, Justice Institute of British Columbia, and Vivienne Chin, Program Coordinator, International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy. The Symposium Organizer and Program Coordinator was Dr. Dilip Das, Professor, Plattsburgh State University of New York, Founder/President, International Police Executive Symposium.

During the symposium, police practitioners, government officials, academics and researchers from 43 countries, from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and South America, made presentations at the sessions and took part in formal and informal discussions in a variety of settings. Accommodations for the participants were provided at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pacific Regional Training Centre in Chilliwack. At a reception in the Johnny Mac Lounge of the Training Center, symposium participants were welcomed by Judge Steven Point of Skowkale First Nation, Beverley A Busson, Deputy Commissioner, Pacific Region, RCMP, Mayor Clint Hames, City of Chilliwack, and Mayor Mary Reeves, city of Abbotsford. The opening ceremony featured a color guard made up of officers from the Abbotsford Police Department, the Vancouver Police Department, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and speeches by Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli, RCMP, the Honorable Rich Coleman, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, British Columbia, Dr. H.A. Bassford, President of University College of the Frazier Valley, and Dr. Dilip K. Das, President of the International Police Executive Symposium. The participants gathered for meals at the Training Center and enjoyed a dinner cruise in Vancouver, hosted by the Vancouver Police Department and the Abbotsford Police Department. Evening entertainment included a music and dance presentation by Spindle Whorl First Nations Dancers and a “pub night,” featuring the Piper Down band. A guided tour of Vancouver was part of the day study trip.

Several themes emerged from the papers and oral presentations given by the speakers, and from the subsequent discussions among the 100 participants. These included:

Development of mechanisms to reduce and eliminate the physical and sexual abuse of women and children is a very complex problem.

This type of victimization involves many crime areas, including organized crime, drug trafficking and abuse, violation of immigration laws, extortion, trafficking in human beings and various forms of violent crime.

The solutions will require short-term and long-range strategies.

The actual amount of crime related to the victimization of women and children occurring in each country is unknown, but it is believed to far exceed the official statistics.

Conditions and Circumstances that Contribute To Victimization of Women and Children

Although all of the speakers at the symposium reported that problems of criminal exploitation of women and children occurred in their countries, the scope and nature of the problems differed and were directly related to the characteristics of the various countries or specific circumstances that increased the problems. These included:

Economic conditions (poverty, unemployment),

Cultural traditions,

Catastrophic events (war, famine, floods),

Government tolerance for the violation of human rights and exploitation of women and children,

Corruption within the government or the police,

Lack of resources to combat the criminal organizations involved in these victimizations,

Acceptance of victimization and a fatalistic view of the future,

Discrimination against minorities and lower socio-economic groups,

Government and police administrative policies that tended to give these problems a low priority and offered few resources or options for victim assistance,

Lack of communication and cooperation among government agencies, the police, and social agencies for developing strategies to assist these victims,

The existence of sophisticated criminal networks that use technological tools to avoid detection,

Weak legislation that made prosecution and conviction of the victimizers very difficult, or legislation with adequate provisions for prosecution that was not enforced,

Lack of cooperation from victims caused by fear of the police, distrust of the justice system, fear of being arrested and prosecuted, fear of retaliation from their victimizers or other persons involved in illegal activity related to the victimization, economic dependence of the victims' families upon the proceeds of the illegal activity, or a fatalistic attitude that nothing will be done to change their lives.

Policies and Strategies Used to Combat Victimization of Women and Children

Existing policies and strategies or future actions recommended by the speakers

were closely related to the specific forms of victimization that were the most troublesome in their own countries. These responses to the problem can be categorized in terms of

those that were set up to address a specific internal problem and those that were

designed to combat problems that were seen as international or even global in scope.

The approaches can also be categorized as short-term programs that address immediate concerns, such as providing assistance to those victimized, and long-term responses that may require the passage of new legislation, development of international agreements and multi-agency cooperation, or programming that addresses the root causes of the victimization of women and children within a particular nation.

For both the short-term and the long-term solutions, all of the speakers agreed that the operational response had to be multi-agency and that it should include government and non-government agencies. They reported that experience has shown that the role of non-government organizations cannot be overemphasized. These organizations can provide assistance to the victims in situations where the government appears unconcerned, and, through pressure groups, they can be instrumental in the drafting and enactment of new legislation or the development of new policies within government and law enforcement agencies.

For more effective short-term responses, it was recommended that the police become more focused on the criminals perpetrating the victimization and less focused on the criminal activity of those who are victimized, which might involve prostitution, illegal immigration, or involvement in violations of child labor laws. The speakers reported that cooperation of citizens, the police, the judiciary, health agencies, and labor regulatory agencies gradually leads to increases in the willingness of those who are victimized to cooperate with the police and provided valuable information that can lead to the arrest and prosecution of kingpins within the crime organizations. The development and utilization of modern, sophisticated technological equipment, coupled with the use of highly trained practitioners, as demonstrated by the programs at the Justice Institute of British Columbia, enhance the likelihood of apprehension and prosecution of perpetrators of various types of victimization offenses.

Several speakers referred to the “push-pull” explanations for the criminal exploitation of children (both male and female) and adults. The “push” factors that lead to victimization include lack of opportunities, economic deprivation, a desire to escape political upheaval, family breakups, or even wishes to avoid a similar life of victimization in their present surroundings. The “pull” factors included a desire for material goods, promise of a better life, avoidance of a menial work position, promises of marriage and security, or entrapment by organized crime. Long-term solutions are beyond the scope of police agencies. For some countries, it may take several generations before economic and political stability reach the point where all citizens are provided a reasonable standard of living. Until this occurs, the problems will continue.

The specific crime problems experienced by each country and the mechanisms used to address the problems are related to the country’s role in the exploitation process. In “push” countries, the authorities must be aware that undesirable economic and social conditions may enhance the opportunities for victimization and induce the victims to cooperate with their victimizers in the initial

stages of the victimization process. Programs in these countries must focus on improving the quality of life and educating citizens regarding the methods used to entrap women and children into lives of servitude. Countries on the transit routes for trafficking of victims being transported to their final victimization destinations face a different set of problems. These countries must give special attention to border controls and enforcement of legislation designed to target organized crime. In the countries that are the targeted locations for victimization, the law enforcement must concentrate on enforcing existing laws or develop new policies to curtail the actual criminal activity (child pornography, prostitution, violations of child

labor laws, smuggling, violence against women and children).

Legislation and International Agreements

Speakers from all of the countries represented at the symposium reported that the problem of criminal victimization of women and children has been addressed through enactment of new legislation and cooperative agreements with other countries. The effectiveness of this legislation is highly dependent on several factors. These include:

The will of the government and the police to enforce the legislation,

The resources available, and

Appropriate training of the police on how to enforce the new legislation through police policies and strategies.

Long-term strategies must be based on sound intelligence and demonstration of some understanding of the causes of crimes against women and children. Many speakers emphasized the importance of having research data and theory to guide legislation changes and the implementation of crime prevention policies. It is here that academics and police practitioners have a common ground for cooperative ventures. Other speakers suggested that police priorities and the deployment of resources must be

changed and that existing legislation designed to eliminate discrimination against women and children and promote their interests must be enforced.

Exploitation of Children in the Workplace

The criminal exploitation of children in the workplace is of special significance, since most countries of the world, regardless of their economic status, are directly involved in this activity. Billion dollar industries that contract with suppliers of child labor to produce goods in sweatshop conditions are just as involved as those responsible

for recruiting the children, bribing public officials to ignore what is going on, and forcing them to work in substandard conditions. Multi-faceted international agreements involving a variety of governmental agencies are needed to halt this activity. The mass media and academic researchers can play important roles in bringing this matter to public attention.

International Police Executive Symposia: An Important Vehicle for Cooperation and Information Dissemination

At the close of the Eleventh International Police Executive Symposium, it seems appropriate to reflect on the ways in which the subject matter of each meeting has complemented and expanded the information gained from previous symposia. In Spain, we explored the problems of policing in developing democratic societies; in Japan, ways to combat organized crime were examined; in Poland, it was concluded that corruption in government and within the justice system reduces the effectiveness of crime prevention efforts; in the Netherlands and later in Bahrain, it was demonstrated that a pro-active crime prevention police strategy, coupled with community policing, could lead to the type of community-police cooperation required for effective law enforcement. In India, the most effective ways to deal with public order crimes were explored, and in Austria the development of international and global agreements to combat crime was discussed. The special International Police Executive Symposium meeting held in German focused on the utilization of research in police practice. The executive summaries of these meetings, the special issues of *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal* developed from these meetings, and the edited books that were published or are currently being prepared using papers from these meetings have helped to build a substantial knowledge base on the many facets of policing that is invaluable to police practitioners and academic researchers. The information made available at the 11th International Police Executive Symposium will be an important addition to this base and should prove very useful to those are committed to understanding and addressing the problem of criminal victimization of women and children.

The Twelfth Annual Meeting of the International Police Executive Symposium will be held from September 5 to 9, 2005 in Prague, hosted by the Police Academy of the Czech Republic. The theme of this meeting will be, "Challenges of Policing in the 21st Century: A Global Assessment." For additional information on the Twelfth International Police Executive Symposium or on other upcoming IPES meetings, contact Dr. Dilip K. Das, Department of Sociology/Criminal Justice, Plattsburgh State University of New York, 101 Broad Street, Plattsburgh, NY 12901, USA. Telephone: 518-564-3045; 518-564-2550 or 518-564-2551; fax 518-564-3333 or 518-564-2555; e mail: didipkd@aol.com