

Executive Summaries

2003 Bahrain Meeting Summary

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

Understanding the unique role of community policing, in order to improve and maintain the program in the future. This undertaking is a complex challenge, with unique hurdles to cross by the international community. These hurdles can be political, social, or due to global events.

This style of policing requires specific government and police structure to flourish. A knowledge of factors that make up individual communities is critical.

Success will require implementing long term goals and a coordinated effort.

Preparing community policing tactics

All of the Speakers at the Annual Meeting supported the concept of community policing. However, there were several ideas as to the factors that affect the implementation and successful maintenance of such programs. These views are based on situations pertaining to specific countries and their own unique situations which included the following:

Differences internationally in governmental/police structures, as they pertain to police departments being able to have a decentralized form of policing. This decentralized structure has been found to be conducive to community policing.

Authoritarian versus democratic governments as they pertain to the effectiveness of community policing implementation.

The cultural diversity of a community as it relates to building bonds, problem solving skills, and inter-agency cooperation in areas that are stressed by ethnic tensions.

The geographic location of communities to other communities and the effects of isolated communities on community oriented policing implementation.

Community policing and public perception

The public perception of the community policing is fluid and subject to change. The community policing style as a direct factor in the reduction of crime is debated. However, the interaction of officers within the community bolstered a positive image of the police within the community. This positive image is the product of joint cooperation between citizens and police to prevent actual crime, and the fear it causes, on a local level, for specific geographic locations.

Police partnerships and participation within the community.

In strengthening ties with the community, the police are now reducing factors that separate them from the citizens. However, in working more closely with the community, the police allow easier access to public criticism. This is not considered as negative because as familiarization between citizens and police increases, it produces an increase in trust, and in the collection of needed information from citizens. Speakers at the Annual Meeting discussed several specific techniques used to enhance public confidence and cooperation which included the following: National surveys, public gatherings, use of the media, and public information boxes etc. etc. where people can drop questions and comments that the police read and address.

Police relations within multi-ethnic cultures

The speakers at the Bahrain Meeting stressed the relevance of reporting criminal victimization to the police. Although criminal victimization is indeed all encompassing and includes all segments of society worldwide, the attention was focused on immigrant women. The problems related with the different characteristics of police agencies which can ensure that women suffering victimization are being helped. To achieve this police agencies need to become culturally sensitive in their training and their daily dealings. Some examples that help to better understand these thoughts are as follows:

The priorities and concerns of the U.S. as a nation to work with victims of domestic violence,

Classifications used by police officers for refinement (degree of bodily damage, multiple violations of the victim by suspect, number of times suspect was on location, valid cases of narcotics and alcohol violations, whether the offender worked in the community or not, whether the victim was or was not pregnant at the time of incident, the type of locations within the community, the number of children that resided in the home, confrontations over control issues with children, and any grouping of these factors),

Creating ideas that help to build trust between the community and the police to eliminate the fear factors involved with specific safety measures,

The risk of increasing corruption among immigrant societies,

The role of the police (how do they handle crime prevention within a specific community),

Victimization reports (why some cases are filed with the police and others are not),

Problems assisting victims within the criminal justice system,

Police need to work harder to strengthen bonds between themselves and the public.

Factors that weaken relations between police and citizens

The speakers at the Bahrain Meeting spoke about factors that limit the potential for successful community policing. The details were specific to each country represented and their individual circumstances and included the following:

Public pressure for the police to “crack down” on crime, this may include “zero tolerance” laws,

Political instability, as well as polarization, within the country or region, the consequences of which may include the following: mass demonstrations, clashes, bombings, and assassinations,

Factors that affect the quality of the police officer, and his ability to complete his tasks including the following: education, pay, working conditions, training, job prestige, and chance of promotion,

Corruption within government or police administration,

Haphazard or inconsistent application of existing laws within the community by Police,

Sudden rises in, or threats of, vigilantism by members of the community.

Reforms to strengthen relations between police and citizens

On the other side of the spectrum are the factors and reforms that have been enacted for the purpose of strengthening relations between the police and citizens, the goal of which is to help prevent growing crime rates. A wide area of topics were being dealt with and they varied from country to country. They deal with public security reform, penal reform, and community policing programs. Within these categories are the following:

Re-organizing police forces,

Re-tooling existing hierarchies,

Decentralization,

New disciplinary bodies,

Improved technology,

Increasing police-citizen communication,

Decreasing police abuse and corruption,

Strengthening defendant rights,

Improving trial procedures,

Strengthening the abilities of prosecutors,

Increasing the cooperation between judges, prosecutors, and public defenders,

Instituting Neighborhood patrols,

Introducing Street watch groups,

Creating Neighborhood councils,

Initiating Education programs, and,

Building Security councils made up of citizens, politicians, and members of the police.

Police accountability to the community

The speakers at the 10th Annual Meeting represented many countries from around the World. The countries represented have different political, economic, and policing systems and challenges. Even countries that have similar modes of policing and have similarity in political as well as economic situations find that policing styles in regard to working as partners with the public are in different stages of development or evolution. However, there is a common theme of concern among the speakers that is not limited to but does include police accountability. While different countries use different ways to determine if police are being accountable and following the rules, a common thread of agreement is found in regard to one concept within the presentations. That is that the police should always be to accountable to the public.

The post 9-11 environment

Every country in the world has found itself affected by terrorism. Specifically, the events within the U.S. on September 11, 2001, and subsequent terrorist acts, are currently having an affect on policing around the world. The potential impact to law enforcement, especially community policing, is the global outcry for heightened security. This demand, whether, fear based or factually based, has brought the community policing style back into competition with older styles of policing which are more paramilitaristic in nature. However, it may be discovered that the police-citizen partnership mentality of community policing will have positive results in communities, internationally, that are stressed by factors related to terrorism.

Maintaining the continuance and expansion of knowledge

The concept of community policing is a reflection of current actions and policies being implemented by countries around the world to improve public-police relations, and have an impact on crime. Community policing, as many styles before it, shows the current progression of long hours of research in many fields of study. For many years, different countries despite their economic and political situations, have analyzed the policing data in the hopes of better understanding, and improving policing. From this endeavor, which is truly international, the following things have occurred:

The increase in criminal justice related academic institutions,

The increase in criminal justice related research, and,

The increase and expansion in training courses.

Citizens as reserve police

The idea of using citizens as police reserves has been a concept for many years. Today's reserve police are unpaid volunteers from the community having different levels of authority, depending on the area

and region in which they serve. Reserves are given training and are most often used with standard police for the following duties:

Crime prevention

Maintaining crowd control,

Assisting with the patrol of business districts,

Protecting environmental resources,

Directing traffic.

The advantage of police reserves are that they are economically efficient to a police department, and also that they are comprised of members of the community. These reserves have intimate citizen connection and knowledge of the community.

Conclusions

The Government of Bahrain, particularly the progressive Minister of the Interior, Shaikh Mohamed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa and his public-spirited, high-ranking deputies provided superb hospitality and the most congenial environment for the representatives of fifty-five nations from all continents of the world to discuss for five days the issues relating to police and the community in their lovely and scenic country. The theme of the meeting was extremely appropriate for Bahrain as the nation has embarked upon a program of democratization in a dynamic manner with genuine participation of citizens and particularly that of women in the government of the country. The Bahrain Meeting of the IPES was a demonstration of the fact that the leaders of the police as well as the government in that country appreciate the police

to be an extremely important vehicle for carrying the message of democratization to the people through their actions, behavior, and cooperation. The international speakers consisting of police elites and top ranking scholars of many different countries emphasized that the best public relations for the police in Bahrain as well as anywhere in the world is they must serve their public with professionalism and a tireless spirit of service.