

Towards Equity and Efficiency in Policing Federation of Canadian Municipalities

June 2, 2008

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today on this very important issue. This discussion is long overdue. Police have been involved in these types of discussions for many years now and I believe the time is right to bring this discussion to a broader audience.

As all of you are aware, policing in Canada and elsewhere changed after 9/11. This was the beginning of discussions regarding policing by government and the police themselves. National Security became the hot topic throughout the country and elsewhere. In 2002 the Commissioner of the RCMP spoke to Interpol regarding integrated policing and our need to work together. In 2003 there were several reports regarding police spending as well the MacInnis Report on Governance and Capacity.

Focus came to this subject in 2004 when the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police brought a resolution concerning police governance to the floor of their 2004 Annual General Meeting. They called on all orders of government to join together with police and governance associations in a public policy discussion on policing in the 21st century.

The intent was to define the roles and responsibilities of each order of government and establish the governance structure to support police agencies and their bodies in operating within Canada's multi-level policing environment. This resolution stemmed from ongoing discussions around the concept of integrated policing and the impact of international crime and terrorism on national, provincial and local policing.

In 2005 a report known as the Plecus Report from British Columbia outlined the increasing complexities of policing. The report discussed the impact of case law and its effect on police performance in the field. Many examples were cited indicating that cases 30 years ago that would take 30 to 45 minutes to process now took 4 to 5 hours. The report also discussed the impact of technology on policing in this modern society.

Also in 2005, a second CACP resolution was approved by their membership calling for an Integrated Policing Policy Framework. More specifically, the CACP called on the federal and provincial governments to pursue studies and analysis on the costs and operational and strategic implications of the current policing arrangements within Canada; confirm roles and responsibilities of each order of government as it related to public safety issues; meet with the municipal governments to establish a policy framework to support police agencies in operating within Canada's multi-jurisdictional policing environment and to define integrated policing.

Also in 2005 the FPT called for a definition of integrated policing.

In 2006 a report released by Sussex Circle revealed that even within policing itself, no one agency or group quite defined integrated policing in the same way. Then in May 2006 the FPT stated that this discussion was not a pressing concern.

Today police are still struggling to define what policing should look like in today's world. Police are trying to determine how they should operate without having clearly defined roles and responsibilities, while at the same time trying to cope with the many demands from their communities with an ever challenging financial environment.

I believe all of you would agree that access to adequate policing is a universal right and expectation for all Canadians. Further, the nature of policing in Canada today is predominately local with local demands and expectations. But we in policing have realized for some time now that modern policing requires extra-jurisdictional response capability. We have come to realize that we need interagency cooperation working seamlessly regardless of jurisdictional issues but this is not as simple as it seems.

Without government discussion and direction, police find themselves trying to invent models that will work for them. As well, they become involved in areas of policing that in many cases are the responsibility of other levels of government. Municipal policing agencies have historically beared the brunt of public policy changes and/or mandates. The oldest example of course was the introduction of the Narcotic Control Act. Over the years as the RCMP changed their mandates or were unable to meet their mandates alone, local policing has filled the gap.

In recent years local police have become involved in major organized crime investigations, interprovincial and international Internet crime, VIP security, commercial crime and national security investigations. To carry out these types of investigations, significant investment into training and specialized equipment have become the topic of discussion at police budget debates.

Halifax Regional Municipality is no exception. In the late 1990's, ports policing was abolished. After many discussions, Halifax Regional Police assumed policing for the port of Halifax. Though we were compensated through an arrangement with the local port authority for basic policing patrol functions, the local detachment needs as a result of investigations required support well beyond the cost recovery of the contracts.

After 9/11, local policing become involved in the establishment and training of response units for chemical, biological, radiation and nuclear complaints with little federal support. Neither the RCMP nor the Military could meet the demand for this type of response. You all can recall the many complaints regarding suspicious packages that occurred throughout our country.

Officers were seconded to national security investigative units and remain there today.

Through the CACP, local police were asked to participate in discussions surrounding national security investigations. It was recognized that municipal, provincial and federal law enforcement all play a critical and complementary role in national security from community engagement to prevention, detection, interdiction, crises management, consequence management and criminal investigations.

These discussions affirmed that we needed to leverage the skills, knowledge and resources of the entire law enforcement and security community to meet the evolving threat environment. It was also realized that standardized operational guidelines had to be put in place. Further, guidelines had to be developed surrounding the sharing of information which had to be adhered to by all law enforcement agencies. Should police and security agencies be developing these rules without government input?

Then you review the Security Offences Act and you find that the responsibility for these investigations lie clearly with the RCMP. Should there be roles in these investigations for provincial and municipal police? To date, government is silent on this discussion. So police are making the rules and developing the protocol. But should they?

As we speak, my department still participates in integrated units that are involved in investigations that span provincial and federal jurisdictions. I could discuss these types of non- traditional roles for local policing all day but I think you get the point.

Since we have been discussing integrated policing I would like to ask you, "What is it?" Is it just police agreeing to work together or is it more complicated than that?

For the purpose of this discussion, how do you get federal and municipal police agencies to work seamlessly together? Is it efficient, effective and/or economical when there is no clear set of rules that we can all agree upon or are mandated by government. In policing today we continue to talk about shared responsibilities as they relate to crime no matter what responsibility center is articulated within policy, jurisdiction or the law itself.

That is because police cannot address the many policing and security demands alone. But there are barriers in place that make these efforts very hard to manage and exhausting to deal with. I would ask you to think about operating within your work areas with dual standards, policies and employers with different mandates and visions, different governance models, security expectations, different tools such as computer systems, phones, weapons, communications systems and no one clearly in charge. Think about going to work everyday and having to negotiate your every decision with one agency reporting to a local authority and the other reporting provincially or federally.

Without a clear mandate and framework these types of endeavors are nearly impossible. The time spent trying to make some of these integrated units work would be better spent just doing the job. But governments continue to be silent regarding these issues. Are some of these units efficient, effective or economical? The simple answer is no. Do they get the job done? In most cases success happens in spite of the complexity.

Within HRM we police in an integrated fashion. Because of this we have been able to establish joint investigative units, a single CAD/RMS system and we have developed a single response to criminal investigations throughout our regional municipality. But we cannot find a way to get our forensic units, Emergency Response Teams, ICE teams and other specialty units to work together because of conflicting policies and standards. Some examples are;

Both the RCMP and Halifax Regional Police capture information and store same in an HRM owned records management system. But if you reside within HRM and want to access your information there are two processes. If the RCMP records your information you apply for same to Ottawa. If HRP records your information you apply locally.

There are two standards for security clearances. The federal standard and the HRM standard. The federal standard does not recognize the municipal standard. We recently moved into a new policing building which had to be wired twice to meet the different security standards.

The same issues apply to training standards. We recently trained an integrated traffic team to operate our police motorcycles for traffic duties. The HRP officers were then assigned to duties. The RCMP officers, however, were not permitted to patrol until a training team from British Columbia traveled to Halifax to retrain the RCMP members to meet their protocols.

I am not criticizing the RCMP. This discussion is more complicated and larger than that.

A recent decision regarding federal storage of personal information has prevented the RCMP from sharing their informants' criminal information with other police agencies within Canada through the use of the national criminal intelligence data base known as ACIIS which is managed by the RCMP. The effects of this decision may complicate criminal investigation for years to come.

As stated in your paper, there is a need for an intergovernmental response to policing. Issues such as these have to be resolved and shouldn't happen in the first place.

Roles and responsibilities have to be clarified for the safety and security of our citizens.

Municipalities are struggling to meet the needs of their communities. I spend a great deal of my working time with my fellow directors discussing budgets and how we are going to meet expectations and budget shortfalls.

Pot holes, snow clearing, recreation, aging infrastructure, fire, policing, EMO, technology, water, libraries, and on and on. How do you make the money meet the many needs and demands? In my case, report after report discusses the crime challenges in Halifax. But there is no unlimited pot of money to respond. Hard decisions are made every budget year and as a result Chiefs of Police like myself have to make tough decisions. Can we continue to be everything to everybody? The simple answer is no. We do what we can. Federal financial support would go a long way towards the efforts in making our communities safer.

In closing, I also support your call for an intergovernmental discussion regarding policing roles and responsibilities. You cannot leave policing up to the goodwill of police agencies. Goodwill is not good enough. It will not be efficient, effective or economical. Police need structure, good governance and clear direction. Community and governments have a responsibility to provide this.

It is time for government leadership and I believe our federal government is well positioned to lead these discussions.

Thank you.
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