

ASPS CONFERENCE SPEECH 2015

CABINET SECRETARY, CHIEF CONSTABLE, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS...COLLEAGUES.

IT HAS BEEN A GREAT HONOUR TO BE PRESIDENT OF THIS ASSOCIATION FOR THE PAST YEAR AND TO STAND HERE TO DELIVER THE PRESIDENTS SPEECH TO CONFERENCE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

THIS IS, OF COURSE, MERELY ONE OF A SERIES OF FIRSTS AT THIS CONFERENCE. WE ARE PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO HAVE MICHAEL MATHIESON, THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE, WITH US AT OUR CONFERENCE FOR THE FIRST TIME AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING HIS RESPONSE TO MY SPEECH. CABINET SECRETARY YOU ARE MOST WELCOME HERE.

THIS MORNING THE CHIEF CONSTABLE, SIR STEPHEN HOUSE, OPENED OUR CONFERENCE AND HE HAS REMAINED WITH US THIS AFTERNOON. IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO US THAT THE CHIEF CONSTABLE IS PRESENT AT OUR CONFERENCE AND WE ARE DELIGHTED THAT HE COULD FREE THIS AMOUNT OF TIME FROM HIS BUSY SCHEDULE TO BE WITH US. THANK YOU CHIEF CONSTABLE.

IT WOULD BE REMISS OF ME NOT TO MENTION OUR FRATERNAL DELEGATES FROM OUR SISTER ASSOCIATIONS IN ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND – THE MAINTAINENCE OF CONTACT WITH YOU IS OF THE UPMOST IMPORTANCE TO US.

SIMILARLY, WE WELCOME THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SCOTTISH POLICE FEDERATION. I HOPE YOU ALL HAVE FOUND THE CONTENT TO BE BOTH THOUGHT PROVOKING AND RELEVANT.

I MUST ALSO THANK OUR ARRAY OF TALENTED SPEAKERS AT THIS EVENT. I BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE PUT TOGETHER AN EXCELLENT PROGRAMME FOR THIS CONFERENCE WITH EXCEPTIONALLY QUALIFIED SPEAKERS AND FOR THIS VICE PRESIDENT MARTIN FOTHERINGHAM AND HIS CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE TAKE GREAT CREDIT.

FINALLY, A SPECIAL WORD OF WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS AND SPONSORS WITHOUT WHOM WE WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY ORGANISING THIS EVENT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.

ONE NOTABLE FIRST FOR ASPS AT THIS CONFERENCE IS THE FACT THAT IT HAS TAKEN PLACE HERE AT THE SCOTTISH POLICE COLLEGE, TULLIALLAN CASTLE. I MUST CONFESS WHEN THIS WAS FIRST PROPOSED AS A VENUE I WAS SOMEWHAT SCEPTICAL BUT IT HAS PROVEN TO BE AN IDEAL LOCATION AND WE NEED TO THANK THE STAFF HERE AT THE COLLEGE FOR ALL THEIR EFFORTS TO ASSIST US THIS PAST COUPLE OF DAYS.

THIS IS A PLACE THAT HOLDS SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR POLICE OFFICERS IN THIS COUNTRY. IT IS UNIQUE THAT WE ALL GATHER HERE AS PROBATIONERS FROM THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE COUNTRY AND TAKE OUR FIRST STEPS TOGETHER INTO THE WORLD OF POLICING, A CAREER THAT BRINGS WITH IT SO MANY CHALLENGES AND SUCH RICH REWARD.

WE ARE ALL BOUND TOGETHER HERE INTO THE DISCIPLINE AND ETHOS, THE VALUES AND INTEGRITY OF OUR SERVICE AND IT IS ONLY RIGHT AND PROPER THAT THE SCOTTISH POLICE COLLEGE SHOULD REMAIN DEAR TO US. IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN OF SCOTTISH POLICING – AN ASSET WE SHOULD CHERISH.

WE MUST ENSURE THAT IT SURVIVES THE BUDGETARY PRESSURES AND CHANGING TIMES IN WHICH WE CURRENTLY OPERATE.

ASPS HAS LONG HELD THE VIEW THAT THE SERVICE UNDERUTILISES THIS FACILITY. WE BELIEVE THAT IT COULD BE A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR POLICE TRAINING WHICH OFFERS COURSES TO COLLEAGUES THROUGHOUT EUROPE AND BEYOND - THUS MAINTAINING THE REPUTATION AND ETHOS OF THE POLICE SERVICE OF SCOTLAND – WHICH IS ALREADY WELL ESTABLISHED AROUND THE GLOBE.

IN SAYING THAT WE MUST ALSO MONITOR DEVELOPMENTS IN POLICING ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE AND BEYOND. THE IDENTIFICATION OF BEST PRACTICE HAS NEVER BEEN MORE VITAL.

FOR THESE ARE UNIQUE TIMES FOR POLICING. LAST WEEK I ATTENDED THE POLICE FEDERATION CONFERENCE IN ENGLAND AND WALES AND EXPERIENCED FIRST HAND THE SENSE OF FRUSTRATION AND CONCERN FOR THE SERVICE THAT IS BEING EXPRESSED SOUTH OF THE BORDER.

FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL PRESSURE BEING EXERTED THERE BY A GOVERNMENT THAT HAS APPEARED TO CONFRONT RATHER THAN SUPPORT POLICING HAS BROUGHT ABOUT MAJOR CHANGE, NOT ALL FOR THE GOOD. CHIEF CONSTABLES FACED WITH A MASSIVE BUDGET REDUCTION HAVE REDUCED NUMBERS DRAMATICALLY AND SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC, THE VULNERABLE IN OUR SOCIETY, HAS BEEN REDUCED.

AS A VERY INTERESTED OBSERVER, I SUPPORT OUR COLLEAGUES IN ENGLAND AND WALES AND EXPRESS GREAT SYMPATHY IN THE MANNER IN WHICH THEIR SERVICE HAS BEEN DISMANTLED. BUT I ALSO WONDER HOW THE 43 FORCE MODEL CAN BE MAINTAINED IN THE FACE OF THESE FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS. IT WAS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT MEMBERS OF THE POLICE FEDERATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES CALLED LAST WEEK FOR THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL FORCE TO ADDRESS ALL THEIR AILMENTS.

OF COURSE, WE CAN SPEAK ABOUT SUCH THINGS WITH SOME CREDIBILITY AS WE HAVE NOW ENTERED THE THIRD YEAR OF THE POLICE SERVICE OF SCOTLAND. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THAT BODY HAVING BEEN A MAJOR FLAGSHIP POLICY OF OUR ASSOCIATION FOR MANY YEARS.

WHILST MANY MAY HAVE BEEN AGAINST THE CREATION OF A SINGLE POLICE FORCE IN SCOTLAND, THE RECENT CRITICISM LEVELLED AT THE SERVICE FROM CERTAIN COMMENTATORS AND CERTAIN POLITICIANS HAS BEEN QUITE UNFAIR AND OFTEN UNJUSTIFIED.

I MUST CONFESS THAT I FOR ONE DID NOT FORESEE THE SINGLE SERVICE BECOMING QUITE SUCH A POLITICAL FOOTBALL - PERHAPS WE SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT COMING.

BUT IT IS NOW APPARENT THAT OPPOSITION PARTIES AND CERTAIN POLITICALLY MINDED JOURNALISTS VIEW AN ATTACK ON THE SERVICE AS AN ATTACK ON THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF. THUS FREEDOM OF INFORMATION 'FISHING EXERCISES' ARE NOW WHAT PASSES FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN SCOTLAND WITH THE RESULTS OFTEN BEING PRINTED ALONG WITH AN OPPOSITION 'RENT-A-QUOTE' WITHOUT ANY ANALYSIS OR PROPER RESEARCH HAVING TAKEN PLACE.

ADDED TO THAT IS THE PERSONAL NATURE OF SOME OF THIS HYSTERIA.

OVER THE COURSE OF THE WINTER AND EARLY PART OF THE SPRING OUR CHIEF CONSTABLE TOOK A BARRAGE OF PERSONAL CRITICISM – EVEN HIS RECEIPT OF A NATIONALLY REGULATED AND AGREED ALLOWANCE WAS ATTACKED AND LABELLED AS A PERK.

LET ME BE QUITE CLEAR....OUR ASSOCIATION FINDS THIS STYLE OF JOURNALISM TO BE WHOLLY UNACCEPTABLE AND, AT TIMES, WE HAVE BEEN THE LONE VOICE PREPARED TO CHALLENGE THE PRINT MEDIA IN THIS RESPECT. WE WILL CONTINUE TO OFFER SIR STEPHEN SUCH SUPPORT.

IT IS DISAPPOINTING THAT OUR CRITICS HAVE FOCUSED ON THE NEGATIVE AND HAVE NOT TRIED TO ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE. BECAUSE THE POLICE SERVICE OF SCOTLAND HAS ACHIEVED MUCH AND WE SHOULD BE RIGHTFULLY PROUD OF THESE ACHIEVEMENTS.

WE KNOW THAT VIOLENT CRIME HAS BEEN REDUCED IN SCOTLAND AND THAT WE HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THAT.

WE ALSO KNOW THAT OUR RESPONSE TO MAJOR EVENTS AND HIGH PROFILE INCIDENTS HAS BEEN MERITORIOUS. WE HAVE TACKLED THE POST CODE LOTTERY OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN THIS COUNTRY, GIVEN FAR GREATER LEVELS OF SERVICE TO VICTIMS OF CRIME, PARTICULARLY IN RESPECT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND HAVE GREATLY

ENHANCED OUR ABILITY TO TACKLE EMERGING CRIME TYPES INCLUDING CYBERCRIME, THE THREAT TO OUR CHILDREN THROUGH SEX EXPLOITATION, THE INCREASED GLOBAL CHALLENGE OF TERRORISM AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING. TO NAME BUT A FEW SUCCESSES.

WE CONGRATULATE SIR STEPHEN AND HIS EXECUTIVE TEAM FOR THEIR LEAD IN EACH OF THESE AREAS. WE ALSO RECOGNISE THAT IT IS OUR MEMBERS THAT DELIVER THIS SUCCESS. WE HAVE A CADRE OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND CHIEF SUPERINTENDENTS THAT ANY COUNTRY WOULD BE PROUD TO CALL THEIR OWN.

IN SAYING THAT, I AM ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT WE COULD NOT HAVE ACHIEVED ALL OF THE FOREGOING WITHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SINGLE SERVICE, PARTICULARLY IN THESE TIMES OF BUDGETARY PRESSURE.

YET, WE MUST ALSO RECOGNISE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SHORTCOMINGS AND THAT NOT EVERYTHING THAT WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN HAS BEEN TO OUR CREDIT.

THIS ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS THE USE OF SEARCH AS A LEGITIMATE TOOL IN A POLICE OFFICERS ARMOURY. WE HAVE LONG BELIEVED THAT OUR LEGISLATIVE SYSTEM PROVIDES US WITH SIGNIFICANT POWERS IN THIS RESPECT AND THAT THESE COVER THE VAST MAJORITY OF INSTANCES WHEN A POLICE OFFICER IN SCOTLAND SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO SEARCH ONE OF OUR CITIZENS.

OCCASIONALLY A SITUATION DOES ARISE WHERE A POLICE OFFICER MAY REQUIRE TO SEARCH AN INDIVIDUAL WITHOUT THE APPROPRIATE LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS BEING FULFILLED. WE CAN ALL THINK OF PRACTICAL OPERATIONAL EXAMPLES I'M SURE. THEREFORE, FOR GENERATIONS WE UTILISED THE ABILITY OF A POLICE OFFICER TO ENGAGE WITH A PERSON IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES AND OBTAIN THEIR AGREEMENT FOR A SEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED. WE SEE NO PROBLEM WITH THAT APPROACH – IT HAS BEEN A TRADITION OF SCOTTISH POLICING AND WIDELY ACCEPTED BY ITS POPULATION.

WE ALSO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE THE USE OF A FULL RANGE OF SEARCH POWERS AS A TOOL TO COMBAT VIOLENCE, A CRIME TYPE THAT HAS EMBARRASSED THIS COUNTRY FOR FAR TOO LONG.

WE BELIEVE THAT IT WAS THE INTRODUCTION OF TARGETS TO THIS SEARCH METHODOLOGY THAT WAS THE ERROR. TARGETS OF THIS NATURE PRODUCE PERVERSE BEHAVIOUR AND THUS WE BUILT A ROD FOR OUR OWN BACK – A ROD WITH WHICH WE WERE REPEATEDLY BEATEN.

THANKFULLY WE HAVE NOW SEEN A CESSATION OF THE 'STOP SEARCH TARGET CULTURE'. HOPEFULLY, THIS HAS NOT ARRIVED TOO LATE. WE SINCERELY HOPE THAT OUR SERVICE WILL NOT SEE LEGISLATIVE RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON OUR ABILITY TO USE

OUR COMMON SENSE APPROACH TO THIS ISSUE DUE TO OUR OWN DESIRE TO INCREASE NUMBERS - HOWEVER LAUDABLE THE ULTIMATE AIM MAY HAVE BEEN.

SIMILARLY POLICE DEPLOYMENT OF FIREARMS OFFICERS DREW HIGH LEVELS OF CRITICISM OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS. ON THIS ISSUE WE WERE IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH THE POSITION ADOPTED BY THE POLICE SERVICE OF SCOTLAND. IN OUR VIEW, IN THEIR TIME OF NEED, THE PUBLIC WOULD NOT CARE IF THE POLICE OFFICER RENDERING ASSISTANCE TO THEM IS ARMED OR NOT. THEY JUST WANT THE POLICE TO COME AND COME QUICKLY.

WE ALSO AGREE THAT A POLICE OFFICER WHO DISCOVERS AN INCIDENT SHOULD NOT DISREGARD IT JUST BECAUSE THEY HAPPEN TO BE ARMED. THE INDIVIDUAL IS A POLICE OFFICER FIRST AND FOREMOST AND SHOULD, IN MOST SITUATIONS, TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION.

THERE ARE SOME WHO WOULD WISH POLICE FIREARMS CONSIGNED TO A SAFE BOX AND ONLY WITHDRAWN WHEN REQUIRED. WHILST THAT IS A SENSIBLE SUGGESTION, WE HAVE RECEIVED A FULL BRIEFING ON THE RESTRICTIONS AND THREAT THAT SUCH A METHOD PROVIDES AND WE ARE CONTENT THAT SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE A RETROGRADE STEP AT THIS TIME.

SO, IF THESE STEPS SEEM SENSIBLE, WHY HAS SUCH LEVELS OF CRITICISM FOLLOWED? AFTER ALL, IN RELATION TO FIREARMS DEPLOYMENT WE ARE MERELY FOLLOWING THE STANDARD ALREADY IN OPERATION ELSEWHERE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IN OUR VIEW, THE ANSWER IS CLEAR, WE DID NOT COMMUNICATE OUR POLICY TO THE PUBLIC WITH ENOUGH CLARITY.

WE SHOULD NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT WE POLICE WITH THE CONSENT OF THE PUBLIC. WE NEED TO TAKE PUBLIC OPINION WITH US. FOR THAT REASON OUR COMMUNICATION POLICY ON THESE BIG ISSUES MUST BE PROFESSIONAL AND INFORMATIVE. WE ALSO NEED TO LISTEN AND RESPOND IN A SIMILAR MANNER.

INTERNALLY, HOWEVER, IT IS THE POLICING BUDGET AND THE DECISIONS THAT RESULT FROM IT THAT HAVE EXERCISED THE THOUGHTS OF OUR ASSOCIATION MOST SIGNIFICANTLY THIS PAST 12 MONTHS.

THOSE WHO STILL CRITICISE THE DECISION TO CREATE THE POLICE SERVICE OF SCOTLAND SHOULD CONSIDER WHERE THE CONSTITUENT FORCES MIGHT BE TODAY.

THE MERE SIZE OF A SINGLE FORCE HAS PROVIDED SOME RESILIENCE AGAINST THE SEVERE CUTS TO THE POLICING BUDGET OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. THESE CUTS WOULD HAVE COME IN ANY EVENT. HOW WOULD A MUCH SMALLER FORCE HAVE

RESPONDED? HOW WOULD THE SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITIES HAVE SUFFERED AS A RESULT?

BUT THE BUDGET HAS BEEN CUT SIGNIFICANTLY. THIS IS NOT A NEW THING AND THE POLICE RESPONSE TO BUDGET REDUCTIONS HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN TO REDUCE OFFICER NUMBERS AND STOP RECRUITING UNTIL THE SITUATION IMPROVES. THAT IS THE ACTION THAT HAS BEEN TAKEN IN ENGLAND AND WALES WHERE OVER 17,000 OFFICERS, THE FULL COMPLIMENT OF THE POLICE SERVICE OF SCOTLAND, HAVE ALREADY DISAPPEARED FROM THE FRONT LINE WITH MORE TO FOLLOW.

AS WE KNOW THOUGH, IN SCOTLAND THE SITUATION IS DIFFERENT.

CABINET SECRETARY, WE TRULY APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT WE GET FROM THE GOVERNMENT. WE KNOW THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR SERVICE AND ITS POLITICAL LEADERS IS FAR MORE HEALTHY THAN THAT WHICH EXISTS SOUTH OF THE BORDER.

BUT WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ONE OF THE MAJOR GOVERNMENT PLATFORMS, THE RETENTION OF 17,234 POLICE OFFICERS, IS, IN THE CURRENT FINIANCIAL CLIMATE, THE CAUSE OF SO MANY OF THE PROBLEMS FACED BY OUR MEMBERS ON A DAILY BASIS.

WHEN OVER 90% OF THE POLICING BUDGET IS SPENT ON STAFFING - BUDGET CUTS AGAINST RING FENCED OFFICER NUMBERS PROVIDE LITTLE ROOM FOR MANOUVRE. THUS DECISIONS ARE TAKEN WHICH ARE BASED ON THE FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE AND NOT PERHAPS ON THE BEST USE OF RESOURCES OR THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE.

ADDED TO THESE FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS IS THE LUDICROUS AND UNJUSTIFIED IMPLICATION OF VAT ON OUR SERVICE BY THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER. WITH 56 MP'S EMBEDDED WITHIN ITS WALLS, HOPEFULLY YOUR PARTY WILL HAVE SUFFICIENT CLOUT TO TACKLE THAT PROBLEM AT ITS HEART IN THE COMING MONTHS CABINET SECRETARY.

THE IMPACT OF THESE FINANCIAL PRESSURES ON OUR MEMBERS HAS BEEN TELLING. VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY HAS REMOVED MUCH OF THEIR BACK OFFICE SUPPORT. RESTRUCTURING HAS BROUGHT ABOUT A REDUCTION IN OUR NUMBERS AND AN EXPANSION OF SPANS OF COMMAND - AFTER ALL IT'S FAR CHEAPER TO EMPLOY A CONSTABLE THAN A SUPERINTENDENT WHEN OFFICER NUMBERS ARE TO BE MAINTAINED.

ADDED TO THIS IS THE BURDEN OF TRAVEL REQUIRED OF SO MANY. WORKING FROM THE CAR HAS BECOME THE NORM FOR A GREAT MANY LEADERS OF OUR SERVICE. AND YET WE STILL CAN'T CONCLUDE NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING BUSINESS MILEAGE AND METHOD OF DELIVERY DUE TO FINANCIAL PRESSURE.

IT IS A FACT THAT MEMBERS OF OUR ASSOCIATION ARE AMONGST THE MOST COMMITTED, PROFESSIONAL AND DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANTS IN SCOTLAND. OUR SURVEYS OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS HAVE UNDERLINED TIME AND AGAIN THAT THEY ARE PROUD OF THE OFFICE THEY HOLD AND THAT THEY DESIRE TO GIVE THEIR ALL FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

THIS YEAR 85% OF OUR MEMBERS RESPONDED TO OUR SURVEY. 82% OF THOSE RESPONDING STILL GET A BUZZ OUT OF BEING A SUPERINTENDENT AND 90% SEE POLICING AS A VOCATION.

WE SHOULD SEE THAT AS A STRENGTH OF THIS ORGANISATION. WE SHOULD USE THAT LEVEL OF COMMITMENT WISELY. WE SHOULDN'T TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUALS.

WE KNOW THEY WILL JUST KEEP GOING. THEY WILL WORK OVER 12 HOURS A DAY AS A NORM, ANSWER THEIR EMAILS AND CALLS OUTSIDE THESE HOURS AND FAIL TO TAKE THEIR DAYS OFF OR FULL ANNUAL LEAVE COMPLIMENT WITH THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE POLICE SERVICE FOREMOST IN THEIR MINDS. ONCE AGAIN OUR SURVEY HAS REINFORCED THESE AS UNDENIABLE FACTS.

ADDED TO THIS THEY FREQUENTLY DO THEIR ON CALL ROTATION. THEY ARE KNOWN TO WORK ALL NIGHT BUT TURN UP AT THEIR DESKS IN THE MORNING BECAUSE THEY NEED TO SEE A JOB THROUGH OR BECAUSE THERE IS JUST NOBODY ELSE THERE. WE HAVE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ALL OF THESE FACTS TOO.

THEY ALSO UNDERTAKE CAMPAIGN AGAINST VIOLENCE DAYS - TURNING UP ON THE STREET AFTER A BUSY DAY IN THE OFFICE. WHILST MANY OF OUR MEMBERS APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ROLL THEIR SLEEVES UP AND BE A COP AGAIN, THIS IS AN UNPOPULAR ADDED IMPOSITION TO THE MUCH VALUED OFF DUTY TIME FOR MANY - ON TOP OF EVERYTHING ELSE THEY DO.

AT WEEKENDS OUR MEMBERS APPEAR IN THE OFFICE FOR A MEETING WHEN THEY SHOULD BE RECHARGING THE BATTERIES. THE PLAN IS TO COMPENSATE THEM FOR THIS BY PROVIDING A DAY BACK THE FOLLOWING WEEK BUT THEY OFTEN FIND THAT THEY ARE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY THAT COMPENSATORY DAY DUE TO DIARY PRESSURE. THUS THEY OFTEN WORK 12 FULL DAYS WITHOUT A BREAK – HOW MANY OTHER PUBLIC SERVANTS FACE THIS LEVEL OF DEMAND?

CABINET SECRETARY, OUR NUMBERS HAVE REDUCED BY A QUARTER SINCE THE CREATION OF THE POLICE SERVICE OF SCOTLAND. THEY WERE REDUCED BY A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT PRIOR TO THAT. THERE HAS BEEN NO CORRESPONDING CHANGE TO BUSINESS PRACTICE. WE WORK IN EXACTLY THE SAME MANNER WITH FEWER PEOPLE. THEY JUST DO MORE!

WORK-LIFE BALANCE HAS BEEN SACRIFICED TO ENSURE THE ORGANISATION THRIVES AND THE HEALTH OF OUR MEMBERS WILL BE THE ULTIMATE COST.

ONCE AGAIN OUR SURVEY PROVIDES DETAIL HERE. 26% SHOW MODERATE TO SEVERE LEVELS OF ANXIETY. 7% MODERATE TO SEVERE LEVELS OF DEPRESSION. THESE ARE EXTREMELY CONCERNING STATISTICS. THIS IS THE COST OF THE CURRENT MODEL.

THROUGHOUT THE TIME THAT THE POLICE SERVICE OF SCOTLAND HAS BEEN IN EXISTENCE, NOBODY HAS ACTUALLY EXAMINED THE ROLE OF A SUPERINTENDENT. NOBODY HAS CALCULATED THE NUMBERS WE ACTUALLY REQUIRE. NOBODY HAS ASKED IF THE DEMAND IS TOO GREAT!

THE PROFESSIONAL GOODWILL OF OUR MEMBERS IS BEING PUT AT RISK! THIS GOODWILL IS A VERY REAL FACTOR – IT IS NOT INEXHAUSTABLE - ESPECIALLY WHEN HEALTH AND WELLBEING ARE BEING IMPACTED DETRIMENTALLY.

IN MY MIND THIS IS THE GREATEST RISK TO THE ORGANISATION AT PRESENT. PEOPLE ARE TIRED, WORN OUT BUT STILL KEEP GOING. AS THE CHIEF CONSTABLE RECENTLY SAID ‘WE HAVE BEEN RUNNING AT RED FOR TWO YEARS’. UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS NO END IN SIGHT AND, APPARENTLY, NO GREAT WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE!

AND YET WE HEAR THAT OUR NUMBERS MAY REDUCE FURTHER - TOWARDS 150 MEMBERS. I SAY NOW, MISTAKES ARE GOING TO BE MADE - LET’S NOT START LOOKING FOR SCAPEGOATS IN THE SUPERINTENDING RANKS WHEN THESE HAPPEN. MOREOVER, WE WOULD WARN NOW ABOUT THE THREAT OF FURTHER DIVISIONAL AMALGAMATIONS AND THE EFFECT THESE MAY HAVE ON OUR RESILIENCE.

WHAT IS THE BEST OPERATING MODEL FOR A DIVISION? WE WOULD CONTEND THAT ONE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT AND TWO SUPERINTENDENTS IS JUST NOT ENOUGH – PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE SIZE OF DIVISIONS WE CURRENTLY MANAGE.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS MODEL WAS DESIGNED WITHIN STRATHCLYDE POLICE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A MANAGEMENT MODEL BELIEVED TO BE BEST AT THAT TIME IN THAT AREA. I WOULD QUESTION THE BASIS FOR ITS INTRODUCTION, I WOULD CERTAINLY QUESTION WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS THE CORRECT MODEL TO BE APPLIED NATIONALLY? DOES IT GIVE SUFFICIENT RESILIENCE? I’M NOT SURE AND I THINK SOME WORK SHOULD BE DONE IN THIS AREA – CERTAINLY BEFORE FURTHER REDUCTIONS ARE CONTEMPLATED.

I THINK IT IS ALSO WORTH HIGHLIGHTING AT THIS TIME THAT OUR ASSOCIATION OPPOSED THE RECENT INCREASE IN CHIEF OFFICER NUMBERS - WITH RESILIENCE WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE BEING UTILISED AS THE ARGUMENT IN SUPPORT OF THAT CHANGE. WHAT OF RESILIENCE AT SUPERINTENDENT LEVEL – WHO IS MAKING THE CASE THERE?



ANOTHER UNFORESEEN CONSEQUENCE OF THE CURRENT DEPLOYMENT MODEL IS THE DIFFICULTY IN PROVIDING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR MEMBERS. WHILST WE RECOGNISE AND WELCOME THE WORK THAT IS CURRENTLY BEING UNDERTAKEN IN THIS RESPECT, NO TRAINING PROGRAMME WILL ULTIMATELY BE A SUCCESS WITHOUT A PROPER STAFF APPRAISAL SYSTEM TO SUPPORT IT.

IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE THAT SOME OF OUR MEMBERS HAVE NOT BEEN APPRAISED AT ALL IN THEIR TIME IN THE POLICE SERVICE OF SCOTLAND AND MANY FOR A LONG TIME PRIOR TO THAT.

44% OF OUR RESPONDEES TO OUR SURVEY DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE CHIEF OFFICER TEAM APPRECIATED THE WORK THEY DO; 61% DID NOT RECEIVE ANY FEEDBACK ON THEIR PERFORMANCE. 37% BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE HAD INSUFFICIENT TRAINING TO DO THEIR JOB.

I HAVE ALREADY REMINDED YOU THAT THIS ASSOCIATION WAS AMONGST THE FIRST TO CALL FOR THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL SERVICE AND I HAVE STATED MY BELIEF THAT IT WAS RIGHT TO DO SO.

OUR SUPPORT WAS NOT OPEN ENDED THOUGH. THERE WERE CAVEATS AND PERHAPS IT WOULD BE WORTH TAKING A MOMENT TO CONSIDER THESE:

WE SAID THAT POLICE REFORM SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE MAINTAINANCE OF A BALANCED WORKFORCE, WE DIDN'T WANT TO SEE POLICE OFFICERS BACK FILLING OR UNDERTAKING ROLES THAT WERE BEST PERFORMED BY OTHERS;

WE ALSO SAID THAT POLICE REFORM COULD NOT BE DONE IN ISOLATION BUT MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY WIDER PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM. YET, TWO YEARS IN, WE HEAR NOTHING ABOUT ADDRESSING THE 32 LOCAL AUTHORITIES OR THE 14 HEALTH BOARDS. QUITE THE REVERSE, ALL POLITICAL PARTIES SEEM TO FALL OVER THEMSELVES TO DEDICATE MORE MONEY TO AN UNREFORMED NHS WHILST POLICING HARDLY WARRANTS A MENTION IN ELECTION MANIFESTOS.

QUITE FRANKLY 17,234 IS A LAUDABLE IDEAL. WE DON'T KNOW IF IT'S THE CORRECT NUMBER OF POLICE OFFICERS FOR SCOTLAND, WE COULD NEED LESS, WE MIGHT NEED MORE - BUT 17234 IS WHAT WE HAVE.

THAT NUMBER COMES WITH A PRICE!

WE CAN'T MAINTAIN OFFICER NUMBERS AND STRIP OUT EVERYTHING ELSE.....IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. 58% OF RESPONDEES TO OUR SURVEY BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE INSUFFICIENT STAFF OR RESOURCES TO DO THEIR JOB.

THIS ASSOCIATION IS NOT AGAINST CHANGE. WE EMBRACE IT. THE PROBLEM AT PRESENT IS THE METHOD OF OPERATION. BY ALL MEANS CUT THE BUDGET BUT LETS FIND NEW WAYS OF WORKING THAT REDUCES THE DEMAND ON INDIVIDUALS – LETS NOT EXPECT A SMALL NUMBER TO CARRY AN INCREASED BURDEN.

IN REALITY, A REDUCTION IN BUDGET SHOULD EQUATE TO A REDUCTION IN SERVICE. AS A PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION WE DO NOT WANT THAT TO HAPPEN. I HAVE OUTLINED THE COST TO THE INDIVIDUAL OF ATTEMPTING TO MAINTAIN THE SERVICE WE WISH TO PROVIDE!

IT WOULD BE REMISS OF ME NOT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE POLICE SERVICE OF SCOTLAND HAS ESTABLISHED A WELLBEING GROUP IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AND THAT IT HAS EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO ADDRESS SOME OF THESE ISSUES. BUT THAT IS NOT ONLY GOING TO TAKE A VERBAL COMMITMENT - IT WILL REQUIRE A MASSIVE CHANGE IN CULTURE AND A RE-THINK ON DEPLOYMENT AND FINANCE – WE AWAIT DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS REGARD.

CULTURALLY FAR TOO MANY OF OUR MEMBERS, 37%, STILL PERCEIVE THAT THEY ARE BULLIED IN THE WORKPLACE AND 85% BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE 'IN CROWDS AND CLIQUE'S'. THESE FIGURES NEED TO BE TACKLED – WE HAVE A PROBLEM IN THIS AREA.

TO BE COMPLETELY FAIR, I MUST ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SOME WORK HAS BEEN DONE IN RESPECT OF 'ON CALL' WITH A VIEW TO REDUCING THE FREQUENCY OF DEMAND ON OUR MEMBERS. THE DIALOGUE AND TWO WORKSHOPS HELD WITHIN THIS BUILDING LED TO THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW ROTA THAT HAS REDUCED THE FREQUENCY OF THIS DEMAND A LITTLE FOR MANY.

A FURTHER REDUCTION IN OUR NUMBERS WOULD NEGATE ANY BENEFIT DERIVED FROM THIS WORK.

YET, DESPITE THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF THE WELLBEING GROUP AND THE WORK OF THE ON CALL REVIEW, WEEK IN WEEK OUT WE STILL HAVE MEMBERS ROSTERED TO WORK 12 DAYS WITHOUT A BREAK – 12 MONTHS OF THE YEAR.

WITH THIS AS THE BACKGROUND WE STILL NEGOTIATE WITHIN THE PNB FOR A PAYMENT FOR THIS VOLUNTARY ON CALL COMMITMENT, ALTHOUGH AN UNDERTAKING TO CONSIDER THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS PAYMENT WAS MADE OVER 5 YEARS AGO!

CABINET SECRETARY IT IS WELL BEYOND THE TIME THAT THE WORKLOAD AND DEMAND PLACED ON SUCH A FEW COMMITTED INDIVIDUALS IS EXAMINED AND THAT THEY ARE PROPERLY RECOMPENSED FOR WORKING ADDITIONAL HOURS IN THEIR OWN TIME. THE MEMBERS OF THIS ASSOCIATION ARE THE OIL THAT MAKES THE ENGINE OF POLICING IN SCOTLAND RUN SMOOTHLY, THEY SHOULD BE TREATED WITH APPROPRIATE RESPECT.

NOBODY SHOULD BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE SUBJECTED TO BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE. INTEGRITY, FAIRNESS AND RESPECT MUST BE MORE THAN JUST WORDS ON POSTERS ON A WALL.

ANOTHER UNFORESEEN PRODUCT OF THE CURRENT FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE IS THE REMOVAL OF LOCAL SUPPORT AND THE CENTRALISATION OF RESOURCE. THUS THE DEBATE CONTINUES IN POLICING, DOES THE CENTRE SUPPORT SERVICE DELIVERY OR DO THOSE PROVIDING SERVICE DELIVERY FEED DEMAND FROM THE CENTRE?

THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE FIRST YEARS OF THE POLICE SERVICE OF SCOTLAND REQUIRED A CENTRALISED AGENDA TO SET STANDARDS, MONITOR PROGRESS AND ESTABLISH AN ELEMENT OF CORPORACY.

BUT AT SOME STAGE THAT 'GRIP' MUST BE RELEASED. A GENERATION OF MANAGERS ARE LEARNING MERELY TO TAKE INSTRUCTION AND NOT TO USE INITIATIVE AND INNOVATION. IN MY MIND THAT IS UNHEALTHY.

LEADERS MUST LEARN TO LEAD.

WE KNOW THAT OPERATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY SHOULD BE OF THE HIGHEST STANDARD AND THAT THE PRESS ARE CLEARLY READY TO POUNCE ON EVERY MISTAKE – THEREFORE REPUTATIONAL RISK IS ALSO PARAMOUNT. HOWEVER, THE RESPONSE TO THESE SHOULD NOT BE TO INCREASE THE LEVEL OF GRIP TO THE POINT THAT IT BECOMES STRANGULATION.

WE HAVE OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUALS AT ALL RANKS ACROSS SCOTLAND. THEY NEED TO GROW AND FLOURISH. THEY CAN ONLY DO SO IF THEY ARE ENCOURAGED AND GIVEN THEIR HEAD. AFTER ALL THE CHIEF OFFICERS OF TOMORROW ARE OUR CONSTABLES TODAY.

THE SERVICE SHOULD ALSO EMBRACE CHALLENGE. ONE THING THE PRESS COVERAGE HAS DISPLAYED IS A KEEN INTEREST IN POLICING FROM PEOPLE LIVING IN DIFFERENT AREAS RIGHT ACROSS THE COUNTRY. POLICING IS A SUBJECT THAT MOST PEOPLE BELIEVE THEY UNDERSTAND, WHETHER THEY ACTUALLY DO OR NOT.

IT IS RIGHT THAT OUR METHODS AND PERFORMANCE ARE CHALLENGED. IT WOULD BE A SAD STATE OF AFFAIRS IF THEY WERE NOT.

OF COURSE, WE HAVE OFFICIAL BODIES FOR THAT PURPOSE. THE BIRTH OF THE SPA HAS NOT BEEN AN EASY ONE. WE HAVE IDENTIFIED A RECENT CHANGE OF EMPHASIS THERE THOUGH AND WE HOPE THAT IT NOW SETTLES INTO ITS SCRUTINY ROLE AND FINDS A PROPER BALANCE BETWEEN SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE.

SIMILARLY, THE LOCAL SCRUTINY PANELS HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY AND MAY NOT YET HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THEIR IMPORTANCE TO SERVICE DELIVERY IN SCOTLAND. IN THIS RESPECT, THE MULTITUDE OF PATHFINDERS MAY HAVE BEEN AN ERROR AND PERHAPS BEST PRACTICE NEEDS NOW TO BE IDENTIFIED AND PROMOLGATED. THE SPA AND HMICS SHOULD LEAD IN THIS AREA.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCRUTINY PANELS AND OUR MEMBERS DELIVERING OPERATIONAL SERVICE IN THE COMMUNITIES WAS, IN MY OPINION, BOTH THE STRENGTH AND THE AIM OF THE ENACTING LEGISLATION. IF WE CAN GET THAT RIGHT, WE WILL BE WELL ON THE WAY TO ADDRESSING MANY OF THE PROBLEMS WE ARE CURRENTLY ENCOUNTERING – WE WOULD SILENCE MANY OF OUR CRITICS AND PROVIDE THAT DEGREE OF LOCALISM MANY OF OUR POLITICIANS CRAVE.

AND THEN THERE IS THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT. THE HMIC, DEREK PENMAN, HAS MADE A SIGNIFICANT AND VALUED CONTRIBUTION TO THE POLICING DEBATE IN THE PAST YEAR AND HAS A CONTINUING INDEPENDENT ROLE TO PERFORM. WE PARTICULARLY WELCOMED HIS OBSERVATIONS AND CONCERNS ABOUT THE WORKING HOURS OF SENIOR MANAGERS AS A THEME RUNNING THROUGH SEVERAL OF HIS REPORTS.

THE JUSTICE COMMITTEE OF THE PARLIAMENT AND ITS POLICING SUB COMMITTEE HAVE ALSO BEEN KEY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL FORCE. BUT, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, AS WITH THE SPA AND THE LOCAL SCRUTINY BODIES, THEIR ROLES CONTINUE TO DEVELOP.

A NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE NEEDS TO BE HANDLED WITH GREAT CARE. WE MUST AVOID AT ALL COST ANY ALLEGATIONS OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE.

AT THIS STAGE I ALSO WANT TO RAISE THE ISSUE OF EQUALITY. WE ARE PLEASED TO NOTE THE INCREASE IN FEMALE MEMBERS TO OUR ASSOCIATION AND THE PROMOTION RECENTLY OF TWO OF OUR FEMALE MEMBERS TO EXECUTIVE POSITIONS. IT IS ONLY RIGHT AND PROPER THAT THE PROGRESSION OF FEMALE OFFICERS THROUGH THE SERVICE IS GIVEN SUFFICIENT PRIORITY AND OBSTACLES TO THAT PROGRESSION IDENTIFIED AND REMOVED.

ONE SUCH OBSTACLE WAS THE SELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR TEMPORARY PROMOTION AND WE THANK SIR STEPHEN FOR HIS WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND TO OUR REQUEST AND ADVERTISE SUCH POSTS WHERE POSSIBLE. THIS HAS BENEFITTED SEVERAL OF OUR MEMBERS WE ARE SURE.

BUT, THERE ARE OTHER MINORITY MEMBERS OF OUR POLICING FAMILY WHO DO NOT RECEIVE SUCH LEVELS OF SUPPORT AND ENCOURGAGEMENT.

AS AN ASSOCIATION WE WILL DO ALL WE CAN TO SUPPORT REPRESENTATIVE STAFF ASSOCIATIONS AND TO UNDERLINE THAT WE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED LINKS WITH THE ROMA GYPSY POLICING COMMUNITY WHO ARE REPRESENTED HERE TODAY.

IT IS THE POTENTIAL FOR LESS OBVIOUS DISCRIMINATION WE ARE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT, HOWEVER. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE SERVICE HAS DONE ENOUGH TO SUPPORT OFFICERS IN RESPECT OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION FOR EXAMPLE.

IN 2015, THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE. WE WANT TO BE PART OF A SERVICE THAT IS PREPARED TO TACKLE THIS ISSUE WITH SOME VIGOUR. SIGNING UP TO STONEWALL IS MERELY ONE OVERT ACTION, GREATER ACTION IS NEEDED! BECAUSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION IS A LESS OBVIOUS FORM OF DISCRIMINATION PARTICULAR EMPHASIS AND CARE IS REQUIRED IN THIS AREA.

THUS WE MUST ENSURE THAT WE RECRUIT, RETAIN, RESPECT AND SUPPORT OFFICERS FROM ALL CONSTITUENT PARTS OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND THAT THEY CAN ALL ACCESS THE SAME CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

I MUST ALSO HIGHLIGHT OUR CONCERNS REGARDING THE NUMBER OF OUR MEMBERS WHO HAVE BECOME THE SUBJECT OF DISCIPLINE INQUIRIES IN RECENT YEARS. AS WE ARE AWARE, THE PROFESSION OF POLICING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM HAS A UNIQUE APPROACH TO INTERNAL DISCIPLINARY MATTERS WHICH FOLLOWS A SIMILAR APPROACH TO CRIMINAL INQUIRIES – WHICH IS AFTER ALL OUR DAY JOB.

FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO NORMALLY CONDUCT SUCH INQUIRIES TO BE THE SUBJECT OF THEM IS HARD ENOUGH. FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO NORMALLY MANAGE INQUIRIES TO BE THE SUBJECT OF THEM IS EVEN HARDER.

OUR SUPPORT SYSTEM IS STRETCHED TO ITS LIMIT AT PRESENT. SUPPORTING OUR COLLEAGUES IN SUCH A SITUATION IS AN EXTREMELY HARD THING TO DO. THEY CAN BECOME VERY DEMOTIVATED AS A RESULT AND THE SERVICE CAN REDUCE THE CONTRIBUTION AND COMMITMENT OF THOROUGHLY OUTSTANDING PEOPLE. THE WHOLE ISSUE REQUIRES GREAT CARE.

WE AGREE THAT THERE MUST BE A FAIR, OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND RIGOROUS EXAMINATION OF ALLEGATIONS THAT PROVIDES CONFIDENCE NOT JUST TO THE PUBLIC BUT ALSO ENCOURAGES STAFF TO FEEL ABLE TO CHALLENGE OR RAISE CONCERNS. WE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE HARD WORK AND PROFESSIONAL APPROACH OF OUR COLLEAGUES WHO OPERATE IN THIS FIELD, MANY OF WHOM ARE MEMBERS OF THIS ASSOCIATION.

LET ME BE QUITE CLEAR, WE BELIEVE THAT ROTTEN APPLES MUST BE EXPELLED. BUT WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE MAJORITY OF THESE INQUIRIES TAKE TOO LONG AND THAT, ON CERTAIN OCCASIONS, A LIGHTER TOUCH MIGHT HAVE BEEN APPLIED. AS IN MANY

THINGS, WE MERELY LOOK FOR BALANCE. INQUIRIES SHOULD BE TIMELY, PROPORTIONATE AND FOCUSED ON LEARNING.

CABINET SECRETARY, SOME OF THE MORE RECENT EXAMPLES OF INQUIRIES IN WHICH OUR MEMBERS HAVE FEATURED ARE DRAWING TO A CLOSE. WE ARE PLEASED TO CONFIRM THAT THE DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE DESIGNATE HAS AGREED THAT THE PROCESS APPLIED IN RESPECT OF EACH SHOULD BE REVIEWED TO IDENTIFY LEARNING FOR THE GOOD OF US ALL.

FINALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT OUR ASSOCIATIONS CONCERNS REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH. NOT ONLY AS IT AFFECTS OUR MEMBERS IN TERMS OF THEIR WELL BEING, AN ISSUE WE EXPECT THE WELL BEING GROUP TO CONSIDER, BUT ALSO IN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF OUR COMMUNITIES.

FOR FAR TOO LONG THE POLICE SERVICE, AS THE SERVICE OF LAST RESORT, HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR ATTENDING TO MENTALLY ILL PEOPLE DISPLAYING IRRATIONAL BEHAVIOUR IN A PUBLIC PLACE.

AS A SOCIETY WE HAVE NOT YET PROVIDED APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF RESPONSE TO THIS VULNERABLE GROUP. THUS THEY ARE OFTEN ARRESTED AND PLACED IN A CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM WHICH IS NOT EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH THEM.

YES THERE HAVE BEEN IMPROVEMENTS OVER THE YEARS. BUT THE ISSUE REMAINS. THIS IS MERELY ONE EXAMPLE OF A NEED FOR TRUE INTER-AGENCY CO-OPERATION. THERE ARE MANY MORE BUT I ONLY HAVE A SHORT TIME AVAILABLE TO ME AT THIS EVENT. THUS I HIGHLIGHT OUR CARE OF PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL HEALTH AILMENT AS A MATTER OF SIGNIFICANT CONCERN TO THIS ASSOCIATION - A TOPIC WE AIM TO RAISE REGULARLY IN THE COMING YEAR.

IT IS SUBJECT OF SIGNIFICANT WORK SOUTH OF THE BORDER AND PERHAPS WE HAVE SOME LEARNING TO TAKE THERE.

CABINET SECRETARY, I HAVE LAID OUT THE ISSUES OF CONCERN TO OUR ASSOCIATION AND THE MATTERS WE HOPE TO PROGRESS IN THE COMING YEAR.

I KNOW YOU ARE ON A TIGHT TIMESCALE AND WE TRULY APPRECIATE THE EFFORT YOU HAVE MADE TO BE WITH US TODAY. THE FLOOR IS NOW YOURS - CAN I INVITE YOU TO ADDRESS OUR CONFERENCE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

