

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO DR. ALFRED BLUMSTEIN BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

*Q. 1. In your testimony you cited certain police needs and indicated the technology is now available to meet those needs. What, then, in your opinion, are the reasons why law enforcement agencies are not using the available technology?*

A. The reasons for the limited introduction of technology into police operations are multiple and complex. They also differ for different kinds of technology. Included in the reasons would be the following:

1. Equipment budgets are typically separate line items in police budgets, so that the cost of additional equipment may appear as a large increase in the equipment budget, even when it would be small compared to the total police budget or compared to an appropriately formulated program or functional budget.

2. Many of the smaller police departments do not know about some of the technological possibilities available to them.

3. In many cases, equipment developed for other purposes may require some adaptation to police use; that adaptation may not yet have been done.

4. Many police departments are unable to evaluate among alternative possibilities, and so, end up choosing none.

*Q. 1a. In your opinion, why hasn't industry filled the void as it would with normal consumer demands?*

A. The market is small and fragmented and so selling that market could lead to a high sales cost per unit sold. Also, the police market is an unknown to most companies and it would require the development of special marketing skills to address that market. In many cases there are some research and/or development costs required and industry may be reluctant to make the required investment as long as the market uncertainty exists.

*Q. 1b. What can be done about these problems?*

A. Create a coordinated national program to provide proper guidance and incentives to industry to provide the products necessary for the police markets. Provide the information to help police departments learn of currently or potentially available products and help them select from among these products those that best meet their needs. Finally, help them incorporate these innovations effectively into their operations.

This program would be supported by actions such as the following:

1. Federal support of research and development.

2. National establishment of equipment standards and unified requirements.

3. Field evaluation and collection of field reports on performance of new equipment and methods.

4. Creation of an information center to disseminate such information to police departments.

5. Creation of an organization with a staff able to provide technical advice and assistance to police departments.

6. Federal underwriting of the initial production run of a new item to guarantee a reasonable market.

7. Creation within the larger police departments of internal technical and operations research functions. These functions would include liaison with external groups which could serve as technical advisors. The external groups could be consulting firms, technical professional societies, or committees of disinterested citizens or industry scientists and engineers.

8. Adoption of program budgeting by police departments.

*Q. 2. What do you consider to be the three most important needs in law enforcement where technology can make the greatest contribution? Why?*

A. The magnitude of contribution that would result from any particular technological innovation would naturally depend strongly upon the size of the department, the nature of the crime problem it must deal with and the current state of its technological development. For instance, a department that had a major part of its force on foot patrol and unequipped with portable radios could probably benefit most by equipping all its officers immediately with portable radios. Another department, equipped with current model radios, would benefit less from a new generation of radios. If forced to generalize across the nation, however, I would probably rank the technological innovations as follows:

1. The introduction of computers (locally for the larger departments and with a terminal on-line to a remote computer for the smaller ones) for handling the mass of information collected in police operations. Most of this information goes unused because of the difficulty of retrieval and manipulation. The growing availability