

Johannesburg
29 November 2010

Speech by the Minister of Police, E.N. Mthethwa, MP at the American Chamber of Commerce in SA dinner on 24 November 2010:

“A focus on the future plans of the South African Police Service, in the short term and medium term”

The Castle Kyalami, Gauteng

Programme Director;
US Ambassador to South Africa, Mr Donald Gips;
President of the Board of the American Chamber of Commerce in South Africa, Mr Doug Franke;
Members of the Board of the American Chamber of Commerce in South Africa present;
Various CEOs and MDs of major corporations present;
Representatives from Business and Government present;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and gentlemen;

We wish to express our appreciation to the entire Board of Directors of the American Chamber of Commerce in South Africa at an invitation to address this grand occasion.

Although we look forward to a great evening of dining, we also intend to utilize this opportunity to derive valuable input. Our intent stems from an understanding that to succeed in dealing a blow to the crime scourge, we need to broaden our interactions with all sectors of society.

To us, engagements such as these represent a continuation of our crusade. They continuously help us in our policy formulations, advancements in programmes and where necessary, assist in fine-tuning some of our current approaches. It is vital to ensure that the policies we develop are intertwined with current safety and security challenges.

Working together in winning the war on crime

Perhaps from the onset, we want to emphasize government’s uncompromisable commitment to fighting crime and all its evils. We will fight it toughly, smartly and within the confines of the law. Coupled with this is our unmovable stance on a community-policing philosophy.

Tonight, we have been requested by the Board to talk about *“A focus on the future plans of the South African Police Service, in the short term and medium term.”* While we shall briefly elaborate on our current and future plans, we still view this as an interaction as opposed to a one-way dialogue. We shall therefore be expecting constructive engagements going forward.

On the occasion of the release of the national crime statistics in September this year, we shared with the nation challenges and successes in the fight against crime. In the main there were more positives, from a viewpoint that in many crime categories such as murder and business robberies, there were significant declines.

Such successes were not achieved coincidentally, but through intensified operations, proper policing, changes in legislations, commitment from both police and society and a stance that says: enough is enough about crime! This was firmly supported by a strategy to tackle crime and giving expression to government’s prioritization, through a multi-faceted approach. We outlined this strategy as follows:

Enhancing a government-led, community-policing philosophy

Some of the current programmes that we are currently implementing include the finalization of a Community Safety Forum Strategy by the Secretariat of Police.

This strategy will outline and contribute to a greater understanding of the role and responsibility of the public in crime combating. It will also focus on building partnerships with civil society and corrections as a societal responsibility (which includes the successful reintegration of offenders in the community).

In addition the Secretariat of Police is currently engaging with academics and other institutions to continuously share best practices. We are also collaborating with Statistics South Africa to initiate another Victims Perception Survey to understand patterns of victimization, which will begin in January next year.

Strengthening the Criminal Justice System

As the CJS cluster, we have developed and signed a service delivery agreement which gives concrete expression to key areas of delivery required within this criminal justice review process.

We are now focusing more on ensuring that post the arrest phase, criminals receive the harshest sentence. Police, through doing a thorough job in the investigations, can influence an outcome of a case. This is what we term the ground work.

A strengthened Detective and Intelligence arm in fighting crime

Intelligence acts as a nerve centre in any policing environment and plays [a] crucial role in all aspects of policing. It is for this reason that we have prioritised the need to revitalise the intelligence component of SAPS and ensure the integration of intelligence into all aspects of policing.

Equally we continue to up-skill and capacitate our detective services. This includes not only increasing the number of detectives but also the quality of those we recruit. The success of this approach has been seen in the cooperation that has developed between the detective service, the Hawks and our Crime Intelligence.

Reducing backlogs and capacitating our forensics

Recently there have been a number of reports about our forensics capacity and problems related to this. We are well aware that we cannot strengthen our detective services without equally addressing our forensic capacity.

Encouragingly, we are beginning to see some improvements in our forensics backlogs, which augur well for our fight against crime. The total entries on hand decreased with 19% between the 1st of April 2009 and the 31st of March 2010. The backlog in ballistics decreased by 39%, in the biology section there was a 33% decrease and a 21% decrease in questioned documents.

Addressing our forensic capacity is not just about purchasing new equipment or employing new staff. Such an approach would imply re-inventing a broken wheel. Instead, we developed a plan with clear monitoring evaluation processes that is currently being implemented.

Adopting and implementing a triple-C approach

In achieving our vision we need to address service delivery within the police. Lazy cops will have no place or space in the Force. To achieve this we are now placing a concerted focus on what we have termed the **triple-C** approach. This methodology speaks to the following aspects:

- A need for greater **command and control** within the police. Part of command and control must address how we are managing our members, particularly at police station level. Management is not only about issuing instructions, but also managing the how these instructions are implemented. We

are emphasizing the need for management to be held accountable and to reassert discipline within the police.

- The need for greater **co-ordination** also requires our focus. All our different components of the police need to be working together and supporting each other.
- The final C refers to both internal and external **communication**. We are improving communication within the police as well as how we communicate with the society we are policing. Police must ensure that once they arrest criminals, [that they] communicate to society that such scoundrels are now behind bars. Failure to do so, leads to anxiety and perceptions that police are ineffective, when in fact they are effective.

Controlling firearm proliferation to reduce crime

Our stance on crime is further informed by the prevalence of firearms in the hands of civilians and widespread readiness to use them. This goes together with the availability of military expertise amongst criminals which have drastically changed the nature of crime in our country especially in the past decade.

A key focus for government is addressing the proliferation of firearms. We need to look at how we are implementing the Firearms Control Act, the manner in which we are controlling the weapons that are in the hands of the State (including the Police) and the scourge of illegal firearms.

To address this we have adopted an approach of working with both communities and firearm owners in finding a solution to address illegal firearms. Equally we have intensified our seizure of such firearms through more focused visible policing.

Police visibility – a deterrent to crime and criminals

All research conducted by our Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC), now known as the Crime Research and Statistics component of the Crime Intelligence point to a trend that in the face of rapid economic and population growth, massive urbanization – one of the factors that can lead to crime reduction is through police visibility.

High police visibility has resulted in the following impacts: crime rates have been significantly lowered particularly in the traditional flashpoints of crime and at peak times of occurrence. It also increases the risk run by robbers, for example, decreasing the reaction time of the police or shifting the robbers' operations to areas and times they are not familiar with.

Defeating criminals, in their own game

It goes without any hesitation that the kind of criminal we are dealing with in the modern century is sophisticated, often times, smarter yet still with limited room to maneuver. What this means in essence is that as government, supported by all our social partners we need to be ahead of the game.

It cannot be a foregone conclusion that one is facing petty criminals, who decide to rob at instinct planning. We are dealing here with selfish people who by the way some of them possess advanced training. They plan with precision. They kill with no mercy. They amass wealth without ever having established businesses legitimately, nor ever applied for a job. This is the modern criminal, who must be defeated in a modern manner.

Utilizing ICT to effectively fight crime

The critical questions become: what resources are available to us? What skills are available? What Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) systems are being utilized? Are these systems sustainable? What partnerships are being formed and fostered?

There are still serious challenges facing government when it comes to utilizing ICT systems, to make a dent on crime. On the one hand you have a HANIS at Home Affairs, eNATIS at Transport and Vehicle Circulation Systems at SAPS.

Admittedly there is currently no clear coordination and integration of these systems to achieve synergy. These need to talk to each other. You have examples where police are searching for the most dangerous criminal, when in fact he is already behind bars. This then becomes a strenuous exercise to the police not only physically, but also on the cost elements and resources, which may not be readily available.

How can business, including this Chamber assist government in this regard? We believe you [have] some of the latest technological systems which may be valuable. We are not merely referring to setting up *facebook* groups, or *twitter* updates but looking at reliable, advanced and cost-effective ICT systems which can assist us.

War Rooms – a new smarter way to fight crime

To thwart these criminal activities head-on, we have introduced provincial centres in some provinces known as War Rooms. In the Western Cape, where these operations were conceptualized and implemented, we have reduced crime significantly and plans are afoot to roll them out nationally.

The most obvious success of the War Rooms is that improved, higher level linkage analysis and profiling of all criminals can be done expeditiously and smarter. This has been of major assistance with regard to provincial assistance to police stations, clustering investigation teams and focusing on crime series (dockets dealing with the same suspects, targets and/or modus operandi).

Again this is an area we believe forums such as the American Chamber of Commerce can contribute towards more positively. We need not re-invent the wheel, but build upon what has been attained.

Strengthening the fight on crime against women and children

A nation that does not protect its mothers and children is doomed. This government has therefore prioritized and strengthened its efforts in protecting women and children against vicious acts of rape and abuse. We have now begun with the re-establishment of the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) units.

FCS structures are being aligned with the cluster policing model to serve the stations. Best practices have also been identified where FCS units and non-governmental organizations will be able to work together. There is a clear positive impact of these models in the turn-around times, detection and court readiness of dockets pertaining to FCS crimes.

The mandate to the police stations is clear: women and children, who come to the station reporting such crimes, must not be treated as criminals. There are instances where such victims are humiliated, harassed and inhumanely interrogated [.] [This] will be a thing of the past because we will have specially-trained personnel who understand the trauma.

Corrupt police officers have no place in SAPS

We are certain most of you have seen in the past increased arrest of police, whether through being in cahoots with criminals or actively leading the charges on criminals. This is an unacceptable conduct.

However the increase in police being busted for criminality and the exposure thereof should be understood in two contexts: that government will not tolerate corruption. Secondly that instead of being in denial that there may be a few rotten apples in this bag, we are decisive in rooting out such 'criminals who hide behind our uniforms and badges.'

There will be a process to look at how we address criminality within the police, particularly in Gauteng where more police officers have been arrested. Part of this process will require finding ways of dealing with people who have been convicted of serious offenses. The process will also have to look seriously at disciplinary procedures and weaknesses that have allowed criminality to creep in. We will also need to address certain behavioural challenges such as substance and alcohol abuse and how these impact on the police.

We need to root out criminality within the Police. Senior management will need to set an example and become part of this implementation process. Organisations stand or fall on leadership and if corruption exists at the top it will have impact all the way through our structures.

Time to implement the 2010 FIFA World Cup policing legacy

One of the fundamental successes derived from the World Cup was changing the negative perceptions about our country in relation [to] crime. Foreign visitors who came to our shores with negative perceptions are now singing a different tune. We intend to consolidate these gains.

A lasting and irreplaceable legacy is the re-skilling attained by our police. Here we are referring to the direct interaction between members of our Force with those from other international Forces such as the FBI from US, Gendarmine from France, UK and many others.

Police to people ratio, SA compares favourably

Our analysis points that the South Africa Police Service favours comparatively with other Forces around the world, including those of US, UK and France. The police to person ratio therefore put us in a better position to thwart these scoundrels.

We are also reviewing the functioning of the police to achieve integration and coordination. As evidenced in the past months, we are actively combating serious and violent crime by being tough on organized syndicates. Emphasis must therefore be on the calibre of the cadre of cop as opposed to focusing on the numerics.

Out with the 'microwave' training, in with the 'well done' training

In this respect, have begun increasing the capacity of the SAPS through recruitment, rigorous training, better remuneration, equipping and increasing the capacity of the detective services, forensics and crime intelligence.

In the past we may have produced police officers who fought crime. We now need to raise the bar. We now need police officers who will put a serious dent to crime, smartly, faster and toughly. We may have achieved this by putting our officers through the microwave who were warmed, but we now need to make sure we produce well done, cooked officers who are ready to deal with any crime obstacle.

We are now in the process of revising how and what is involved in training. This must speak to both the content and the manner in which we train. Training cannot be just about churning out numbers but must be ongoing and relevant.

Securing our borders

Part of our CJS review pointed to a free-for-all entry gap at some of our borders as having contributed to increased crime levels. Cabinet therefore relooked this matter and a decision was taken to redeploy the Army at all borderlines.

As most of you may be aware, cross border criminal networks tended to utilize borders for the variety of crimes; including vehicle hijacking, drug and human trafficking. Since the deployment, we have seen tighter controls and lesser criminal activities.

In dealing with the illicit regional trade in vehicles, government is also enhancing co-operation with other regional police agencies to strengthen the implementation of regional protocols and agreements.

Strengthening our international relations

Irrespective of how creative our plans are in dealing with crime, if they are not coordinated at regional and international levels, success is bound to be minimal. Crime is a scourge that does not respect borders, with syndicates that have made the entire globe the theatre of their operations.

As a result of this understanding, we have realized (we realize) a need for a co-ordinated effort to address this scourge. That is why as government we continue to engage with bodies such as the Southern African Region Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO) and INTERPOL.

We should not underestimate the resolve of these criminals. Criminal gangs will employ every trick in the book to disunite, disorganize, and destabilize forces such as INTERPOL through fraud, bribery and corruption and by direct intimidation.

We shall overcome crime, together as a united front

As we conclude, we want to say that we are under no illusion that there are no quick fix solutions to policing challenges in South Africa. We do believe that over the last year we have begun to put in place processes that are not only yielding some successes, but will also become the building blocks for the Police Service we envisage.

It should not be a government-only responsibility to tackle crime. We believe your experiences as a broader business fraternity enable you to better grasp and understand some of the key issues faced by police. Whether as multinationals operating in developing and developed economies, you have a vital role to play. The new ethos of our strategy in dealing with crime entails a new orientation in the provision of service to society, rooting out corruption and introducing a new organizational culture and motivational values.

It is increasingly becoming obvious that things cannot be done the same old way. Things must be done smarter and faster. Through intensified partnerships, the tide is now turning. More and more South Africans are joining this crusade.

I thank you.

