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Beat Patrol Deployment in Hong Kong

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ABSTRACT

On March 14, 2001 a young Hong Kong Police (HKP) Constable (PC) Leung Shing-yan was shot and killed in the line of duty. The incident aroused a fierce public debate as to whether HKP should adopt a one-officer (single beat or SB) vs. two-officers (double beat or DB) patrol deployment policy.

This article addresses critical policy issues raised in the SB vs. DB debate. How should such a policy debate be resolved? What are the pros and cons of both patrol deployment measures? More importantly, what immediate and effective remedial steps can be taken to secure the front line police officers' safety and security without compromising the public's legitimate expectation for order and service.

This article provides the HKP community – policy makers, operational managers and front line officers - with relevant research literature and pertinent empirical data to understand the issues involved and help resolve the debate on hand in an informed and reflective manner. In the end, it is argued that education and training is more important than patrol deployment in reducing risk of injury to police officers in the line of duty. Removal of side arms and demilitarization of the HKP is also suggested.

Beat Patrol Deployment in Hong Kong

The debate about the safety and effectiveness of deployment in police car is not new... Often the facts surrounding this issue are obscured by emotional appeal.

ONE OFFICER VS. TWO OFFICERS CAR IN WINNIPEG (February 2001)¹

I. Introduction

On March 14, 2001 a young Hong Kong Police (HKP)² Constable (PC) Leung Shing-yan was shot and killed in the line of duty. The cold-blooded murder shocked everyone in Hong Kong. The people in the street grieved openly for the lost of a brave public servant. The HKP officers cried hurtfully for the demise of a fallen comrade.³ All want quick justice to be done; a few demand vengeance at all costs.⁴

¹ Brief Analysis from Frontier Centre for Public Policy.

http://www.fcpp.org/publications/backgrounders/one_vs_two.html (Visited August 6, 2001)

² “The Hong Kong Police Force has operational responsibilities for crime prevention and detection, the maintenance of law and order, traffic matters and the detection of illegal immigration. The 34 622-strong force consists of 28 585 disciplined staff and 6 037 civilians. There are also 5 721 volunteer citizens of the Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force. Reported crimes in 1998 totalled 71 962, an increase of 6.8 per cent compared with 67 367 crimes recorded in 1997. The crime rate stood at 1076.1 cases per 100 000 of the population, an increase of 3.9 per cent, compared with 1997. Despite the slight increase, the force's dedication in maintaining the law and order of Hong Kong ensured that the Special Administrative Region (SAR) remained one of the most secure and stable cities in the world.”

<http://www.info.gov.hk/isd/hk99/ewww/17/1702/middle-middle.htm>

³ “Next Saturday, Police is to Organize the Largest Funeral Since Hong Kong was Settled, the Event is Capable of Hosting 20,000) 下周六舉行 可容二萬人 警辦追悼會開埠最大) *Apple Daily*, March 17, 2001. “Force mourns fallen PC” *Offbeat*. The newspaper of the Hong Kong Police Force. ISSUE 699. Mar 21 to Apr 3, 2001

⁴ A reward of one million dollar reward was being offered for information leading to the capture of the criminal(s). This is unheard of. “Reward is the Same as Thief of Thieves Yip Kai Fun, One Million is Being Offered to capture Cop Killer” (賞金與緝賊王葉繼歡相等百萬懸紅緝殺警者) *Apple Daily*, March 15, 2001.

The incident aroused a fierce public debate as to whether HKP should adopt a SB vs. DB patrol deployment policy.⁵ As intimated above, the public debate has been driven more by emotion than rationality and consumed by conviction than analysis. Increasingly, the debate is tainted by factional interests, overtaken by institutional agenda and confounded by political considerations.⁶

This article addresses the broad range of policy issues raised in the SB vs. DB debate. What are the critical issues involved? How should such a policy debate be resolved? Where do we look for evidence in support of a SB v. DB policy? What are the pros and cons of both patrol deployment measures? More importantly, what immediate and effective remedial steps can be taken to protect the front line police officers' safety without compromising the general public's expectation for law and order. In so doing, this article argues for a more informed discussion and reflective deliberation in pursue of an enlightened police patrol deployment policy.

This article caters to two kinds of academic audience. First, comparative police scholars who are interested in policing in Hong Kong. Second, China scholars who are interested in policing in Hong Kong.⁷ For both of these groups, research into HKP is just beginning. Particularly, there is no relevant police research study on either SB vs. DB debate or assault on police leading to injury in the line of duty in Hong Kong.⁸ This article is a first attempt to fill this noted literature gap.⁹

⁵ Stella Lee, "Police patrol in pair pending beat review" *SCMP* March 16, 2001. A2.

⁶ "One Accused of Neglecting Junior Staff, One Observed Taking the Opportunity to Make a Fuse, Killing of an Officer Reviewed Police Internal Discord" (一指忽視下層 一指借題發揮 殺警案掀家醜警隊內訌) *Apple Daily*, March 21, 2001.

⁷ See Kam C. Wong, "The Philosophy of Community Policing in China" Vol. 4(2), pp. 186-214 *Police Quarterly* (2001) (There are little research on policing in China. Comparative criminal justice scholars have failed to include PRC's emerging criminal justice system within their purview)

⁸ My own literature review, as confirmed by Chief Superintendent of Police, Charles Wong, PPRB. March 25, 2001.

⁹ For a literature review on police studies in Hong Kong, see Kam C. Wong, "Criminal Justice Education in Hong Kong" (Dec. 15, 2000) (unpublished paper on file with the author).

On a more practical front, the article also provides the HKP community – policy makers, operational managers and front line officers - with relevant research literature and pertinent empirical data (mainly from the United States; a country with the most police officers being killed in the line of duty and has had the most experience dealing with one vs. two officer patrol debate) to help understand the issues involved and resolve the debate on hand.

The article explores and untangles issues in the SB vs. DB debate in a systematic and comprehensive manner. There are nine sections to this article. After the introduction, Section II provides for a brief literature review on two lines of most relevant research that informs upon this debate: policy research on one vs. two officers patrol and empirical research on assaults on police in the line of duty. As a matter of focus, section III sets forth the issues raised and positions taken in the SB vs. DB public policy debate in Hong Kong in the wake of the incident. As a matter of context, section IV outlines the facts and circumstances giving rise to the SB vs. DB debate in Hong Kong. As a matter of caution, section V sounds the alarm against a rush to judgment as it calls for a more reflective evidence based decision-making process. This study begins with the observation in section VI that we have far too little factual information about the case on hand on the reasons for the murder and still less reliable empirical research data in stock on the prevalence and distribution on assault of police officers resulting in injury in the line of duty in Hong Kong to make an informed policy choice. Section VII points out the problems with DB as Section VIII observes the benefits to DB. Section IX concludes by observing that the risks of injury to front line officers are either unpredictable or unavoidable, or more likely both. They can best be reduced through proper training and continuing education, as supported by advanced life-saving technology and enlightened police-citizen encounters policy. More radical policy change in the demilitarization of the HKP is also suggested.

II. Literature review:

Two lines of research serve to inform upon the SB vs. DB beat debate, providing general orientation and overall structure for this study in turn.

The first line of research focuses on how the SB vs. DB policy debate has been discussed, i.e. issues raised and arguments structured.¹⁰ The central issue as raised by this line of policy-oriented research is one of safety vs. effectiveness. Such kinds of policy debate are usually conducted within the context of how to improve existing police service within a jurisdiction. They usually draw upon professional experience to support various claims asserted and argumentations advanced, e.g. one officer car has a higher rate of injury or two officers cars are more complained prone. They are rarely supported by any empirical study on the critical issue of relative efficacy or efficiency of one vs. two officers patrol. To date, there is no systematic research designed to test the hypothesis that two officers patrol is safer, from various sources of assaults, than one officer patrol. Thus, the “safety in number” proposition is at least unsubstantiated, at worse a myth. Nor is there any rigorous empirical research to show that single officer car patrol are more effective in reducing crime. Hence, the assumption that single officer patrol allows for more police coverage and lower crime rate is at best an unsupported, at worse false.

Policy research into one vs. two officers patrol

This line of research is exemplified by the work of ONE-OFFICER VERSUS TWO-OFFICER POLICE CARS IN WINNIPEG.¹¹ (Winnipeg Policy)¹² The Winnipeg Policy begins the policy debate by observing that notwithstanding the fact that Winnipeg has a

¹⁰ See the debate between O.W. Wilson, “One-Officer Patrol Car” *Police Chief*, May 1982, pp. 18-24. (One-Officer police patrol car is more cost effective); Richard Johnson, “The Advantage of Two-Officer Patrol Teams.” *Law and Order*, Jan. 1999, p. 68-70 (Police Foundation research shows that two-officer patrol is more likely to be assaulted by citizens); Chicago Police Department 1963 Training Report, “One-Officer Patrol Car,” *Police Patrol Readings*, Second Edition (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1970), pp. 212-220. (Two-Officer police car is more safe.) *The President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, Task Force Report*, Table 1, page 55, noted that there was a general move from two-officer police patrol to one-officer police car.

¹¹ http://www.fcpp.org/publications/backgrounders/one_vs_two.html

¹² For similar study, see Chapter II: Police Staff and Deployment in Report of the Task Force Studying the Akron Police Department (Feb. 1, 2000). http://www.ci.akron.oh.us/News_Releases/020200.html (Visited July 30, 2001) “The report by the IACP indicated that the use of two person assignments by the Akron Police Department is extreme. The national trend is to move away from two person units. Studies conducted by other agencies indicated that department’s who utilize one person units actually has a reduction in incidents of officer injuries,

larger than most police presence in Canada with 182 officers/100,000 population,¹³ the City has an lower than average detection rate at 9,763/100,000 or 25%.¹⁴ The Winnipeg Policy attributes the observed low clearance rate to inefficient deployment and ineffective distribution of police resources. Particularly, the City of Winnipeg police department suffers from an inflexible two-officers police car deployment policy. In the City of Winnipeg, one officer car is deployed between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. except for priority calls. Between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. two officers must be deployed.¹⁵

Having raises the issue, the Winnipeg Policy attempts to show that one-officer cars would increase coverage, reduce response times, use resources more effectively, and create a more attentive police force, with no loss of safety for the officers.

In making the case for one officer car, the Winnipeg Policy describes many modes of mixed one vs. two officers patrol that can maximize both officer safety and public security:

- . The RCMP has an exclusively one officer per car deployment policy.
- . The Indianapolis Police Department has a one officer per car policy, except in cases of dangerous assignments when two or more officers will be deployed. However, officers are trained and instructed to wait for backup when confronted with serious or dangerous situations.
- . The Saskatoon Police Department has a one officer on patrol policy until 11 p.m. when officers start to pair up. Like Indianapolis, two officers are required with “priority one” call, e.g. domestic disputes, 911 and weapon related calls.

resisting arrests and used of force. In addition, the calls for service per unit were reduced with the inception of one-officer unit.)

¹³ Average of all Canadian cities are 169 officers/100,000 population: Thunder Bay (187); Winnipeg (192); Regina (173), Montreal (173); Toronto (167); Saskatoon (151); Halifax (151); Victoria (149); Edmonton (146); Vancouver (141); Quebec (136); Ottawa (132); Calgary (132).

¹⁴ Thunder Bay (56%); Winnipeg (25%); Regina (40%), Montreal (27%); Toronto (38%); Saskatoon (42%); Halifax (22%); Victoria (32%); Edmonton (42%); Vancouver (16%); Quebec (26%); Ottawa (23%); Calgary (32%).

¹⁵ The deployment of two officers patrol is mandated by labour contract with Winnipeg police service.

. The City of Halifax runs one and two officers car 24 hrs. a day.

The key lessons learned is that cost-effective patrol deployment requires flexibility and prudence, something that is lacking with the Winnipeg police one-officer car deployment policy.

The Winnipeg Policy goes on to recount the pros and cons with one officer vs. two officers car:

Arguments in favor of two officers car, included: increased safety; increased observation (capacity) increased aggressiveness and increased observation.

Arguments in favor of one officers car, included: increased coverage; shorten response time; increased observation (alertness); better use of resource; and added safety (prudent).

Drawing upon this line of research, we learn valuable lessons in conducting SB vs. DB policy debate:

- (1) There is currently no empirical research bearing on the issues of safety vs. efficacy attending the SB vs. DB debate, in Australia,¹⁶ U.S.,¹⁷ U.K.¹⁸ or Hong Kong.
- (2) The SB vs. DB policy debate if conducted in the public is given to emotional appeal and political grandstanding.
- (3) SB vs. DB offers separate and distinct benefits as well as drawbacks. A fully informed, properly considered and well balanced policy debate must take into account all the pros and cons of two competing deployment policies to formulate an *integrated* patrol plan as a *comprehensive* whole.

¹⁶ See for example Institute of Criminology Web. Publications Catalogue (Police). <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/catalog/police.html> (Visited August 8, 2001)

¹⁷ See for example, Publication of National Institute of Justice, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs.htm> (Visited August 8, 2001)

¹⁸ See Publications of Policing and Reducing Crime Unit, Police Research Group, Police Research Series, London: Home Office Department. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/policerspubs1.html> (Visited August 8, 2001)

(4) There is no right or wrong, only more optimal, patrol deployment policy choice. The appropriateness of a beat deployment policy has to be considered with reference to a number of factors, e.g. environmental context (what kind of cities) and situational factors (what kinds of calls). The decision making process is one of balancing of utilities, i.e. seeking to optimize one set of benefits, e.g. public safety, in the face of other competing concerns, e.g. officers' safety.

Empirical research into assaults on police

The second line of research reports upon the incidences, prevalence, nature, causation and prevention of assaults on police officers.¹⁹ In the process, the literature touches upon, albeit tangentially, the issue of whether police officers are more likely to be assaulted in SB vs. DB assignments. More generally, given what we know to be the causes contributing to or factors associated with assaults on police officers, whether DB will be likely to prevent or reduce assaults on police incidents. Alternatives, what steps or measures can be taken to improve upon police street survival in the line of duty and while on patrol.

Systematic and comprehensive investigation into assaults on police officers began in earnest with the publication of PERSPECTIVES ON POLICE ASSAULTS IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL UNITED STATES²⁰ in 1974.²¹ This research aroused public

¹⁹ Samuel G. Chapman, *Murder on Duty: The Killing of Police Officers in America* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1998). (3,367 police officers have been murdered in the line of duty from 1945 to 1994, an average of 67 deaths each year.) (Hereinafter Chapman) For most recent data on police officers assault, killed and injured in the line of duty, see *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics* (D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000) and U.S. Department of Justice, F.B.I., *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted*, 1999, F.B.I. Uniform Crime Reports (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 2000). For an analysis of data, see "Officer Safety and Survival." In Donald T. Shanahan, *Patrol Administration: Management by Objectives* (Mass: Allyn and Bacon, 1985), pp. 324-334. For a more recent analysis, see Harry W. More, *Special Topics in Policing* Second Edition (Cincinnati, Ohio: 1998), "Chapter 5: Murder and Injury of Police Officers: Nature, Extent, and Trends", pp. 111-141. For official studies, see U.S. Department of Justice, FBI, *Killed in the Line of Duty: A Study of Selected Felonious Killings of Law Enforcement Officers* (Washington, D.C., 1992). *In the Line of Duty: Violence Against Law Enforcement* (Washington, D.C., 1997). For an excellent literature review, see "Chapter 11: A Fertile Arena For Research." In Chapman, op. cit., pp. 183-189.

²⁰ For example, the IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police) has published a "Police Casualty Series" with information gathered from newspapers and public journals when officers are injured or killed in the line of duty. This is of little use for research purposes because of

interests, defined research methodology and set scholarly benchmark for such studies until now.²² Before then, data on police officers injured and killed in the line of duty were kept by respective law enforcement agencies, in unsystematic and eclectic ways. The FBI was the first to systemize the collection of assaults on police data nationwide in the U.S. From 1960 to 1971, the FBI asked federal and local police agencies to supply annual information on prescribed forms on (1) number of full-time officers killed in the line of duty; (2) the total number of police assaulted; (3) the total number of injury and non-injury assaults; (4) the type of weapons used. Since January 1, 1972, the FBI introduced the “Law Enforcement Officers Killed or Assaulted” form which requires police agencies to report on the activities the police was engaging in and the type of assignments undertaken when assaulted or killed. It is the latter kind of data that is of most interest and useful in providing for a factual foundation and scientific base for policy formulation.

What is of interest to us about this line of research, such as FBI “Law Enforcement Officers Killed or Assaulted” data on police assignments when assaulted, is that they can tell us empirically about the relative dangerousness of one officer vs. two officers patrol assignments by correlating/tabulating police unit assignments with varying rates on assaults on police. As observed by Prof. Chapman:

“The unit assignment of assaulted officers is of particular interest in light of the one-man, two-man motor patrol controversy... Table 29 (see below) indicates that from the assault population, the greatest percentage (63.1 percent) of assault incidents took place when officers were assigned to one-unit. Over one-third of the assaults (36.9) involve officers

validity problem. See Police Casualty Series published by the Police Weapons Center, Management and Research Division, (International Association of Chiefs of Police)

²¹ Samuel G. Chapman (Project Director), Charles D. Hale (Assistant Project Director), C. Kenneth Meyer (Director of Research), PERSPECTIVES ON POLICE ASSAULTS IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL UNITED STATES, Vols. I, II, III. The National Institute of Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice. (1974)

²² See for example, Craig D. Uchida and Laure L. Brooks, Institute of Criminal Justice and Criminology, University of Maryland, College Park, MD (June 1988). More recently, Ben Brown, Assaults on Police Officers: An Examination of the circumstances in which such incidents occur, Police Research Series, Paper 10, Police Research Group, London: Home Office Department. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/policerspubs1.html> (Visited August 8, 2001)

assigned to two-man cars... The number of assault events involving officers assigned to one-man unit is probably a reflection of the proportion of one-man cars in the typical department...From 1946 to 1964 the percentage of large cities utilizing only two-man cars dropped from 62 to 20 percent. The percentage of all cities using one-man cars exclusively rose from 18 to 41 percent. Almost one half of the smaller cities employ one-man cars only.’²³

Table 1: DISTRIBUTION OF ASSAULT INCIDENTS BY UNIT ASSIGNMENT (ONE-MAN, TWO-MAN CARS)

Unit Assignment	Number	Percent
One-man unit	643	63.1
Two-man unit	376	46.9
TOTAL	1019	100.0

Notes: Extracted from Table 29 “DISTRIBUTION OF ASSAULT INCIDENTS BY UNIT ASSIGNMENT (ONE-MAN, TWO-MAN CARS), Samuel G. Chapman (Project Director), Charles D. Hale (Assistant Project Director), C. Kenneth Meyer (Director of Research), PERSPECTIVES ON POLICE ASSAULTS IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL UNITED STATES, Vols. I, The National Institute of Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice. (1974), p. 140.

Another interesting observation made by Chapman is that more officers do not necessarily mean less assault on police officers. According to statistics compiled on the number of other officers present when assault happened, only a minority (12.4%) of the incidents have no other officers present and a majority of (87.6 %) of the cases have more than one other officers present, i.e. one officer present (37.3%, two officers present (12.0%). The implication is clear - more officers do not mean less assault on police.²⁴

²³ Samuel G. Chapman (Project Director), Charles D. Hale (Assistant Project Director), C. Kenneth Meyer (Director of Research), PERSPECTIVES ON POLICE ASSAULTS IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL UNITED STATES, Vols. I, II, III. The National Institute of Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice. (1974), p. 140.

²⁴ Table 30: “DISTRIBUTION OF ASSAULT INCIDENTS BY UNIT ASSIGNMENT BY NUMBER OF OFFICERS PRESENT” IN Samuel G. Chapman (Project Director), Charles D. Hale (Assistant Project Director), C. Kenneth Meyer (Director of Research), PERSPECTIVES ON POLICE ASSAULTS IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL UNITED STATES, Vols. I. The

Later study of the same vein, shows that one-man patrol and two-man patrol might exhibit different assault patterns, giving rise to the possibility that the two kinds of patrol assignments are dissimilar policing activities and subject to different risk factors for safety vs. effectiveness comparison purposes.²⁵

According to Fridell and Pate slain one-officer vehicle patrol officers incidents (1983 to 1992) exhibited the following characteristics: “relatively small proportion ambused; more likely than other assignments to be dispatched; plurality occurred in residential areas; majority occurred outside at the side of the roads; relatively small proportion “killed at entry”; plurality intervening in ongoing crimes; primary one opponent; relatively large proportion disarmed and killed with their own weapons; likely to be without immediate assistance” while slain two-officer vehicle patrol officers incidents exhibited the following characteristics: “Similar to one-officer vehicle patrol except: even more likely to be dispatched; more likely to be killed indoors; even more likely to be intervening in ongoing crimes; more likely to be killed with handguns; less likely to be disarmed; much less likely to be without immediate assistance”²⁶

This line of research informs us of the following:

- (1) One-man patrol car is not necessarily more dangerous than two-man patrol.
- (2) Two-man patrol car is not necessarily safer than one-man patrol.
- (3) The empirical relationship between safety and number of officers on patrol exhibits complicated, complex, and contingent patterns and has to be untangled with further controlled research and critical analysis, taking local context and situational dynamics into account.

National Institute of Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice. (1974), p. 141.

²⁵ Lorie A. Fridell and Antony M. Pate, “Death on Patrol: Killings of American Law Enforcement Officers” in Roger G. Dunham and Geoffrey P. Alpert, *Critical Issues in Policing*, Third Edition (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1997), pp. 581-608.

III. The factual context for public policy debate: The murder of PC Leung Shing-yan²⁷

At about 12.05 pm, on March 14, 2001, the Lei Muk Shue Police Station received a call from a man who made a noise complaint against occupants of a flat. A PC was deployed to the scene. The PC was dispatched there alone because the complaint is a non-criminal and minor one. His usual beat partner was at lunch.

At about 12.25 pm, the PC was reported dead outside the same flat on the fifth floor of Shek To House. His service revolver and 12 rounds of ammunition were found missing. The case is classified as a robbery and murder. Initial investigations revealed that the PC sustained four gunshot wounds at his left eyebrow, left back, left arm and the back of his head respectively. The police was unable to locate the complainant who led the PC to his death. The call for police assistance was made by a mobile phone with a disposable phone card. No one cares to record and confirm the name and contact of the complainant. This has led the police to suspect foul play.²⁸

The police reacted quickly to contain the damage and ameliorate its impact – stabilizing survivors' emotion, maintaining staff morale, restoring public confidence. As with cop killings in other jurisdictions, the reaction to the incident followed predictable and well-rehearsed pattern.²⁹

Thus, within hours of the incident, the Commissioner of Police issued a stern statement condemning the deplorable incident and promising resolute action to bring the culprit to justice: "I would like to express my sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of the Constable. I wish to assure them that resources have been deployed to

²⁶ Lorie A. Fridell and Antony M. Pate, "Death on Patrol: Killings of American Law Enforcement Officers" in Roger G. Dunham and Geoffrey P. Alpert, *Critical Issues in Policing*, Third Edition (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1997), pages 591, 592 respective.

²⁷ "Murder and robbery in Lei Muk Shue" Add Police Report No. 4. Issued by PPRB (Police Public Relations Bureau). 1800 hours, Wednesday, March 14, 2001. See also also "Assassin Ambushed Police, Shot Four time" (殺手設局警中四槍亡) *Apple Daily*, March 15, 2001, A1. Clifford Lo, "Officer lured to his death," *SCMP* March 15, 2001. A1.

²⁸ Clifford Lo, "Officer lured to his death," *SCMP* March 15, 2001. A1.

²⁹ See Chapman, *supra*, note 6, p. 38.

ensure that a full and thorough investigation into this terrible tragedy is conducted."³⁰ The statement is meant to address as much the emotional needs of the survivors³¹ as the psychological well being of the officers.³²

The District Commander of Tsuen Wan, where the incident occurred, immediately ordered that all patrolling in the police district be switched to DB, pending review. DB is extended to all New Territories (South) police districts the next day.³³ Under normal circumstances and as a matter of HKP management policy, local commanders are given wide latitude to deploy their resources, including beat management. SB is the norm. DB will be used with female officers, at night, in remote area, on dangerous assignments and as dictated by circumstances. For example, SB officer will answer to non-criminal and non-serious calls, with back-up if needed.³⁴ The immediate policy change is to address security concerns of agitated police officers, suffering from the trauma of having had one of their colleagues killed in the line of duty.

In the wake of the incident and as a confidence boosting gesture, the Commissioner of Police ordered the immediate deployment of 850 police officers from Police Headquarters establishment, such as the Police Tactical Units (PTU), to support various Police regions to perform frontline duties during the fiscal year.³⁵ This is to address the allegations by Local Inspectors' Association and other rank and file officers that the police senior management is uncaring and not supportive.

³⁰ Statement by Commissioner of Police" Police Report No. 4. Issued by PPRB. 1745 hours, Wednesday, March 14, 2001

³¹ Francis A. Stillman, "Line-of-Duty Deaths: Survivor and Departmental Response." National Institute of Justice. Research in Brief. Jan. 1987. (A survivor's distress is affected by the police's response to the tragedy in terms of notification, emotional support and financial support.)

³² Gail A. Goolkasian, Ronald W. Geddes and William DeJong, "Coping With Police Stress," National Institute of Justice, Office of Development, Testing and Dissemination. Washington, D.C. 1985. pp. 1-12. ("There is a growing recognition among police administrators that the officers under their command are not superhuman.")

³³ Stella Lee, "Police patrol in pair pending beat review" *SCMP* March 16, 2001. A2.

³⁴ Mathew Lee, "Patrols switch in wake of killing" *Hong Kong I Mail* A10, March 15, 2001. (DC Tsuen Wan has ordered pair patrols for all beats.)

³⁵ "Police to increase number of officers on frontline duties" Police Report No. 3. Issued by PPRB. 2345 hours, Monday, March 19, 2001.

The deployment of additional officers may be more symbolic than real. It is certainly intended to silence (internal) critics and court (external) supporters, more so than obtain tangible results in reducing risk to beat officers. More information is needed to ascertain the impact and effect of the 850 officers on public safety in the street (actual or perceived) and officers' security on patrol (real or imagined). The first question to ask is how many police officers are actually available operationally at the street level in real terms with the added officers. The second question is how are such officers being deployed. In answer to the first question, 850 officers can be translated into 170 beat officers in operational terms. This is hardly a major boost in manpower to have any material effect on crime. In answer to the second and third questions, it is observed that the availability of 850 officers, depending on actual deployment policy and operational practice, may provide little safety to officers on the beat. In this regard, it is noted that PTU has always been deployed to augment regional police strength, e.g. in major crowd control situation or organized crime sweep operations.³⁶ More significantly, PTU deployment is not subject to local command and control. These kinds of deployment might not help local districts to reduce risk to officers at the beat level in a targeted way. In the end, there might only be marginal increase in security (reduction in opportunistic crime) with the presence of more officers (displacement effect due to saturation patrol) in the areas patrol. The foregoing analysis does not deny that the addition of 850 officers might have psychological morale boosting effect to the police officers (internal impact) or reduction of fear of crime in the minds of the public (external impact) in measurable ways.

Police also offered a reward of \$1 million, a record sum,³⁷ for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of the culprit(s).³⁸ The large award encourages defector from the

³⁶ "Anti-crime operation in Wan Chai" Police Report No.3. Issued by PPRB. 1300 hours, Saturday, May 27, 2000. (Officers from Wan Chai District together with Police Tactical Unit and Regional Anti-triad Unit of Hong Kong Island mounted anti-crime operations and arrested 62 in the morning of May 27, 2000.)

³⁷ "\$1m to catch cop killer" *Hong Kong I Mail* A5, March 15, 2001. (It is the highest reward for the slaying on an officer. The next highest was \$500,000 for arrest of the murderer of another PC who died in September 1993. That case is still unsolved.)

³⁸ "Reward for detection of PC murder case." Police Report No. 2, Issued by PPRB. 1830 hours, Friday, March 16, 2001

underworld and keep interest alive in the general public. Symbolically, the reward shows that the HKP is doing all it can to bring the murderer to justice.

Table 2: Policy implications of HKP’s remedial measures on targeted audience: Internal and External

HKP Actions	Internal audience	External Audience
CP Statement	Show overall organizational leadership in the face of attack: commitment and direction Provide internal support: consolidate support and boost morale	Show overall executive leadership in terms of crisis: responsive, confident and competent Pacify survivors: reduce anxiety; bring closure
Regional Commander NT(S)	Demonstrate coordination of effort with HQ order Demonstrate policy initiative & operational leadership to CP Relieve post shooting trauma to TW officers Remove anxiety on routine patrol	Remove public fear of crime Restore public confidence in HKP
CP deploying 850 more	Demonstrate commitment:	Address public concern with

police	<p>providing full support to front line officer</p> <p>Reacting to LIA comments</p> <p>Anticipating force wide concerns</p>	law and order
OCTB announcement of rewards	<p>Demonstrate commitment to obtain justice for one of its own</p> <p>Provide material incentive for general public to report</p> <p>Provide long term incentive for general public to report</p> <p>Provide material inducement to underground</p>	<p>Demonstrate police's commitment to do all it can to solve the case</p> <p>Sent a clear signal to the criminals not to attack any officer</p>
DCP public debate with LIA	<p>Drawing the a clear line between role of CP and LIA</p> <p>Correct the record</p> <p>Addressing police officers' concern</p>	Defensive against public charge of ill administration

IV. The contending issues in the public debate: Officer safety vs. Patrol productivity

Literally within days, if not even hours of the incident, concerned public and distressed police officers have called on the HKP to review its beat patrol deployment policy.³⁹ Currently, beat deployment is a local commander's prerogative. Particularly whether police officers should patrol in SB vs. DB. On March 17, 2001 Lau Kam-wha, chairman of Junior Police-Officers' Association and Tony Liu Kit Ming of the Local Inspectors' Association have called upon Assistant Commissioner of Police (operations) Cheung Ch-sum to review patrol deployment and practices.

The public debate centers on two main schools of thoughts. The Hong Kong iMail editorial epitomized the popular "reactive" school of thought: "For a start, police officers should not be required to go into situation alone. Even a routine investigation of a noise complaint can have the most deadly consequences, as yesterday's incident has shown."⁴⁰ This position is supported by Legsialtor Lau Kong-wah of Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of HK: "I think police officers are in danger at anytime and any place. It's safest for at least two officers patrol together."⁴¹

The opposing more professional "reflective" point of view is supplied by an editorial in the *South China Morning Post*: "Yet the number of times that policemen on duty are attacked in any way remains small...If manpower permits, double patrols could be introduced. But are they needed? "No-go" areas do not exist here, and any suggestion that police should not venture out along is simply a knee-jerk reaction to a terrible, but isolated, event."⁴² This position is supported by Legislator Democratic Party legislator To Kun-sun: "I believe this was an isolated incident. Deploying two officers to patrol together would reduce the beat coverage area."⁴³ The Chief Secretary for Administration, Chan Fang On-sang has come out in favour of SB but will leave it to the professional to decide.⁴⁴

³⁹ Stella Lee, "Shooting sparks manpower debate" *SCMP* March 15, 2001.

⁴⁰ Editorial "Safety First" *Hong Kong I Mail* A10, March 15, 2001

⁴¹ Stella Lee, "Shooting sparks manpower debate" *SCMP* March 15, 2001.

⁴² Editorial, "An isolated tragedy" *SCMP*, A 17, March 15, 2001

⁴³ Stella Lee, "Shooting sparks manpower debate" *SCMP* March 15, 2001.

⁴⁴ Mathew Lee, "Patrols switch in wake of killing" *Hong Kong I Mail* A10, March 15, 2001.

As expected, the police officers' representatives want more safety for the beat officers. If only the HKP has in place a DB police patrol system, the tragedy might not have happened.⁴⁵ Equally adamantly, the police administrators argue for more prudent use of limited police resources in the face of rising crime rates and increasing demand for services. DB patrol should be carefully deployed in order to maximize the security for the police officers without compromising the protection of the citizens.⁴⁶

Deputy Commissioner of Police Lau Yuk-Keun think that HKP: "needed to deploy its resources practically, flexibly and appropriately. It would be up to district commanders to decide when officers would patrol in pairs or alone."⁴⁷

V. The need for detached reflection

The issue being debated - SB vs. DB - is a complicated,⁴⁸ contentious, and increasingly being politicized, public policy issue.⁴⁹ Here in Hong Kong as with elsewhere around the

⁴⁵ "Urges Senior Management to Add More Staff, Not to Fool Oneself Anymore, Police Suggest that Single Beat Lead to Tragedy) (促高層添人手 勿再自欺欺人 警員指單獨巡邏釀悲劇). There are three police officers associations in Hong Kong, representing a colonial legacy of clearly demarcated hierarchy structure. The positions of the respective police officers' representatives/associations are much more nuanced, in some cases contradicting. Larry HK Leung, chairman of Superintendents Association, does not support a compulsory DB system. It all depends on the kind of cases. Lau Kam-wha, chairman of Junior Police-Officers's Association, likewise think that DB is not necessary if properly equipped and backed up. Tony Liu Kit Ming of the Local Inspector's association is more ambivalent and shifting. At one time he was heard to remark: "Sending two officers on patrol in all areas may be a waste of resources." On other occasions he accused the police senior management of obeying orders and pursuing reform, i.e. cutting staff, without taking the welfare of the staff into account. See Mathew Lee, "Patrols switch in wake of killing" *Hong Kong I Mail* A10, March 15, 2001.

⁴⁶ The position of the senior management is that the issue of police beat deployment should be made the responsibility of the officer in charge of the area or region, not to be made a centrally imposed, HKP wide policy. Within days of the incident, in a melodramatic move, the Commissioner ordered 850 HQ staff to be reassigned to the field.

⁴⁷ Stella Lee, "Senior officer hits out at 'irresponsible' criticism" *SCMP* March 19, 2001. A2.

⁴⁸ Carlene Wilson and Neil Brewer, "One- and two-person patrols: A Review" *Journal of Criminal Justice* Vol. 20(5) (1992). (The original impetus of one-officer patrol was economic. Upon review, the debate expanded to a number of issues: effectiveness, cost, safety, attitude).

⁴⁹ Amy Silverman, "Two-Cop Cop-Out?" (When an officer is senselessly murdered, the deliberative process and rational discourse dies with it.) August 4, 1999. phoenix.newstime.com (Visited March 21, 2001) <http://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/issues/1999-04-08/columns2.html>).

world, the issue comes up every time a police officer is assaulted, injured or killed in the line of duty.⁵⁰

The SB vs. DB is a complicated policy problem-set because it involves many nuanced and interconnected issues, and implicates still more subtle and divergent interests. It is a truly polycentric decision making set. It is a contentious issue because it challenges commonly accepted factual assumptions (there is safety in number), deeply held values (sanctity of police life) and fiercely defended organizational interests (prerogative of police administration vs. participation of police officers). Failure to resolve the issue in a timely and appropriate (principled, objective, balanced) fashion will be sure to cause irreparable damage to police morale, unrecoverable loss in public confidence, and permanent erosion of competency and legitimacy at the HKP.

Given the great challenge ahead and grave implications involved, the SB vs. DB debate should be conducted in a rational and informed manner with a broader perspective in mind, i.e. with a view of the future and in the context of the larger society. Lastly, as observed by a leading text in police administration: “The planner should consider the extent to which the different courses of action are likely to produce the desired goal, the assumptions underlying each course of action, and the criteria judging the strength of each course of action.”⁵¹

Finally, some decision, any decision, here and now, is not necessarily better than no decision at all. First, rash decision made it not theoretically informed, empirically tested and experientially borne out. Second, under the current climate, politicized decision caters to some interests (police safety) more so than others (public order). Third, fashionable decision focuses on limited, particularly tangible and short term - considerations (police safety, public order) without giving due regard to others more

⁵⁰See Chapman, *supra*, note 6, p. 36.

⁵¹For the importance of scientific research in police policy formation, “Research, Planning, and Implementation.” In William A. Geller (ed.) *Local Government Police Administration*. Third Edition. (International City Management Association, 1991), 331-361, 350. See the mechanics of policy analysis, see William N. Dunn, *Public Policy Analysis* (N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981), esp. Part Two.

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57 "Appeal for Information on Wounding Case in Tsuen Wan" Police Report No.3. Issued by PPRB. 1400 hours, Wednesday, January 27, 1999.

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⁶³ This is subject to the non-detection and non-reporting of successful effort in cubing attack due to DB. Sir Robert Peele taught that the best police is one that do nothing.

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Table 4: Law Enforcement Officers Killed by Type of Activities 1950 to 1994

Type of Activity	Oklahoma 1950 - 1994 Number (Percent)	National 1965 - 1994 Number (Percent)
Responding to disturbance calls (family quarrels etc.)	9(14.8)	429 (16.3)
Burglaries in progress or pursuing burglary suspects	3 (4.9)	148 (5.5)
Robberies in progress or pursuing robbery suspects	6 (9.8)	434 (16.5)
Attempt other arrests	17 (27.9)	587 (22.4)
Civil disorders (riots)	-	15 (0.5)
Handling, transporting, custody of prisoners	6 (9.8)	117 (4.5)
Investigating suspicious persons or circumstances	7 (11.5)	282 (10.7)
Ambush (entrapment and premeditation)	3 (4.9)	123 (4.7)
Ambush (unprovoked attack)	1 (1.6)	106 (4.6)
Mentally deranged	1 (1.6)	77 (2.7)
Traffic pursuits and stops	8 (13.2)	315 (12.1)
Totals	61 (100.0)	2,626 (100.0)

⁶⁴ Joel Garner and Elizabeth Clemmer, “Danger to Police in Domestic Disturbances – A New Look,” National Institute of Justice, Research in Brief, 1986.

Source: Abstracted from Table 2.2. Samuel G. Chapman, *Murder on Duty: The Killing of Police Officers in America* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1998).

It does appear then, based on this most cursory analysis of US data, that if we are going to reduce chances of police assaults and injuries we are better off paying attention to the former kind of low publicity and high stress police assault and injury incidents, e.g. responding to disturbances calls (e.g. family quarrel), or crime in progress (e.g. pursuing burglary suspects), or handling crazy people.⁶⁵ However, the HKP are already very experienced with handling all these kinds of incidences, e.g. back up is a routine. And when back up is not possible due to fast evolving circumstances, e.g. chasing robbers, there is very little that can be done now or in the future.

VII. The problems with DB patrol

Some might argue that the unpredictability of risk to police on duty and uncertainty of effective preventive measures argues for DB patrol. This is based on the theory that more is better, i.e. there is safety in number. *Intuitively* and at a *common sense* level, the proposition has facial validity - DB patrol does seem to impress upon the general public that the “bad guys” should think twice before launching an attacking on unsuspecting officers. However, this observation is subjected to three exceptions as informed by policing research and literature.

First, DB is not necessarily more deterring against well planned attacked by seasoned professionals working in groups. Nor it is particularly effective against emotionally unstable, e.g. highly charged family dispute,⁶⁶ desperate, e.g. people being arrested or in the process of escape,⁶⁷ or highly motivated assailants, e.g. drug dealers.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Joel Garner and Elizabeth Clemmer, “Danger to Police in Domestic Disturbance – A New Look.” National Institute of Justice, Research in Brief, 1986.

⁶⁶ Police Officer Shot Dead During Domestic Disturbance.” March 20, 2001. APB.News.Com, New York, NY.

⁶⁷ “Screaming suspect” (Visited March 21, 2001) APB.News.Com, New York, NY. (Officer Loses composure as police search his car for drug.)

Second, DB patrol also has three unintended side effects:

- (1) Officers might become more complacent while on patrol, e.g. talking with partners without paying attention to risk they should otherwise be sensitive to, or relying on each other's watchfulness when they should be taking more precautions.⁶⁹
- (2) Officers might become more confident than justified when entering a situation, e.g. overestimating their ability to control a situation.⁷⁰ Thus "each gives the other a sense of security far out of proportion to the added protection provided by the second officer."⁷¹
- (3) Researches have consistently shown that the presence of partners affect police-citizens encounters and outcome, particularly it can alter the risk of an encounter.⁷² Some officers, as suggested by social psychology research, will become more assertive and aggressive in the presence of other officers, which in turn might contribute to the aggravation of situational dynamics and inter-personal conflict leading to uncalled for hostility and attack.⁷³ In other circumstances, partners contribute to "sympathetic shooting" prompting officers to shoot even after danger is gone. This has the effect of aggravating or prolonging the armed confrontation, leading to more injury in turn.⁷⁴

Third, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967) noted that one-officer cars were safer. Another study conducted in 1977 by the

⁶⁸ Amy Worden "ARIZONA COPS SHOT IN RECORD NUMBERS Spike Attributed to More Brazen Suspects" July 27, 1999. APB.News.Com, New York, NY.

⁶⁹ O.W. Wilson and Roy C. McLaren, 4th Ed. *Police Administration* (McGraw-Hill, 1977) p. 337.

⁷⁰ See America Firearms Training and Tactics Course on "Law Enforcement Two Officer Team Tactics <http://www.aftt.org/specialty.html>

⁷¹ O.W. Wilson and Roy C. McLaren, 4th Ed. *Police Administration* (McGraw-Hill, 1977)

⁷² Peter Scharf And Arnod Binder, *The Badge and the Bullet* (Praeger, 1983), pp. 86-89.

⁷³ Richard R. Johnson, "Citizen complaints: What the police should know" *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* Vol. 67(12): 1-5 (1998) ("Because of added sense of safety and the extra pair of scanning eyes, more on-site situation involve two-officer units." This led to more complaints.)

⁷⁴ Peter Scharf And Arnod Binder, *The Badge and the Bullet* (Praeger, 1983), p. 87.

Police Foundation of the San Diego Police Department (a nonprofit research group based in Washington, D.C.), which is widely considered the best research on the subject, concluded that although officers showed a slight preference for two-officer cars, the one-officer cars better served the community. One-officer car covered more patrol grounds and did not appear to be less safe. The study noted that there were fewer reported incidents of resisting arrest with one-officer cars, and that two-officer cars did not reduce the odds that an officer might be assaulted or injured.⁷⁵

Fourth, historically, except in some big cities, New York and Chicago, the development in the U.S. has been from two-officer patrol cars to one-officer police foot patrol.⁷⁶ Currently, as a matter of policy, one-officer patrol is the norm and two-officer patrol is the exception. The police administrator has to make the decision base on community (dangerous “hot spot”) operational (dangerous assignments) or situational (deteriorating encounters) needs.⁷⁷

Fifth, one-officer vs. two-officer patrol debate in the U.S. has been deemed a police administrators’ prerogative, i.e. not amenable to negotiation or arbitration as terms and conditions of employment or staff benefits.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ John E. Boystum, M.E. Shenny and N.P Moelter *Patrol Staff in San Diego: One or Two Officer* (Washington, D.C.: The Police Foundation, 1988).

⁷⁶ The Clifton Police Department (On Line) Clifton, New Jersey
http://www.cliftononline.com/City_Government/Police_Dept/

⁷⁷ American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators recommends that all police jurisdiction should adopt a one-officer patrol policy.
<http://www.aamva.org/AAMVA/Legal/PolicyPositions/PTSPolicies.html> (Visited March 22, 2001)

⁷⁸ See *City of Boston v. Police Patrolmen’s Assn.*, 403 Mass. 680, 532 N.E. 640 (Mass. 1989). (Massachusetts Supreme Court holds that arbitrator could not decide one vs. two-officer patrol car issues; decision was a management prerogative.); *City of Sault Ste. Marie v. Fraternal Order of Police*, 414 N.W. 2d 168 (Mich. App. 1987) (City need not bargain with union on number of officers in a patrol car or minimum number of officers on duty each shift.) *Cunningham v. Moore County*, 604 S.W. 2d 866 (Tenn. App.) (Sheriff loses case seeking additional deputies; state and national manpower studies inadmissible as evidence.); *City of New York OCB Panel* (1980) ((NYC impasse panel upholds solo police cars for sergeants and lieutenants except in high-risk precincts. Sergeants Benevolent Assn. and the City of New York, Case I-145-79).

Sixth, SB deployment has been demonstrated to be the most productive use of limited law enforcement resources in preventing crime, rendering assistance and reducing fear of crime.⁷⁹

VIII. The benefits to DB patrol?

The above section noted that there are a number of (potential) problems with the DB patrol system. However, is there anything to recommend about DB patrol system? DB patrolling has the following to recommend itself:

- (1) There are clear and convincing evidence (from data compiled by the FBI – see Table 5 below) that SB officer sustained more injury when on duty, including death, i.e. injury per incident. This set of data is subject to the following caveat. Firstly, in as much as there are more 1-officer than 2-officer cars on patrol, the absolute number of officers killed in the line of duty in 1-officer car may just “appear” to be more than 2-officer car. Secondly, on the other hand, it can be argued that in as much as 2-officer car are dispatched to and otherwise involve in more dangerous assignments, the rate of officers being killed does not do justice to the actual risk they are exposed to. Lastly, notwithstanding the absolute higher rate of killing with 1-officer car patrol, research has also shown (thought not conclusive) that some injuries to officers on patrol, be it 1-officer or 2-officer car is avoidable, e.g. failed to call for backup in face of apparent dangerous situations. In essence, it is not 1-officer vs. 2 officer car that is the problem, it is the lack of due care of the officers involved that causes injuries and killing. All this is to say, making sense of 1-officer vs. 2-officer car assault and injury data is neither simple nor straight forward.

Table 5: Law enforcement officers killed: By circumstances at scene of incident (1986 - 1995)

⁷⁹ Linda Green and Peter Kolesar, “The Feasibility of One-Officer Patrol in New York” *Management Science*, August 1984, Vol. 30(8): 964-92. (Using speed of response to service as an indicator, one-officer patrol is demonstrated to be one of the most productive use of resource.)

Circumstance at scene of incident	Total	2-officer car	1 – officer car	1- officer car – assisted
Total	706	84	219	121
Disturbance calls	114	26	35	37
Arrest situations	261	23	40	46
Civil disorders	0	0	0	0
Handling prisoners	35	4	9	2
Investigating suspicious circumstances	122	15	52	18
Ambush	71	5	16	3
Mentally deranged	14	3	4	4
Traffic pursuits/stops	89	8	63	10

Source: Extracted from U.S. Department of Justice, F.B.I., *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted*, 1995, F.B.I. Uniform Crime Reports (Washington, D.C.,: USGPO, 1997), p. 30.

(2) In the study of crime, researchers have discovered that it is the fear of crime not the crime itself that is of concern to the (potential) victims.⁸⁰ This line of research informs that it is the symbolic presence of police, not the actual effectiveness of police patrol (in preventing and detecting crime) which influence people’s attitude

⁸⁰ Mary Dale Craig, *Fear of Crime Among the Elderly : A Multi-Method Study of the Small Town Experience* (Garland, 2000). See also George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson, “Broken Window,” *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1982. See later elaboration of the theory in James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, “Making Neighborhoods Safe,” *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1989. George

towards crime and the police. Should that be the case, the critical question to be asked in this debate is the symbolic significance and not actual effectiveness of DB vs. SB in reducing crime and promoting safety. For example, DB might be viewed by the public as a commitment by the HKP to provide for public safety at all cost and thereby help reduce the public's fear of crime. Alternatively, SB might mean faster response time to call for services and more virtual presence of police on the road. In this way, SB strategy may be translated into more public confidence in police ability to fight crime. It is argued here that in deciding whether we should adopt SB vs. DB patrol we should start with some clear understanding of how the HK public, or special segment thereof, perceive and experience with DB vs. SB patrol in their own community and daily life. More importantly, what the people want from the police and expect them to do?

- (3) Extrapolating from the fear of crime research, the police as “victims” of crime (potential attack) display the same kinds of “fear of crime” syndrome quite independent of the chance of being attacked in DB vs. SB patrol system. In essence, police is a stressful job because of the possibility of attack as imagined, not the actual probability of attack as informed.⁸¹ If that should be the case, the relevant scientific question is whether DB can substantially reduced the “fear of attack” on the police independent on its actual deterrent effect.
- (4) In law enforcement, the symbolic message projected by DB vs. SB should not be underestimated.⁸² This may well be influenced by the presence of two officers on scene. With this realization, the policy debate moves onto a different plan: should public agencies, including the HKP, be engaged in the image promotion business;

L. Kelling and Catherine M. Coles, *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities*. (New York: The Free Press, 1996).

⁸¹ The “possibility” vs. “probability” “analysing of risk of attack on HKP officers should not be confused with “vulnerability” vs. “risk” of attack analysis, as a policy tool. In making risk assessment, the assessor has a tendency to look at internal and subjective “vulnerability” (how exposed am I when attacked) and not external and objective “risk” (how likely an undesirable event is going to happen).

⁸² Anthony J. Pinizzotto and Edward F. Davis, “Offenders’ perception shorthand: What messages are law enforcement officers sending to offenders?” FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, June 1999.

beyond being cognizant of the symbolic significance of any policy and practice.⁸³ If the answer is yes, how far is the HKP allowed to promote image of safety to the exclusion or at the expense of what the HKP can or cannot do in providing safety and security to the public and its officers?

(5) One of the strongest arguments against DB beat is that of cost-effectiveness. SB in most circumstances function as well as DB, e.g. on routine patrol or in handling most non-violent situations. The question to ask is whether SB is more cost-effective than DB? The comparison is based on one basic proposition – SB is comparable to DB as a police service delivery mechanism. This supposition fails to understand how police work works and what police service means. Take two most frequent police tasks: I.D. stop and family disturbance calls. In the case of I.D. check, the single PC on beat may be tempted not to confront groups of two people or more if he is not sure of his own security, i.e. being properly back-up. On the other hand, DB patrol intervenes in some of the more dangerous situations. In the case of family dispute calls, two persons can take care of the situation better because they can talk the situation down by isolating the couple. In essence, there are things that two people can do that one person cannot take care of. The argument here is that DB patrolling is a *qualitatively* different in the maintaining public order and providing for service. In this case comparing SB vs. DB is just like comparing apple and oranges; they are not comparable – certainly not only with a single dimension – officers’ safety, or even double dimensions – together with public order. The public’s perception of safety, fear of crime and satisfaction of police services are all matters of concern for a policy maker.

(6) One of the major concerns these days is complain against the police, e.g. rise of right consciousness.⁸⁴ As a result, the police will be exposed to all kinds of complaints, real or fabricated. If there is no colleague to back an officer, he will be subject to unfound complaints more so than he is working in a DB. In other circumstances when

⁸³ The debate was anticipated by the father of FBI, Hoover, who was one of the very first police executives to use the media to built an FBI image larger than itself.

the police is one on one with the complainant, there is no other person to bear witness to what actually transpired.⁸⁵

IX. Conclusion: How best to protect our police officers and safeguard the public?

In conclusion, how should we strive to protect our officers from risk of attack and potential of injury in the line of duty without compromising the public's safety and order? Thus far we have been focusing on how to reduce the potential risk of attack and injury to officers through providing more staff support, thus the debate over DB or SB patrol. We have concluded that this line of thinking is not a particularly fruitfully one. First, we observe that assaults of police officers leading to serious injuries are rare and unpredictable events. This argues against DB on a 24 hours a day basis on flexible deployment of resource grounds. Second, we do not have sufficient evidence to show the relative effectiveness of DB over SB in preventing unpredictable or uncontrollable assault on police, e.g. cold-blooded ambush and hot - emotional confrontation. The evidence is at best inconclusive.

If DB is not the answer, what should we do next? In the rest of this paper, I am going to argue that if we are truly interested in reducing risk to officers we should be focusing on how to make unpredictable risk more predictable (more research on pattern, more information to street officers, more diagnostic training for officers), and alternatively make what is predictable less unpredictable (better control of situation, more survival skills). Chapman laid the necessary groundwork for this line of analysis:

“What is striking about the deaths of the 30 lone victims, as well as the 31 others who were in the presence of other officers, is that many of the murders were preventable. It appears that a lack of training, a moment of carelessness, over-reliance on other officers, a guess which proved wrong about how other officers were going to behave, and an underestimation of apparent circumstances contributed to several deaths. The failure to comply with some standard

⁸⁴ Kam C. Wong, “Policing Hong Kong Police” (2000) (on file with the author).

communication or field tactical procedure was central to the deaths of several officers. These lapses characterized not just a few men working singly, but were apparent in cases where several personnel were present. The issue then, is NOT purely one-vs.-two officer motor patrols. It is far broader, and must include a candid evaluation of officers carelessness as a factor which contributed to murder.”⁸⁶

In light of Chapman’s insight, the following immediate remedial steps can be considered to reduce the vulnerability of our officers in the line of duty:

- (1) The police officer on beat should be better informed about the relative dangerousness of various types of situation, assignments and people they are going to encounter. What types of assignment present the greatest risk? What types of opponents are most dangerous? What types of training are most appropriate in responding/dealing with certain assignments? Is it possible to develop special training to avert certain dangerous situations? Are there interaction patters and interpersonal dynamics among different types of assignments that make a particular type of assignment more ore less dangerous?
- (2) The police officers should be trained to be sensitive to personal and environmental cues of attack so that they can take precautionary steps to avoid getting injured.⁸⁷ As a first step, this requires the gathering of more relevant information from the police informants and complainants to be passed on to the beat officers. Police officers should know what to expect when they come into a potentially dangerous encounters with the public. Researches have shown that police conduct and resulting injury in critical incidences is dependent on the kind, nature and accuracy of information possessed by the officer at the point of entry.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ This is subject to the challenge that there is a “blue coat of silent” culture where police officers never volunteer to testify against each other, or if they have to testify, they testify truthfully.

⁸⁶ Chapman, *supra*, note 6., pp. 37-8.

⁸⁷ Peter Scharf And Arnod Binder, *The Badge and the Bullet* (Praeger, 1983).

⁸⁸ Research has repeatedly shown that frontline police officers decision and action is based on information in their possession.

- (3) The HKP should also compile reliable and valid statistics as to when, how, and why attacks on police happen, e.g. most attacks happened on Friday and in late evenings with drunks, such that the beat police officers can request for and the police executive can provide them with necessary support, including double back-up support, if deemed warranted. For example, DB should be the norm in dangerous or remote areas.⁸⁹
- (4) The police officer can be better trained and educated as to how to be sensitive to and react appropriately to inherently risky and potentially dangerous situations or people. In light of what little we know about the cause, prevention and deterrence of violence against the police (the supply side to the policing risk), the most productive use of limited police resource for assured result is to improve upon police performance, especially sensitivity ability and survival skills, of the police in the street (demand side to policing risk). This is most important when research show that most injury to the police is avoidable if the police officer involved has paid more attention and taken the necessary degree of care.⁹⁰
- (5) The police officers should be provided with prompt and sufficient back up (e.g. within three-five minutes) in most routine interventions and shorter for some more dangerous assignments. A designated back up (“shadow”) officer can be identified when an initial assignment to call is made.⁹¹ The “shadow” officer can be electronically linked to voice/video monitor at HQ control in real time and as an

⁸⁹ See Chapman, *supra*, note 6. Generally, “Part II: THE INCIDENT, ACTORS AN DISPOSITION” P. 15-72.

⁹⁰ See Chapman, *supra*, note 6. “Chapter 5: What Officers Need to Know: Improving Police Training” pp. 77-102.) Management of Aggressive Behaviour, VHS - LE 95163V, 30 min., 1994 (The frequency of assaults on police officers continues to rise every year. Roland Ouellette, author of the book by the same name, looks at verbal and non-verbal behavior as it relates to public safety situations. The issues of space, the reactionary zone, gestures and posture, various types of conflict that people go through and a host of other subjects are discussed. This video will help officers recognize, avoid, and/or minimize, the problems in any confrontations.)

⁹¹ West Barrett, Training Officer, GA (Gunns543@Yahoo.com) Comments: “We note that the contact and cover method gives us the tactical as well as psychological edge in most circumstances.” <http://lineofduty.com/disc1/00000091.htm> (Visited March 22, 2001).

police intervention is taking place, such that available back up can be made immediately, e.g. the officer may be too busy to pick up danger cue or too surprised to be able to do so.

- (6) Lastly, as a more radical policy, the HKP should consider having a no side-arms policy for beat officers;⁹² with the ultimate aim of de-militarizing the HKP in the future.⁹³ The doing away with HKP side-arms will stop the assailant from targeting (ambushing) the police for the service revolver and prevent more serious harm to police and others when revolvers are snatched. This suggestion is subject to the following yet to be resolved empirical issues: (1) How might the doing away of service revolver affect the HKP from carrying out his duty, e.g. capturing of criminal on the run, securing otherwise (potentially) dangerous criminals after arrest, and deterring future attempt of would be criminals in assaulting the police?⁹⁴ (2) How might this arrangement affects police morale, sense of identity, and perception of risk? (3) How might this arrangement affects how police carry out its routine duties?⁹⁵ (4) How might this arrangement affects people's perception of law and order or fear of crime?⁹⁶

⁹² Revolver can be provided to one of the officer on DB or SB on dangerous assignments. Otherwise, armed panda car can provide necessary cover and support.

⁹³ I am much indebted to Prof. Carol Jones (City University of Hong Kong, Department of Law) who pointed this out to me. (Personal e-mail, March 25, 2001). See also Kraska, Peter B. and Victor E. Kappeler (1997) "Militarizing American Police: The Rise and Normalisation of Paramilitary Units." *Social Problems*, 44 (1).

⁹⁴ All of the assaults on police is at close ranged. For protection purpose and in close quarter, it is not necessary to use a gun, mustard gas maze can be as effective. Otherwise, police can be instructed in karate to a level (black belt) such that they do not have to use revolver in defending himself.

⁹⁵ Bittner *The Functions of Police in Modern Society* (National Institute of Mental Health, 1970), pp. 36-47. (Everyone expects the police to use force to solve problem when they call the police.) Without arms (or force), he police, in order to have people comply with their wish must resort to other power, e.g. reason, charisma, and expertise. Max Weber, *Law in Economy and Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 323.

⁹⁶ In September of 1999 I was interviewed by an experienced 'police beat' reporter. When I told her that the HKP should be civilized, she said: "I like the police in smart uniform. They make me feel pride in them. I like the police to look strong. They make me feel secure. I do not want to know what they actually do!"

(7) On a still larger compass and with a longer perspective, the demilitarization of the police will have the effect of redefining the role and character of the police from a colonial and para-military police to a community and civilian one. More importantly, the de-militarizing of the HKP serves important symbolic value of redefining the culture of violence in Hong Kong. Henceforth, people – police and offenders – will learn not to use arms and resort to violence when confronting each other. Currently, violence begets violence. This is the true pitfall behind DB; the endorsement of violence as means to reduce violence.

We should do whatever we can to make our police officers feel secure in the line of duty without sacrificing the sense of safety of the public. The above recommendations can be implemented immediately while further study can be taken to decide whether SB or DB patrol should be provided, along the lines suggested in this paper.