

■ Tekst 6

An attack of sanity

Tackling the causes of crime obsesses the government but it doesn't work. Catching and imprisoning the criminals does, writes **Robin Harris**

1 Last week's figures for recorded crime and the latest British Crime Survey (BCS) had a predictable impact. The Home Office said they showed crime continuing to fall. The
5 tabloids and the Tories pointed to an apparent rise in violent crime and complained of displacement of crime from cities to underpoliced rural districts. The truth is at once more complex and more simple.

2 10 We do not know much about what crime is doing from year to year. But we do know about the level and the broad trends. Both the police figures and the BCS suggest a fall in crime since the early 1990s. This is probably
15 correct. But more importantly crime is still historically high. There has been a huge increase since the 1960s and this has not been reversed. Crime is also high by international standards. A recent survey of 17 countries
20 placed England and Wales at the top of the list of crime-ridden nations.

3 The debate should really start there. Are we prepared to carry on with existing policies? Or are we prepared to change
25 direction by embracing an alternative penal philosophy and, as taxpayers and citizens, pay the price for it?

4 Rather than pursue an approach that brings the full weight of the law and the resources of
30 the state to bear on crime, the authorities in Britain have continued to try to understand and remove its causes. It is assumed that criminals are propelled into criminality by their circumstances, and that these
35 circumstances can be changed by government. This is over-optimistic.

5 Despite all the research we still do not know much about the underlying causes of crime. More importantly, most of what we do
40 know does not help to stop it. A sensible strategy would be to stick to being "tough on crime", not on its "causes". We do actually know what works. Forceful, locally based, well-funded policing works. And prison
45 works.

6 Unfortunately, policing in Britain today does not work well at all. We have, despite the occasional scandal, an honest police force. But it is incompetent in the one respect that
50 matters more than everything else: tackling crime.

7 The collapse of British policing began when the huge growth of crime from the 1960s was not met with proportionate growth
55 in police numbers. This in turn encouraged a retreat from the streets to panda cars and offices. Timidity in dealing with crime hotspots and with those who were obvious suspects grew.

8 60 It isn't inevitable. The example of the New York police department shows that. In the 1990s the NYPD was transformed into a proactive, assertive, well-led, well-resourced and accountable force. The London
65 Metropolitan police wasn't and isn't. The leadership and mentality of the British police will have to undergo a revolution. And there will need to be many more police officers.

9 We also know that prison works because it
70 deters and incapacitates. Evidence from America suggests criminals have a good understanding of the sentences they are likely to receive if caught and that they adjust their behaviour accordingly. There seems no reason
75 to suggest that homegrown British villains are any less smart.

10 The effects of incapacitation are even clearer. The average criminal probably
80 commits about 10 crimes a year when free to do so. Locking him up for a good while for one offence, even perhaps one that is not in itself very serious, will afford a lot of protection to the public.

11 Prison is, of course, expensive. Indeed, if
85 we want much less crime, spending on criminal justice clearly has to rise as a necessary, though not of course sufficient, condition for the right policies. The sums involved are large. A doubling of the number
90 of police officers and a trebling of the number of prison places might together nearly double the current criminal justice budget of £16 billion. But it would still leave what we devote to our security as citizens as a mere
95 fraction of what we devote to the National Health Service and social security.

The Sunday Times

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- 1p **21** ■ How does Robin Harris introduce the subject of his article in paragraph 1?
- A By criticising the way in which information about crime is collected in Britain.
 - B By explaining why interpreting the data on crime is very difficult.
 - C By pointing out that the official crime rates give rise to various different conclusions.
 - D By stating that English institutions do not seem to agree on how to combat crime.
- 1p **22** ■ Which of the following statements about British crime rates is/are true, according to paragraph 2?
- 1 After going down, British crime rates have risen again in recent years.
2 There is a lot of crime in Britain compared with many other countries.
- A Both 1 and 2 are true.
 - B Only 1 is true.
 - C Only 2 is true.
 - D Neither 1 nor 2 is true.
- 2p **23** □ Geef voor elk van de onderstaande citaten aan of het volgens Robin Harris wel of niet een kenmerk is van de “existing policies” (regels 23-24).
- 1 “an alternative penal philosophy” (regels 25-26)
2 “an approach ... on crime” (regels 28-30)
3 “to try ... its causes” (regels 31-32)
4 “It is assumed ... their circumstances” (regels 32-34)
- Noteer het nummer van elk citaat, gevolgd door “wel” of “niet”.
- 1p **24** ■ How could the sentence “A sensible strategy ... its ‘causes’.” (lines 40-42) also begin?
- A For example, a sensible strategy...
 - B However, a sensible strategy...
 - C Moreover, a sensible strategy...
 - D Therefore, a sensible strategy...
- “Unfortunately, policing in Britain today does not work well at all.” (lines 46-47)
- 1p **25** ■ Which of the following pairs of elements plays a role in this, according to Robin Harris?
- A Corruption and bureaucracy.
 - B Lack of facilities and lack of information.
 - C Too many managers and too much tolerance towards crime.
 - D Understaffing and lack of effective action.
- 1p **26** □ Leg uit wat Robin Harris bedoelt met “they adjust their behaviour accordingly” (regels 73-74).
- N.B. Een antwoord dat neerkomt op een vertaling van het citaat zelf levert geen punt op.*
- 1p **27** ■ What conclusion does Robin Harris reach in the last paragraph?
- A It is doubtful whether the public will be willing to pay for a new approach to crime.
 - B No matter how much money is invested, crime will never disappear completely.
 - C The costs of an effective crime strategy are high, but low compared to some other government expenses.
 - D The money needed for fighting crime can only be found by cutting the budgets of some other ministries.