The future of the Nigeria police

Patrick Edobor Igbinovia
Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

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Abstract Future-time is of concern – and of increasing concern – with police system. The modern police has existed in Nigeria for about 69 years (1930-1999). These comments are an attempt to predict the future of the Nigerian police. Using the events of more than six decades in Nigeria as a baseline, intelligible guesses are made about what to expect of the general shape and character of the Nigerian police in 20 years from now – the year 2043. Prognostication of the future with respect to the Nigerian police is made in two broad areas: areas of continuities in policing; and areas of changes that might or might not occur in the police. And awareness of the continuities in policing in Nigeria provides perspective for predicting changes that might occur in the Nigeria police in the future. The essay is aimed at enabling the Nigerian police to anticipate and keep pace with changes so that it can minimize its own problems, enhance its functional performance and fulfil its proper role in society.

We are always looking to the future:
The present does not satisfy us. Our
Ideal, whatever it may be, lies further on.
Ezra Hall Gillett

Introduction
To a large extent police agencies are reactive in nature and thus are at the mercy of events beyond their control. The police react to the offence and the offender after the occurrence of the crime, as they react to the accident, disturbance or disorder after the fact. However, while police agencies today are primarily past oriented and reactive, there are instances where these same agencies are, on occasion, future oriented and proactive. Thus, future time is of concern and of increasing concern with the police system (Stephens, 1982, p. IX).

The forerunner of the present Nigeria Police Force (NPF) was established in 1861. However, the amalgamation and consolidation of the various police forces into what became the NPF did not take place till 1930. Consequently, if 1930 is taken as the year of its formal establishment, the modern police has existed in Nigeria for about 69 years.

The main elements of policing in Nigeria have been examined elsewhere (Igbinovia, 1980; 1981; 1982a; 1982b; 1988). It is now appropriate to consider the future of the Nigeria police. Any such discussion is necessarily speculative, since predicting the future is more an art than science. Using the events of the recent past in Nigeria as a baseline, we can begin to make educated guesses about the future of the police. Guesses, however educated, are still only guesses. Experience seems to teach us that we are often overtaken by unexpected
events. With respect to the NPF, for example, few people foresaw the ferocity of the student riots in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s; the emergence of new crimes and a new class of criminals; the sudden rise in criminal activities in the 1980s and 1990s; the change in police uniform and the reorganization and decentralization of the police. The past, then, provides only a limited guide to the future. Looking ahead to 25 years from now – the year 2024, what should we expect of the general shape and character of the Nigeria police?

Prognostication of the future with respect to the police is facilitated when we separate the various issues. These basic issues will involve two areas:

1. areas of continuity; and
2. areas of change.

An awareness of the continuities in policing provides perspective for a consideration of changes that might occur in the future. It is important to recognize the extent to which policing will or will not change. The police that can readily adapt itself to and at least keep pace with changes, will not only fulfil its proper role in the community, but will minimize its own problems in doing so.

Areas of continuity

Origin and structure

In certain respects, the basic elements of the Nigeria police are likely to remain unchanged for the foreseeable future. The major area of continuity involves the social, economic and political structure of Nigerian society and their impact on the police role. Barring some unforeseen upheaval, the dominant features of Nigerian social/political and economic structures will remain unchanged. In addition to great extremes of wealth and poverty, including chronic poverty among part of the population, there will continue to be cultural diversity, unemployment, ethnic conflict, religious intolerance, political instability, student unrest, and crime.

As a consequence, the police role will continue to be complex and ambiguous. They will be called upon to respond to these social problems and others. Thus, the NPF will continue to play a major peacekeeping and social service role in addition to the more clearly defined law enforcement role.

The continuities in the Nigerian social structure and in the police role mean that routine police work will also remain essentially unchanged. So also will controversies about police conduct and demeanor (arrest patterns, use of deadly force, brutality, corruption, etc.) continue in the foreseeable future.

Inheriting the pattern of British policing, the future of the police in Nigeria will continue to be plainly reflected in the policing of the UK. The local setting, the cultures and traditions, the expanses of the terrain will all continue to be subordinated to the Western (British) vision of what the future can and should be. Ideally, the Nigeria police, which was introduced to the colony as a progressive, “civilizing” institution will continue to be seen as an instrument of the people’s will – as interpreted by those wielding the power. The
responsibilities of the police will expand. Training will follow patterns already set or influenced by the UK and, no doubt, technical assistance will be made available by the West and the UK to Nigeria to ensure that the police are not only made strong and effective but also to ensure that Nigeria follows the West in its toleration of individual freedom and in its attempt to operate market economics (Clifford, forthcoming). Indeed, just as the Francophone countries take France or its satellite countries as their models, so will Nigeria continue to adopt British styles of training, preventing or investigating crime. There are signs that this development will continue in the years ahead:

British police officers are expected soon in Nigeria to help their local counterparts beef up training, research and planning units.

Already, an officer from the UK has visited the country to assess the training needs of the Nigeria Police Force.

Part of the training would entail the British officers coming to the country to exchange their experience and expertise with Nigerian officers.

The British officers are also expected to deliver lectures … the British experts’ training assistance will complement the past process of sending police officers abroad to attend specialized courses and seminars (Oshodi, 1988, p. 5).

A similar statement was made in November 1999. It states:

The Inspector-General of Police, Alhaji Musiliu Smith, has sought the assistance of Britain in the provision of modern equipment and training of police personnel. The request was made to Mr Graham Burton, British High Commissioner in Nigeria and a team of officials from the British Department of International Development during a meeting last week (Tempo, 1999, p. 2).

Furthermore, it is unlikely that the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) will be in the throes of major changes in administration, supervision and operation in the future. The traditional hierarchical concepts and “principles of organisation”, with heavy input of military constructs – emphasis on command, role call inspections, periodic inspections of personnel in uniform, issuance of general and special orders, saluting of superior officers and formation drills – will not only continue to dominate the NPF but it will also continue to authenticate hierarchy by tacit acceptance. Apart from that, the NPF will continue to be a closed service, with virtually no lateral movement of personnel. This will mean that management and supervisory personnel will continue to move up through the ranks, thus the lower standards, graft and corruption which have plagued the police service will be reflected in the development and improvement of the personnel (Kenny, 1972, p. 8).

It is also likely that Nigeria will continue to have a national police force rather than an autonomous state-based or atomistic police force. The geographical size and the diversity of the country are the principal guarantees for this. Another is the nation’s well-established conviction that the presence of a national police force is a guarantee against tyranny, oppression and victimization of citizens of different political persuasion from those in power. In part, this prejudice stemmed from our post-independence experience when regionalized police provided each region or state with a militia which it used
against the other in the event of conflict and lent itself to enforcement of policies detrimental to the interest of minorities in several states (Kayode, 1976, p. 57; Arikpo, 1967, pp. 88-9). Logic and political expediency seem to argue persuasively against the divisive tendencies of regionalized police forces, as the strength of public opinion attests (Kayode, 1976, p. 57; Arikpo, 1967, pp. 88-9).

From the origins of the NPF, it was intended that the police perform control activities. This will not be less important in the coming years; but there will also be an increase in the importance of its role in social integration and support services. One thing is certain: the pressure on the agency can only increase in the years ahead. Rising expectations, population growth, and urbanization will exert ever greater pressures on the Nigeria police. Apart from that, continued erosion of the authority of the schools, the churches and the family and other institutions of social control will leave the agency to deal alone with some of the country’s deepest problems. The NPF will have to respond to the pressures, whether due to erosion of social control or to an increase for need of societal inputs into the support system (Shane, 1980, p. 197).

*Modus operandi*

Although police workload and public pressure on the police will increase, basic police operations will not, however, undergo any fundamental change. The police will still have the responsibility for dealing with crime, maintaining order and providing miscellaneous services to the public. In all probability, patrol will remain the basic manner in which police services are delivered to the public, and police officers – working alone or in pairs, will continue to exercise enormous discretion (Walker, 1983, p. 321).

Improvements in police operations are likely to be small, however. The primary objectives of policing are beyond the direct control of the police. Research indicates that patrol has, at best, a marginal effect on criminal activity. Improvements in patrol are not likely to increase the deterrent effect substantially. Criminal activity remains a social phenomenon largely beyond the control of the police. At the same time, improvements in the detective function are not likely to increase the clearance rate substantially. The very nature of many crimes (especially crimes where the offender is not known to the victim) puts limits on the ability of the police to solve them (Walker, 1983, p. 321).

*Financial and value considerations*

The biggest problem affecting the future of the NPF will continue to be the problem of money. There will never be enough money to do all that is needed and hence it is a question of making the best use of the money available. The problem of money is likely to grow worse because the trend will be for the cost of the services to increase faster than increase in the country’s wealth, if the country’s past economic growth is anything to go by. The reasons for the increasing cost of the services are improved services due to the use of more sophisticated equipment and the employment of more police personnel in
relation to the users of its services, the continuing increase in the proportion of young people in the population; the increasing crime rate; the increasing wage bill which will be difficult to reduce as the police services rely on people to operate them and hence, as the wage bill increases, greater use cannot be made of machinery as happens in industry; and finally, an awareness of new needs that previously had been overlooked (Baugh, 1977, pp. 186-7). Until the problem of money is solved, most of the other problems can only be tackled in a hypothetical way. Indeed, the NPF may have to commercialize some of its services in the future to raise money to finance its services. Alternatively, the agency may have to adopt line taxation — taxes paid for specific services — to help pay police bills.

Like criminologists, economists agree on little save that Nigeria has a perilous problem with inflation which does not seem amenable to solution, and which will likely continue to ravage the economy for some time to come. An interesting thing about inflation is the effect it has on crime. Victimization studies suggest that the probability of a person reporting a theft is related to the value of the property lost (Friel, 1982, p. 29). In the future, if inflation continues to drive prices up an average of 60 per cent per annum (The IMF, World Bank and Africa, 1997, p. 12), with disposable increase shrinking, the perceived value of stolen goods will increase and so will the reporting of previously unreported crime, according to Friel. Since crime involving property constitutes the lion’s share of crime reported to the police, this reporting artifact will have a substantial statistical impact on future crime rates (Friel, 1982, p. 29).

The more nefarious upshot of inflation, however, is what it does to people’s capacity to acquire the material goods and services associated with the dreams of the Nigerian lower and middle classes. For decades, the people in these classes have been the economic backbone of the nation. They constitute a plurality of the workforce, pay a disproportionate share of the taxes, and have least access to the federal larder. With rampant inflation, the cost of the lower/middle class dream increases while the financial capacity to realize that dream declines. Supposedly less law-abiding than individuals in the upper class, the lower/middle classes may turn increasingly to illegitimate means of acquiring consumer goods, as inflation eats away at legitimate ones such as savings and credit. One very real future possibility is an enormous black market of stolen consumer goods tempting these moral individuals in these classes with all manner of goods and services that inflation has denied them. Such fencing operations may enjoy a large clientele amongst the urbanites and suburbanites in Nigeria in the foreseeable future. This pervasive black market, the subsequent corruption of Nigerians, and the enhanced incidence of larcenies to feed the hunger with stolen consumer goods may well be the major crime problem in Nigeria in the next two-and-a-half decades. Apart from that, if the Nigerian economy continues to worsen in the future, with higher levels of unemployment, we can anticipate higher levels of crime.
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Patterns of criminal behaviour
Furthermore, if one gives wings to his imagination and transports himself forward to the future we find a very different Nigeria than exists today. Not only will crime increase in the country, the level of violent crime will also escalate. The general increase in the latter will manifest itself in terms of more assaults on police officers and more officers killed on duty; and more people killed in general. Indeed, the country will be stupefied by a series of savage political and other assassinations which will threaten to snuff out the candle of many citizens: the destiny of the country will hang on the hair trigger of an assassin’s pistol; business houses will be looted in large numbers; riotous mobs committed to violent acts and violent acts committed against them will be the order of the day; a drug culture will mushroom, rotting the underbelly of Nigerian life, corrupting our young, our police and public officials; there will be violent protests of all sorts, and unprecedented youth crimes; cities will be turned into jungles filled with young human predators; there will be violence in the homes, in the schools, on the streets; and homes will be heavily secured and fenced like prison yards. Apart from that, criminologists agree that crime is a young person’s behaviour. A corollary of this is that the larger the proportion of young people in society, the more criminogenic it becomes (Cressey, 1957, pp. 230-41). A 1998 World Health Organization (WHO) survey has put Nigeria’s population at 130 million with a projected rise to 329 million in the year 2025. In 1990, the same survey showed that 3.2 million of the 80.6 million people in Nigeria were people of 60 years and above. It is estimated that by the 2025, 14 million of Nigeria’s 329 million people will be 60 years and above (Sunday Vanguard, 1998, p. 1). In addition, the 1996 report by the Population Reference Bureau (Washington, DC) projects that at an annual growth of 3.1 per cent, Nigeria’s present population may double by the year 2021 if the rate is maintained. In its 1995 World data projects, it stated that Nigeria’s population which it puts at 101.2 million would hit 162 million in 2010 and 246 million in 2025 (The Guardian, 1996, p. 15). What this boils down to is that the country has a future dominated by youths in numerical strength. With the birth rate increasing, we may live in a non-gerontocracy, a society in which the young will be in and old will be out. If this demographic trend continues through the year 2024, we may experience a proportionate increase in youth crime nationally. Indeed, it would appear from available data that the seeds of youth delinquency have already been sown; we will likely harvest them in the future.

Perceived role of the police
All these happenings would probably lead to three things. For one, there would be increased pressure on the police to do something about the crime situation. Nigerians will demand more effective and efficient (result-oriented) police operations to stem the tide of crime. Second, the country will come to recognize that the police are responsible for enforcement of many laws that are realistically unenforceable, due to manpower constraints or lack of the support of citizens. We will probably see some laws such as wandering, loitering,
hawking, marijuana use, bigamy and personal morality laws decriminalized so
that the police can effectively utilize their time and resources to enforce laws
that need greater attention such as violent crimes against property (Grazia,
1982, pp. 29-30). Third, as all these things happen, the level of popular tolerance
for harsh law enforcement will rise. More punitive legislation will be passed;
authorization for preventive detention and electronic surveillance, mass arrests
by the police without a declaration of an emergency, acquiescence to
overreaction of the police to allegations that the police pressurize and harass
individuals and groups without public outcry will be rampant and will make
people become increasingly insensitive to the personal danger of giving
government broader powers in law enforcement (Kenny, 1972, p. 216).

Political and constitutional factors
Politics will not only continue to have a major impact on the police role in
Nigeria, the police will also continue to be affected by the corrupt influences of
politics. This problem will stem from two sources:

(1) political interference in the police function; and
(2) political control of the police.

Political interference may take two forms. One, continued involvement and
employment of the police in conducting partisan elections will politicize the
police, cause them to loose their neutrality, may turn them into punitive and
repressive tools to be used by the ruling political group to oppress and victimize
political opponents. Second, political interference may take the form of inducing
the police to engage in partisan intervention or non-intervention. The police will
be pressurized by subtle means to take action against a particular group of
people or to refrain from taking action against another group. These forms of
directives for partisan intervention or non-intervention will not only frustrate
the police as a body, they will also act as impediments to efficiency because they
will serve to prevent policemen performing their official work.

Finally, the Nigeria police will continue to face a political and constitutional
dilemma in the years ahead. This dilemma is a product of the constitutional
provisions which place the control of the police on the shoulders of an elected
executive president. For example, under section 215 of the 1999 Constitution, it
is the president acting on the advice of the Nigeria Police Council who appoints
the Inspector General of Police who is the head of the police while the
Commissioner of Police for each state of the federation is appointed by the
Police Service Commission. Under sub-section 3 of section 215 of the
Constitution, the president is also empowered to give lawful directions with
respect to the maintenance of law and order to the Inspector General of Police
and he shall comply or cause them to be complied with. There is an equivalent
provision in section 215 (4) which creates such relationship between a State
Governor and a Commissioner of Police. The Constitution (section 215 (4))
further provides that where there is a disagreement between the Governor of a
State and a State Commissioner of Police over a directive by the Governor
which appears to be unlawful, the matter would be referred to the President for settlement but the Constitution has not vested such power of review in any person or body in case the relationship between the President and the Inspector General of Police breaks down. The question is: suppose an unlawful directive regarding public safety or public order is given to the Inspector General of Police by the President who employed him and has power to dismiss him, what happens, if the Inspector General disobeys? The answer is obvious. This constitutional chain on the leg of the police will continue in the years ahead and if care is not taken certain unlawful orders (for example, police collusion with a political group to rig elections or arrest political opponents of the President’s party), could plunge the country into chaos or civil war (Inyang, 1986, p. 10). Commenting on this, the Nigerian Tribune says:

A major conflict area in the political administration of this country since independence is the use to which the police is put. This conflict becomes more potent and devastating in the period of party politics. The second republic, especially towards its end, was marked by agitation from various quarters for a confederal arrangement for the country. One of the reasons usually advanced by the vociferous protagonists of confederation then was the lopsided and unacceptable manner in which the police was made to operate. The Inspector-General of Police (IGP), because he earned his appointment from the President, had to kowtow to the President and his party members. Thus chief executives of states not controlled by the party that formed the federal government had to virtually beg the President and the IGP for the use of the police.

State police commissioners suddenly saw themselves as alternate governors and acted so. The elected state governors had to bribe the police commissioners to get them to perform their normal constitutional functions. When this is related to the understanding that state governors were supposed to be in charge of peace, security, law and order in their states, the ridiculous nature of the matter becomes obvious. The police was made to abuse its charge and the country, as a whole suffered the indiscretion that went with it.

Perhaps the abuse arose from the reason that the IG's appointment was made by the President. The argument that the appointment of such an important officer of state ought not to have been vested in an individual may not be too unreasonable, given the experience of Nigeria's recent past.

The further argument that the IG's appointment should have been made by the Police Service Commission, as that body is responsible for the appointment of the state police commissioners, is equally sound and plausible. But the question arises: who appoints the Police Service commission? …

… The mode of appointment notwithstanding, it is our considered view that the police should be loyal only to the Nigerian state and the people therein and not to the transient functionaries that appoint them. Regardless of the manner of appointment, we say that the IG and his subordinates need not see themselves as thugs and errand boys of political office holders. Rather, they should know that they are important officers of state and that peace in the country depends on how impartially they handle their assignment …

… For the success or otherwise of the third experiment in democratic government depends largely on the role of the police. The relationship between the police and elected public officers must be clearly defined … The experience of the second republic should constantly remind everybody of the need to have a police force whose loyalty is to the country (Nigerian Tribune, 1988, p. 7).

Perhaps the lesson to be learned is that a good police force may not be able to dictate to its political masters, but it can moderate their excesses (Clifford, 1983, p. 14).
Areas of change

What will be the general changes that would occur in the NPF in the next two-and-a-half decades? One of the most significant changes in the future due to the high level and incidence of violent crimes in the country is that the NPF personnel, who under normal circumstances do not carry guns, will be required to do so as a matter of routine. Indeed, guns will replace batons as part of the regular police outfit.

Another significant change that is likely to occur in the future is that the concentration of police officers in barracks would be a thing of the past. The rank and file will live with the people. This development will help reduce the physical and social isolation which has existed between the police and the public and bind them together. Besides, another important change that is likely to occur is that the rank and file of police personnel will become much more educated than they are now. Given the positive trend in education, it is possible that in 25 years time we may see university degrees or diplomas demanded of all recruits. With the organizational and milieu changes that are likely to occur in Nigerian policing, it will come as no surprise if the credentials of future police administrators also undergo some changes through experience, seminars, managerial training and formal university education.

Educational background and image

The current problem, however, is that the NPF has made no effective provision for educated officers. Thus, most of the best leave for occupations that promise greater (according to Maslow) self-actualization. The grinding down effect of a paramilitary bureaucratic organization especially at the lower echelon level is incompatible with education. Consequently, it is likely that more effective organizational arrangements would be made in the years ahead for better educated officers. This process is likely to be spurred primarily by Nigeria’s need for better police service and by growing professionalization. This would be encouraged by the opening of police job opportunities to such people as women who will not perpetuate the traditional image. It is likely that this provision will include the redefinition of the general duty of a police officer and require assigning of men and women to all facets of the police mission; and encourage their promotion to specialty units and command and supervisory positions. If this becomes a reality, it would increase the pool of available candidates for line, staff, and managerial positions. There will also be renewed emphasis on the quality selection of police administrators since the available pool will increase competition (Farmer, 1978, p. 32).

Technological implications

The state of Nigerian technology and the economy may be the most important forces for change in the next two-and-a-half decades. We are living in an era of technological innovation. Computer systems, Internet, e-mail, video tape recording machines, and international communication networks, which were reserved for companies or agencies that had the means of massive capital investment, are now available and accessible to the average home in many
countries in terms of cost. As a rule, police organizations are often wary of technological innovation, since it is often tied to cost considerations and threatens the traditional way of doing business. Police administrators in Nigeria today and in the future have to be “informed consumers” of this new technology. Although they are not expected to know how to tear apart a computer terminal system, they should know the strengths and weaknesses of implementing a computerized records system for the police. They need to know about basic programming to experiment with new methodologies that deal with budgets, crime trends, personnel records, and so on. The same is true for other forms of technology, such as video units, which can be used for long-term surveillance on target areas, thereby freeing personnel for other duties (Thibault et al., 1985, p. 322).

In addition, patrols of the future in Nigeria may be altered dramatically by technology from the prevention brand that is employed today. It is possible in the future for every patrol vehicle in the country to be equipped with a miniature computer augmenting the mobile radio which would relay an automatic signal back to the communication centre giving the location of the vehicle on an electronic map of the whole area – as in the advanced countries. Computerized crime analysis would also permit this map to be keyed to show a great variety of characteristics and facilitate planning. Some of these characteristics would be:

- Street and map response time grid.
- *Modus operandi* grid related to demographic characteristics and time of crime commitment.
- Time, place, and nature of crime shown by number and also colour coded for easy identification, from white to crime free areas going to black for areas of violent crimes against the person. Listing of burglaries, robberies, traffic deaths, juvenile crimes, and other grids would be available at the punch of a button.
- Demographic vehicles: population density, race, age of population, mobility of population, and so on.
- Trend analysis of traffic control, civilian disasters or traffic and energy blackouts would be available for planners if a disaster or traffic stoppage occurred (Thibault et al., 1985, p. 323).

Computers can not only help the police solve problems, but can also create other problems for the police. One clever computer fraudsman can criminally and falsely divert or credit electronically millions of dollars or pounds into his account or named accounts (Taylor, 1982, p. 57). Computer theft/fraud is not only occurring now but the problem will grow in frequency and complexity in the years ahead. Indeed, the most complex criminality that will lurk in Nigeria in the next two-and-a-half decades will probably be crime committed on or by technology. To deal with this problem will require new laws, agencies,
enforcement strategies and know-how. The NPF must anticipate and keep pace with these problems if it is to minimize them.

Role of women
A significant percentage of the Nigerian labour force is currently made up of women. Friel (1982, p. 3) describes such a trend thus: “Flight of women from the kitchen to the (labour) market . . . is more an act of economic necessity than an expression of women’s rights. The widening gap between cost and disposable income compels both husband and wife to work if they are to maintain a modest capacity to secure the good life. For the single parent, there is no choice in the matter of work” (Friel, 1982, p. 3).

As women move from the kitchen to service jobs and professional positions, the incidence of weekend or evening families will increase – husband working in one area of the city, wife in another, the family coming together on the weekends and evenings. This increasingly loose federation of parental breadwinners will have less influence on the development of their children because other institutions will have more. Clearly, such a change in the family could be criminogenic (Friel, 1982, p. 33).

Besides, with the movement of masses of women into the work force, there will be a change in victim-offender profiles. Traditionally the most victimized citizen in Nigerian society has been the young male, the female being the citizen at least risk. This pattern is already changing with more and more women becoming victims and offenders. As an increasing number of women get involved in criminality, the traditional chauvinism of the courts will decline and an increasing number of women will be committed to prison institutions. Possibly by the first half of the next century as many as 40 per cent of the nation’s prisoners will be women. Indeed, by the year 2024 women offenders and prisoners will be commonplace.

Private security organizations
While there is only one police force in Nigeria, there are many private security companies operating in the country. The Federal Government has regulated private security agencies (Private Security Company Decree No. 33 of December, 1986), and this regulation will increase in the future. The private sector of policing is growing in Nigeria at a rapid rate while the public sector police are remaining the same. Indeed, the Sunday Times reports that “despite police efforts to curb crimes, the level at which companies and individuals employ the services of private security agencies is on the increase” (Sunday Times, 1988a, p. 14). Thus the proactive police management team of the future will have as one of its major concerns the relationships between the Nigeria police and private security agencies. As salaries increase in the private security sector, more and more talent will desert the NPF for private corporations, housing developments, retail management systems, banks and financial institutions, and so on. There are already indications that “most major companies and financial institutions (in Nigeria) now patronize private security
companies" (Sunday Times, 1988b, p. 11). Thus a major focus in the future of law enforcement in Nigeria will be the creation of a positive relationship and cooperation between private security agencies and the Nigeria police.

Balancing state security and human rights
Numerous other areas will also bring problems to the police in the future. These will range from the rapid increase in motor vehicles with associated problems of death, injury and criminal mobility to the problems surrounding police behaviour and its effect on police operations. One area, that will have an important bearing on police activity, will be the legislative field. Recent announcements indicate moves to review some Nigerian Laws and revise the Constitution and other changes directed toward protecting the rights of the individual. Indeed, human rights organizations like the Association of Trial Lawyers of Nigeria and the Civil Liberties Organization have been established to “protect the fundamental rights of the individual Nigerian from an unwarranted abuse by agents of government” (The Guardian, 1988, p. 9). These moves will not only have important bearings on police activity, they will also bring changes in the relationship between the community and the individual living in it.

Paradoxically, while the 1999 Constitution guarantees liberties under the individual law, the same Constitution recognizes the need to curb the excesses of individuals if the state is to survive. The law of the land equally empowers the police to check these excesses while at the same time ensuring that individual rights and freedom are not violated. However, “experience has shown that there is increasing confrontation between individuals and the police in an attempt by the latter to protect state security” (Inyang, 1986, p. 9). In the process, the police find themselves violating the very same fundamental rights of individuals which they are supposed to protect.

The demand for greater police respect of citizens’ constitutional rights is likely to continue in the future. The failure to recognize that the police force cannot survive if it depends for its continued effectiveness on the citizens’ abdication of their individual rights and liberties will undoubtedly lead to much litigation by citizens who will seek to challenge the legality or otherwise of police action. A former Inspector General of Police (Inyang, 1986, pp. 8-9) observes that many suits against the police for unlawful arrests and court orders on writs of habeas corpus pending in various High Courts in the country, border on attempt by police to protect the state. The development must remain a major concern of the police as it seeks to strike a balance between community or state rights on the one hand with human rights and individual freedoms on the other.

In sum, the increase in personal and social mobility, the rise of urbanization, the threat to secularization, the growth in population, the decline of the family, the emergence of an employee society, the specialization of labour, the decline of individual autonomy, the rise of education, and the growth of science and technology will be the dominant factors which will have great impact on the
administration of the police function in the years ahead. The police force must either adapt or plan to meet the challenge. Indeed, police at the cutting edge of social change will be faced with many challenges in the years to come. It will be called on to deal with an increasingly changing world, in both values and expectations. The relation between groups is changing as the formerly powerless groups are demanding and gaining power. These conditions demand flexibility and understanding from the agencies of society and particularly the police (Shane, 1980, p. 193).

Conclusion
Some of the problems to be encountered by the NPF in the future have been outlined in this essay. There are many other forecasts that might be made about problems which will encroach upon the Nigeria police in the years ahead. Whether these forecasts are correct is secondary to whether they evoke in the reader some sense of the changing times and the realization that the odds of tomorrow are approaching zero. How then should the police prepare for this evolving future?

The first consideration must be forecast about the future improvement opportunities. Some are predictable, others obscure, but their magnitude can be significantly affected by current activity in the areas of administration and organization. Forward planning, anticipation, preparation and dedication by present police administrators, who must have the capacity to interpret future trends, understanding the underlying reasons for them, and then the ability to overcome the difficulties arising therefrom, will do much to minimize these problems and promote organizational effectiveness in the period ahead (Knight, 1974, p. 196).

Other suggestions that could help to ameliorate the problems facing the NPF can be summarized as follows:

- To increase personnel efficiency and effectiveness, the NPF needs a well-developed selection procedure. A model that will help filter undesirables from joining the Force while attracting highly qualified and competent individuals who will be assets to the organization should be devised.

- The NPF should consider creating salary levels that are commensurate with, if not actually better than, those available to persons of similar qualifications in business or corporations. To pay police officers less than they can expect to make elsewhere defeats efforts to recruit them.

- College graduates should be encouraged to apply for employment. Individuals aspiring to careers in the police force and those currently employed should also be encouraged to advance their education at the university level. To attract university graduates, it may be necessary to create more entry level points, especially for individuals with above bachelor degree certificates. Individuals with masters or doctorate degrees, for example, could be recruited to the rank of deputy superintendent (DSP) while bachelor degree holders should continue to
be recruited into the rank of assistant superintendent (ASP). To recruit individuals with substantially higher degrees at the same level as those with a bachelor degree also defeats efforts to recruit them.

- For super echelon police applicants (college graduates), the present two-year probationary period is far too much for a Force which is having quality and quantity manpower shortages and low morale. The two-year period is probably one of the longest in the world. It should be reduced to one year. This will enable the NPF to attract and retain university or other qualified applicants who presently feel that it involves too much personal sacrifice to be on probation without the guarantee of job confirmation for two years.

- The NPF should create inducements to police officers in terms of status, compensation and promotion on the basis of criteria that are related as directly as possible to the police goals and functions (American Bar Association, 1972).

- The Force promotion eligibility requirement should stress ability above seniority. “Promotion lists” should be compiled on the basis not only of scores on examinations, but also on prior performance, character, educational achievement and leadership potential (Presidents’ Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice 1967).

- There is the need for the Force to select the laws it will enforce. Suggestions are that the police confine their activities to the enforcement of laws against “serious” crimes, and that separate agencies be developed to deal with “morals”, traffic, licensing, registration of vehicles, bicycles and the like.

- The NPF urgently needs to establish a police national research bureau and a police planning bureau similar in function to the police scientific development branch and the police research services branch in the UK, and the police national research and planning bureau in Australia (British Information Service, 1975, p. 16; Knight, 1974, p. 189). The police national research bureau should be staffed by senior police officers and should be concerned with operational research into methods and development of equipment for the police. The police planning bureau should be composed mainly of economists and accountants who will be responsible for the development of a planning-programming-budgeting system for the police, and for the medium- and long-term planning of police resources (British Information Service, 1975, p. 16). These bodies would greatly assist the NPF planners in the field not only by critically examining overseas concepts and development in the light of Nigerian conditions, but also in co-ordinating, collating and disseminating information regarding research being carried out by the various world police forces. It is necessary to state that the establishment of a national criminal justice institute is long overdue in Nigeria.
It is suggested that uniformed police officers in Nigeria be required to wear name tags and rank-identifying insignia on the outside of their uniforms. Name plates enable a citizen to identify an officer who is guilty of discourtesy or misconduct, and thus discourage such behaviour on the part of the police. This policy also facilitates recognition of officers who deserve commendation for meritorious service, particularly when performing some relatively mundane police duty which might otherwise go unnoticed. Further, easy identification of supervisors benefits both citizens and subordinate officers particularly in field situations, and facilitates the overall direction of police operations.

In the final analysis, the future of policing in Nigeria and the administration of the police function in reality rests with the Nigerian public. Perhaps the most significant trend in policing is the recognition that it is no longer a singular function of the police agencies alone. It has been amply demonstrated in the past that the police are no longer capable of coping with the crime and societal control problems as an organizational entity. It is becoming increasingly evident, according to Kenny (1972, p. 225) that the police can only deal with the surface problems of anti-social and asocial behaviour; in riotous and major civil disturbance situations they do not have the operational capability of exercising control. He argues that the approach of “crisis management” of situations requiring police control other than the routine can no longer prevail. The Nigerian society is going to have to recognize that the administration of the police function as we know it is limited to dealing with routine matters of crime control, service, traffic control, crime repression and in a general way, crime prevention. Basic responsibility for the policing of society remains with a disciplined people who established behavioural limits and expectations of behavioural patterns of individual members, the control of which, for the most part, will be exercised by peers. The police force will have to be a buffer organization between the police and the members of a community, deal with the more routine problems of antisocial and asocial behaviour which the people themselves cannot effectively deal with, and handle the more violent group behaviour problems for which, until a better solution is found, collective use of police force or the military is imperative (Kenny, 1972, pp. 225-6).

It is perhaps pertinent to bring this discussion to a close by noting the words of Richard Knight (1974, p. 195):

Failure to recognize the need for change and progressive modern thinking within a force, or failure to innovate and adapt to circumstances while clinging to anachronistic traditional methods can only result in a proving of Charles Darwin’s theory of the evolution of the species, “that failure to evolve and adapt will lead to extinction”. In other words, without progress, democratic policing as we know it could disappear, to be replaced with a totally different concept, either totalitarian in outlook or, because of the inefficiency of law enforcement, to a vigilante-type citizen involvement in the prevention of crime and the punishment of offenders; neither of which would be in accord with the democratic traditions and concepts of our nation.
However, in Nigeria, turning today’s promise into tomorrow’s reality will not be easy; but, as Victor Hugo once said: “The challenge is urgent, the task is difficult, and the time is now”. In spite of the rather uncertain picture, the lessons of history may still lean on the favourable side.

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