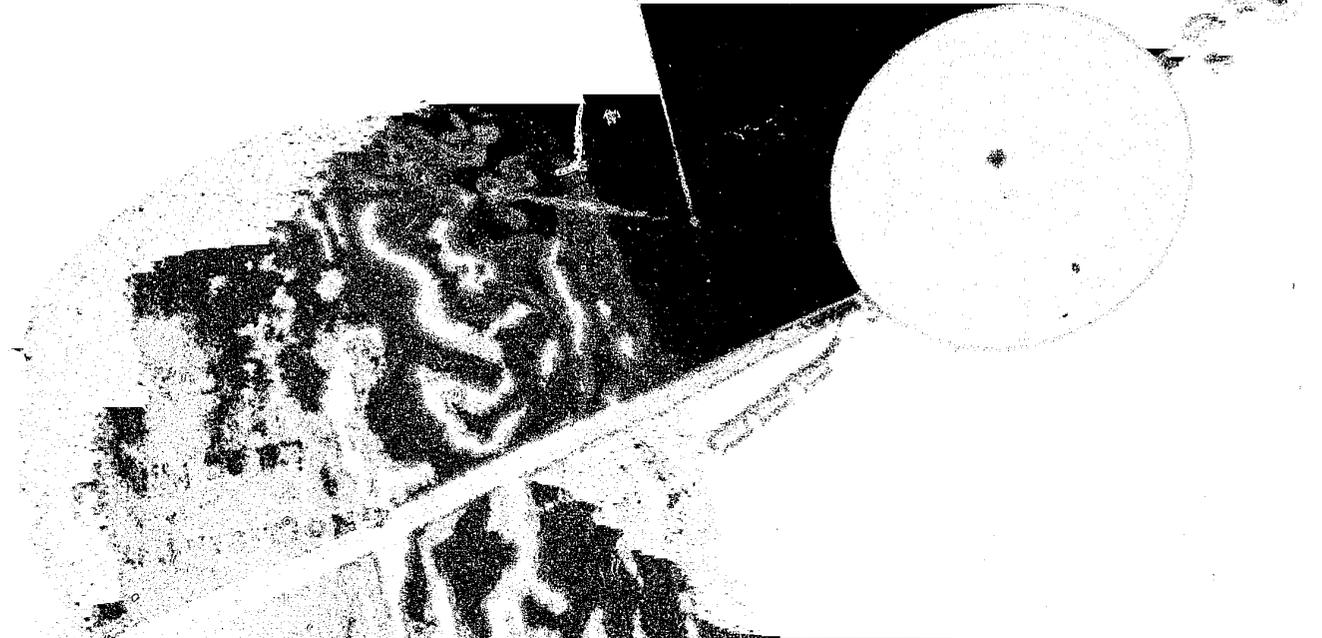


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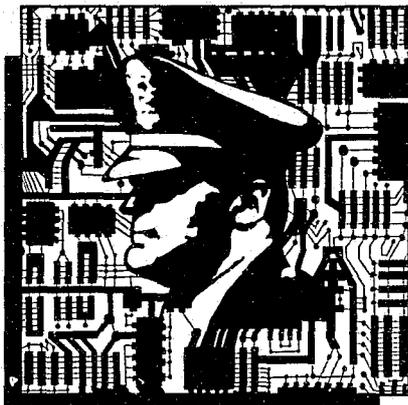
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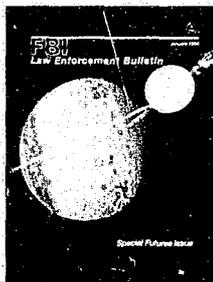


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The Cover: Voyager symbolizes one example of the advantages and absolute necessity of planning for the future. The Editor wishes to thank the FBI's Office of Planning, Evaluation and Audits and the Behavioral Science Instruction/Research Unit for helping to prepare this issue.

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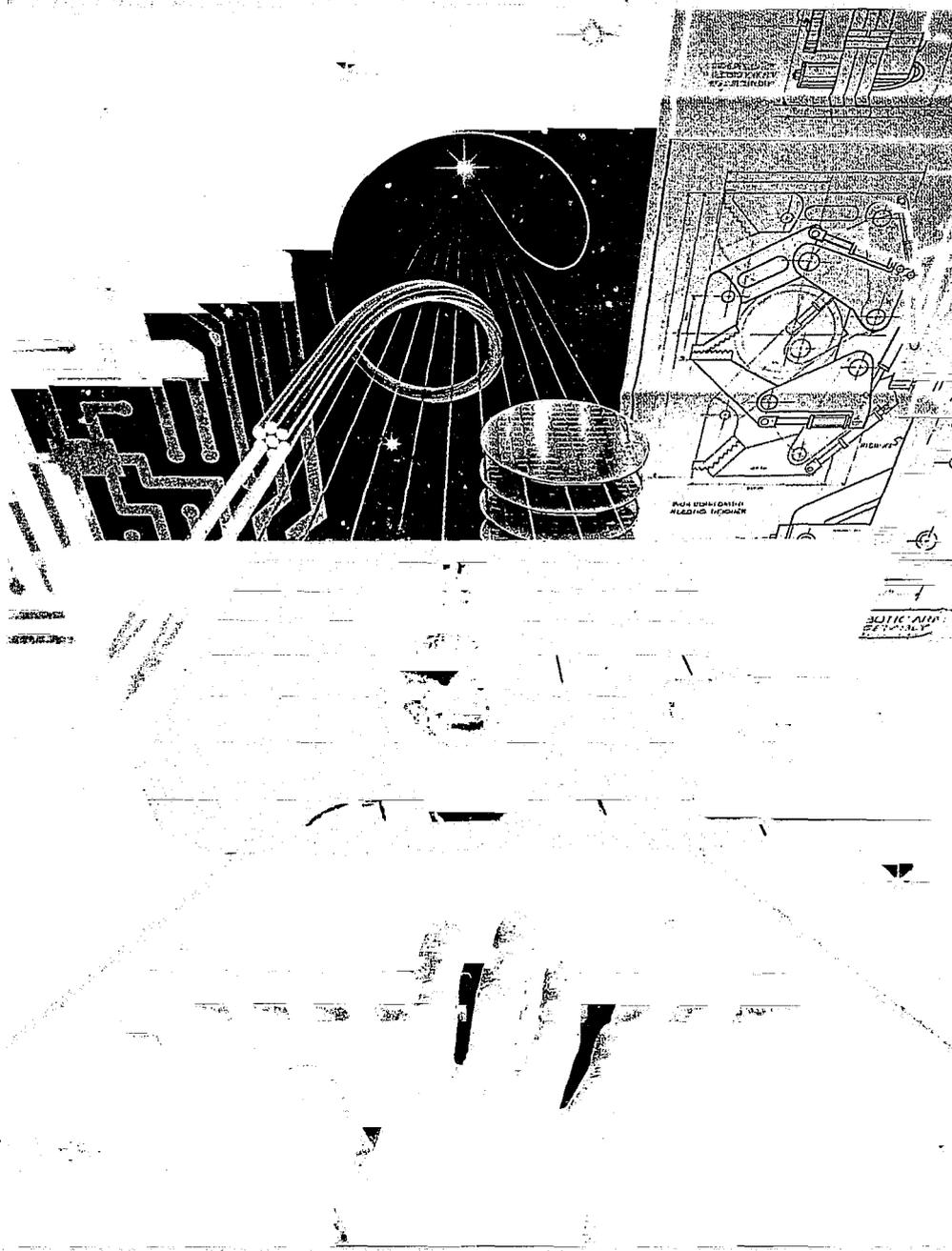
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122824

The Future of Law Enforcement

Dangerous and Different

By
ALVIN and HEIDI TOFFLER



Before we begin, a question. Does anyone reading this think the years ahead are likely to be tranquil?

If so, quit reading, or prepare to disagree. For what follows contradicts the complacent views of straight-line trend spotters and pollyanna politicians. It is based on the premise that we are moving into some of the most turbulent years in the history of this Nation.

If correct, we can expect this turbulence to put enormous new strains on our entire law enforcement and justice system. It will make law enforcement far more complex, dangerous, and different.

To understand why, it isn't necessary to replay familiar statistics on choked courts, overcrowded prisons, tight budgets, and all the other problems besetting the justice system today. Rather, the growing crisis in American law enforcement has to be seen in context. For it is only a small part of a much larger phenomenon.

America—A Nation of Change

The fact is that *almost all* the major systems on which our society depends—from the transportation system and the health system to the postal system and the education system—are in simultaneous crisis.

We are witnessing the massive breakdown of America as we knew it and the emergence of a strange, new 21st-century America whose basic institutional structures have yet to be formed. The 1990s will either see a further deterioration of

old systems and the social order that depends on them, or a serious effort to restructure America for the 21st century.

Either way, we are likely to put tremendous new pressures on people in their jobs, homes, and communities—with results that will show up in tomorrow's crime statistics. Failure to prepare in advance for the turbulent '90s could produce a grave breakdown in public security.

America-As-We-Knew-It—the one we grew up in, the one we still remember from 1950s television or from those ads showing pert young bobby soxers sipping Coca Cola at the soda fountain—was an industrial America. It was the place that built the best cars, shipped the most steel, turned out the longest production runs of consumer products, and fitted everyone (more or less) into a nuclear family. It was basically a blue-collar America. It was "Smokestack America."

This Smokestack America has since been battered by the most accelerated technological revolution in history. Computers, satellites, space travel, fiber optics, fax machines, robots, bar coding, electronic data interchange, and expert systems are only the most obvious manifestations. All this has been combined with globalization of the economy, rising competition, and many social and cultural changes as well.

The "New America" emerging from these upheavals has an economy increasingly based on knowledge. When many of our grandfathers came to this country, speaking a foreign language and knowing nothing of American culture, their intelligence didn't count

for much in the job market. What employers mostly wanted was muscle. Millions at the bottom of the pile were able to find work because they had muscle. They actually entered into the economy *before* they entered into the culture.

Today this is becoming impossible. More and more jobs presuppose skills, training, and education. As "muscle work" disappears, fewer openings remain for those on the bottom rung. A young person must now enter into the mainstream culture *before* he or she can enter into the legitimate economy. And millions don't. The results are clear in our inner cities.

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...almost all the major systems on which our society depends...are in simultaneous crisis.

It is simple-minded to blame crime on poverty. There are plenty of societies in which poverty does *not* produce crime. But it is equally witless to assume that millions of poor, jobless young people—not part of the work-world culture and bursting with energy and anger—are going to stay off the streets and join knitting clubs.

Fully 25 years ago, some futurists began forecasting massive dislocations, calling for radical changes in education, and trying to warn the country. Futurist analysis and forward thinking on the part of U.S. Government agencies could have prevented at least some of today's problems. Unfortunately, these early warnings were ignored,

and today's law enforcement agencies are desperately struggling to pick up the pieces.

Will the same thing happen in the '90s? Only worse?

The systemic crisis facing America will not just affect ghetto kids. The new complexity of everyday life (you need a manual to operate the simplest gadget) affects everyone, and the passing of Smokestack America has left millions of middle-class Americans stranded and disoriented. Expecting one kind of life, they find themselves plunged into another, frustrated and future-shocked.

Indeed, as early as 1970, we warned that the American nuclear family was about to be "fractured"—not because of permissiveness but because of radical changes in the work force, technology, communications, and economics. The subsequent collapse of the nuclear family and its replacement with a family system made up of many different models—two-career couples, childless couples, much-married couples, etc.—has had a massive impact on law enforcement.

One of its consequences has been a frightening increase in the number of singles and loners in society and a loosening of all social bonds. Forced to be highly mobile, torn away from their root communities and families, and lacking support systems, more and more individuals are being freed from the social constraints that kept them on the straight and narrow. These individuals are multiplying, and that fact alone suggests further social turbulence in the years ahead.

We all know that law enforcement is society's second line of defense. Crime, drug abuse, and sociopathic behavior generally are

first held in check by social disapproval—by family, neighbors, and co-workers. But in change-wracked America, people are less bonded to one another, so that social disapproval loses its power over them.

It is when social disapproval fails that law enforcement must take over. And until the "social glue" is restored to society, we can expect more, not less, violence in the streets, more white-collar crime, more rape and misery—and not just in the inner cities.

Impact of Technology

It is said that generals always try to fight their last war over again. This is what the French did in the 1930s when they built their immense and costly "Maginot Line." French generals, steeped in trench-warfare thinking, paid little attention to the weapons of the future—air power, highly mobile land forces, blitzkrieg tactics. As a result, their guns were pointed in the wrong

police and criminals alike. Already experimentation with electronic monitoring of parolees had begun, and the FBI is exploring expert systems to help solve crimes.

Science fiction writers and some futurists talk about a future in which drugs and electronic brain stimulation can be used to control behavior 24 hours a day (an Orwellian prospect), or about undersea prisons and space prison colonies. In addition, breakthroughs in genetics, birth technologies, bizarre new materials, software, and a thousand other fields will shake up our economy yet again, dislocate additional millions, and provide new opportunities for creative criminals.

Many of these will raise the deepest of legal, political, and moral issues. Is the theft of a frozen embryo kidnapping, or mere burglary? What bio-monitoring technologies should be admitted as evidence? What new invasions of

On the other hand, when social disorder reaches intolerable levels, citizens begin to demand the most punitive, most intrusive, most anti-democratic measures.

Only by beginning now to analyze future technological and social changes systematically can law enforcement become anything more than a series of too-little, too-late crash programs. By thinking these matters through in advance—jointly with other agencies of government—law enforcement officials can begin to influence the social and political policies that would prevent, not merely suppress, crime.

Only by exploring long-range options can we begin to define the limits of governmental power and individual rights. Only by thinking ahead will our law enforcement system be able to protect *both* American society and its constitutional rights.

For law enforcement agencies and civil libertarians alike, dedicated to preserving not only order but also democracy, it is essential to step into the future now.

Social Change

Futurism, or long-range thinking, is not only a matter of technology. Even more important is a grasp of social changes bearing down the freeway toward us.

With the collapse or restructuring of the major systems in society, we must also expect higher levels of community conflict as power shifts dramatically away from old industries to new, from bureaucratic organizations to more-flexible ones, from the uneducated to the educated, and potentially, from law-abiding citizens to those who would

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...law enforcement is society's second line of defense...when social disapproval fails...law enforcement must take over.

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direction, and the Nazis swept across France in a few weeks.

The question facing law enforcement professionals is the same one that faced the French military: Is law enforcement in America still fighting today's wars with yesterday's weapons?

The high-speed technological revolution alone—a revolution that has barely begun—will introduce new weapons and methods for

privacy will become technically possible? What are the consequences of such technologies for democracy and the unique American Bill of Rights? How must present criminal codes be changed to deal with previously unimaginable issues? Can the Constitution itself remain unchanged?

On the one hand, what makes America special is its profound commitment to individual freedom.

take advantage of widening cracks in the system. In short, law enforcement professionals starting out now face approximately 25 years of a society that is confused, rent with conflict, struggling to find a new place in the world, and bombarded by destabilizing technological changes and economic swings.

What Lies Ahead

No one knows the future. No crystal ball can provide firm answers. Forget straightline trend extrapolation and the people who peddle it. Trends are usually spotted when they are already half over. Trends top out or convert into something radically different if they continue long enough. They do not provide any explanation of *why* anything is happening. They typically do not reveal interrelations. More importantly, in periods of structural upheaval, trends are cancelled, reversed, turned upside down, and twisted into totally new patterns. That is the definition of an upheaval.

But the fact that no one can be sure of the future, and that simplistic trend projection doesn't work, shouldn't leave us helpless. First, there are many other techniques to help us model change. Second, "prediction" isn't what futurism is all about, in any case.

Futurists cannot hit the bull's eye all the time. But far more important than trying to forecast, they can help us to imagine more possible scenarios and alternative tomorrows. This widening of our imagination is crucial to survival in a period of accelerated, destabilizing change. It smartens our decisionmaking in the here and now.

To illustrate the point, 25 years ago, in an article in which we

coined the term "future shock," we called for more attention to be focused on the future, more long-range thinking. Ten years ago, we sat in the home of a former Japanese prime minister and were lectured by two top Japanese industrialists, who warned that American industry would suffer badly in the competi-

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Failure to prepare in advance for the turbulent '90s could produce a grave breakdown in public security.
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tive battles ahead if its managers continued to bury their heads in the present. Today, this theme has become common among American managers, and Uncle Sam, himself, is beginning to echo it.

Specifically, Richard Darman, the President's Budget Director, has urged a shift in the national attitude toward the future. Attacking what he calls "now-nowism," Darman defined that disease as "our collective short-sightedness, our obsession with the here and now, our reluctance to adequately address the future."

Therefore, we believe that it is necessary for every arm of law enforcement, Federal, State, and local alike, to assign some of their best thinkers to the task of probing the future, and to plug their findings into decisionmaking at every level—including at the very top.

When agencies begin to focus on the future, some questions

naturally arise. What should a community's law enforcement budget be? How should law enforcement personnel be trained? What skills will be needed? What new technologies will they face and need? What new forms of organization will have to be created? How should forces be deployed? What provisions should be made for continually updating missions?

Practical questions such as these can't be answered intelligently if an agency's total attention is consumed by the present—no matter how hard it is pressed—if, in other words, it too is guilty of "now-nowism."

A Final Thought

It is the proud function of law enforcement to help guarantee the survival of the same democratic system that imposes limits on its action. These very limits make *our* system of justice better than that of some banana republic characterized by death squads, terrorists, and narcobobs.

To guarantee democracy's future in the dangerous decades to come, all the agencies that form part of the American justice system need to rethink their assumptions about tomorrow and to pool their findings. They must not only know that they can never get it "right" but also realize that the very act of asking the right questions, or shaking people out of their mental lethargy, is essential to survival. **LEB**

*Alvin and Heidi Toffler are the authors of such internationally renowned works as **Future Shock** and **The Third Wave**.*
