



The Scottish Parliament

Patrick Harvie MSP
Room 3.12, Scottish Parliament Headquarters
George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 6363 Fax: 0131 348 6375
patrick.harvie.msp@scottish.parliament.uk
www.patrickharviemsp.com

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Ken Livingstone
Mayor of London
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

Dear Mr Livingstone,

My attention has been drawn to a question (1777/2003) lodged by Diana Johnson, a member of the London Assembly, inviting you to condemn my recent statements on the London emergency services resilience exercise. I thought it might be helpful if I explained the background to my comments.

On Thursday 2nd October the Scottish Parliament held an open debate on the issue of Antisocial Behaviour, a subject on which the Scottish Executive is due to bring forward legislation in the near future. As speaker for the Green Group on the portfolios of Justice and Communities, I contributed to that debate. If you care to read my speech at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/plenary/or-03/sor1002-02.htm#Col2296> you will see that my comments referred to the over-use of footage of the resilience exercises, and the lack of context for the footage.

I feel strongly that the media, and broadcasters in particular, are helping to create a climate of fear in Scotland and in the UK with regard to crime, antisocial behaviour, terrorism and other issues. The repeated use of footage of police in biohazard suits walking through empty London streets is just one example of this. This footage is often used without explanation, and is usually part of a report on 'international terrorism'. I hope you will agree with me that the correct response to a perceived

threat of terrorism must involve addressing the legitimate grievances of dispossessed and powerless peoples, for example the Palestinians.

I did not intend to suggest that London's emergency services should not prepare themselves to deal with possible incidents, and I do not believe that the Official Record gives the impression that this was my view. What I described as propaganda was the use of imagery to reinforce fear, not the investment in equipment, training and infrastructure necessary for the operation of the emergency services.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on today's poll figures for the London Mayoral election, and hope that you will continue to have a constructive relationship with my Green colleagues in the London Assembly.

Yours sincerely ,

Patrick Harvie MSP