

## Conclusions

The Committee is under no illusion that implementation of even the most comprehensive guidelines will reduce the number or severity of terrorist incidents in Canada, nor is the Committee under any illusion that guidelines will be religiously or universally respected. The existence of effective guidelines may, however, save a life or speed the resolution of a terrorist incident.

In the final analysis, however, when a terrorist incident occurs, the paramount consideration must be the resolution of the incident in such a way as to minimize danger to life or property. The primary responsibility for this lies with police officers. The Committee has concluded that to resolve a terrorist incident, law enforcement officers are not only permitted, but indeed have the obligation, to take and enforce whatever steps they deem necessary within the law to secure the situation as quickly as possible. The most practical and effective way to minimize media intrusion or inadvertence is for police to take immediate action to restrict the media's physical access to the scene. After the incident, the media will have an opportunity to appraise the methods by which police handled the incident.

Police must realize, however that the media does form an integral part of any police strategy to handle a terrorist incident. As indicated earlier in this Part by witnesses, terrorists may settle for publicity through the media rather than perpetrate the violence they threaten; strategic release of terrorist propaganda or demands by authorities through the media might assist in negotiations; while the release of some information during an incident could endanger lives or jeopardize negotiations or an assault operation. Accordingly, the Committee strongly recommends that the federal government, through the Department of the Solicitor General and the RCMP, initiate discussions with representatives of national media organizations and outlets as well as selected provincial and municipal police forces to design practical guidelines. The Committee would like to see a process developed whereby police and media groups in an ever-growing number of centres reach agreements that are consistent and would eventually merge into national guidelines.

In the Committee's view it is imperative that these discussions occur soon, prior to a terrorist incident that results in problems that could have been avoided through implementation of such guidelines.