

Britain considers controls on vicious dogs

LONDON (Reuter-Kyodo) The British government said Monday it was considering new measures to hold owners accountable for attacks by their dogs after a six-year-old girl was savaged by a pit bull terrier.

Home Secretary Kenneth Baker said the government was considering a range of proposals including a ban on certain types of fighting dogs.

"Firstly, we want to make it an offense to allow any dog to be out of control in a public place and this should be

backed with a heavy fine," he said.

The girl, Rucksana Khan, was in a critical condition in a hospital after the weekend assault, which doctors said would leave her permanently scarred. The dog was destroyed.

Pit bull terriers, which originated in the United States, were responsible for around a quarter of the 500 dog attacks in London this year, police inspector Alan Garish said.

"We need a new criminal offense of allowing a dog to be dangerous and out of control

anywhere, even in the owner's home," he said.

"These dogs are not pets, they are weapons, and they have got to be stopped right now, not the day after tomorrow," Conservative politician Anthony Beaumont-Dark told Parliament.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals repeated a call for a dog registration system, a law requiring owners of dangerous dogs to carry insurance and restrictions on the import and breeding of certain fighting dogs.

5-22-91 Times