

## Bahrain security forum & exhibition Bahrain

24-25 February 2009

Opening remarks by [Khoo Boon Hui](#), INTERPOL President

Bahrain's Minister of Interior,  
His Excellency Lt. Gen. Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa;  
Distinguished guests and colleagues;  
Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning:

I am very pleased to be here today in my capacity as President of INTERPOL. The participation in this forum of such a distinguished group of individuals, from not only countries in the region but throughout the world, is proof of our shared commitment to securing our borders and protecting our citizens. It also underscores the need to bring together all stakeholders – from government, military, law enforcement, international organizations and the private sector – for any approach to enhancing our collective security to be successful.

2. Besides being the President of INTERPOL and its [187 member countries](#), a role I have held since October last year, I have served as the Commissioner of the Singapore Police Force for almost 12 years now. Singapore, like many countries, has faced threats from terrorism and extremism, but it was not until I came on board INTERPOL's [executive committee](#) in 2006 that I came to fully appreciate the inextricable link between my country's own national security and that of our neighbours and countries throughout the world.
3. As my friend Assistant Commissioner Peter Clarke, the former head of London's anti-terror police, said in 2006: "The defence of the capital often starts many thousands of miles away."<sup>[1]</sup>
4. This concept lies at the heart of INTERPOL's day-to-day efforts to help police in all of our member countries do their jobs more effectively, by giving them the means to communicate with their colleagues anywhere in the world around the clock; by providing them with an array of critical police data on [wanted persons](#), stolen and lost travel documents, [fingerprints](#) and [DNA profiles](#); by supporting them operationally, either from the INTERPOL General Secretariat headquarters in Lyon, France, or on-site through the deployment of specialised teams; and by working towards building up the capacity of police in all countries to better respond to the complex security challenges of today.
5. INTERPOL could not do any of this without the high level of dedication and support we receive from police and governments in our member countries.
6. An issue that will loom large over our discussions during the next two days is the current financial crisis and its potential impact on global security. I acknowledge that during times of shrinking government budgets, putting too much emphasis on international policing could be seen as indulgent or unnecessary.

7. But the reality of today's security landscape means that no one agency, government or region can operate in a vacuum. Now more than ever we must devote greater, not fewer, resources to keeping our citizens and countries safe. Criminals and terrorists are nothing if not opportunistic and we will all pay the consequences if we let our guard down.
8. Collectively, we can leverage our scarce resources to the maximum advantage and avoid duplication of investigative effort and fiscal waste by cooperating more closely through multilateral bodies like INTERPOL.
9. INTERPOL has recently developed several cost-effective solutions – which I will discuss in more detail later today – to address the most critical gaps in global security. These include providing police forces in Africa with the necessary technical infrastructure and operational and analytical capacity to take on a greater role in global anti-crime efforts, and working with our member countries to restrict the mobility of terrorists using fraudulent passports. INTERPOL is also more aggressively tackling the issue of corruption, the silent partner of all terrorists and organized criminals.
10. Launched in October 2008, INTERPOL's Global Security Initiative for the 21st Century is a framework for our current and future activities in five strategic areas: global security, secure global infrastructure, law enforcement training and capacity-building, public-private partnerships, and innovation. We are already moving forward with an innovative cyber-security initiative as well as new programmes for promoting secure borders, highly secure travel documents and anti-counterfeiting technologies.
11. High-level gatherings like this are a great opportunity for INTERPOL to hear about your concerns and receive your input and guidance. This is also a chance for INTERPOL to tell you about what we are doing to support you and your countries in all of your security efforts.
12. Thank you. I am sure all of us will have a constructive 2 days of intense interaction here in Bahrain. I look forward to speaking with you later.

[1] Daily Mail, 3 July 2006.