

## Bio-Terrorism Conference

1st INTERPOL Global Conference,  
Lyon, France, 1-2 March 2005

by [Ronald K. Noble](#), Secretary General of INTERPOL

Mr. President,  
Mr. Minister,  
Heads of delegations,  
Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, we are all making history.

This is the largest meeting of police ever in terms of country participation.  
Not just in INTERPOL's history, but ever.

We have police or law enforcement services from 155 countries represented here today. We have experts from all over the world in the fields of counter-terrorism. We have representatives of other major international organizations and from the public health community.

Why have so many countries come to INTERPOL for this conference?

The reason, simply stated: there is no criminal threat with greater potential danger to all countries, regions and people in the world than the threat of bio-terrorism.

And there is no crime area where the police generally have as little training as they do as in preventing or responding to bio-terrorist attacks.

What is the source of this threat? Highly motivated terrorists such as Al Qaeda, or groups that are like Al Qaeda or inspired by Al Qaeda.

Al Qaeda, for one, has made no secret about its intentions. Its public spokesperson has stated that it has the right to kill four million people using biological or chemical weapons.

Al Qaeda has posted on its website instructions on how to make chemical weapons and biological weapons.

Police and intelligence services in the UK have disrupted terrorist plots to use ricin as a biological weapon.

Radical fundamentalists arrested in Asia have confirmed that Al Qaeda already has researched the making of biological weapons.

Police, military and intelligence services have discovered evidence in Afghanistan reinforcing the point that terrorists do want to use biological weapons.



Heads of government, the United Nations, the World Health Organization, heads of police and intelligence services, counter-terrorism experts and we at INTERPOL all agree that the threat of bio-terrorism is real and present.

We at INTERPOL know, and all of us gathered here for this conference know, that we do not need to witness an actual global biological terrorist attack before mobilising our defences.

We are already persuaded that the threat is worthy of immediate preparation by us.

There might be pockets of adequate preparedness around the world, but were a massive terrorist attack that resulted in the spread of contagious disease to occur, we would not be prepared.

Today, we are taking the first major step to prepare us globally to be better able to prevent and respond to the threat of bio-terrorism.

Preparing ourselves would not have been possible without the help of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, which believes, among other things, that it is important to bring the police, counter-terrorism and health experts together for specialised training in preventing and responding to the threat of bio-terrorism.

I therefore have the great honor of recognising Dr. Paula Olsiewski, the Program Director for the Sloan Foundation, for helping INTERPOL to obtain almost one million US dollars to fund this two-year initiative - that is, our conference here in Lyon this week and an ambitious bio-terrorism training programme for police around the world.

But, even with the Sloan Foundation's grant, INTERPOL did not have enough resources to make sure that the delegations of some of our less fortunate member countries could attend this conference. So, at the last minute we called Microsoft - already a partner of INTERPOL in fighting computer virus attacks and fighting sexual exploitation of children over the Internet - in order to help fund the travel costs of a number of our delegations and some other conference costs.

I must also thank in advance John Abbott, the former Director General of the UK's National Crime Squad, who will be the chairman of this conference. And I thank Adrian Baciu, who heads INTERPOL's initiative in the area of bio-terrorism, and all members of my staff who have worked tirelessly and selflessly to make sure that this conference is a success.

To the speakers, the attendees and to the 155 INTERPOL member countries who have taken the time to come here, I promise that when you leave here you will have learned more than you knew before about the threat of bio-terrorism and about what is being done and can be done to prevent and respond to it. You will all also have made important contacts among experts and other delegates with whom you can be in touch again once the conference concludes in order to continue the important work that needs to be done.

Now to the introduction of the speakers for the opening session:

Great police organizations need great leaders.  
Great ministries need great Ministers.

As part of this morning's opening session you will hear from two great speakers who are dedicated defenders of the security and well-being of all of us.

The first speaker will be INTERPOL's President and Commissioner of the South African Police Service, Jackie Selebi.

Thereafter, you will hear from a very special guest, the Minister of the Interior for France, Dominique de Villepin. Monsieur de Villepin flew to Lyon just to be able to address you this morning. For this, Monsieur le Ministre, we are extremely indebted to you.

### **[Secretary General Noble's introduction of INTERPOL President Jackie Selebi]**

Let me tell you a little bit about INTERPOL's President, Jackie Selebi, Commissioner of Police for the South African Police Service.

Jackie Selebi already has been credited with bringing positive and revolutionary changes to the South African Police Service. This is not surprising to those of us who know his background. Jackie Selebi has seen the role of the police from the eyes of someone fighting apartheid, and therefore as someone who was hunted by the very police service that he now leads.

Yet, when he was named Commissioner of Police for South Africa, his first appointment as Deputy Police Commissioner was the very police officer who was responsible for trying to capture and arrest Jackie Selebi. With that one appointment, Commissioner Selebi sent a signal to all police officers inside and outside of South Africa: the police can only succeed if we work together with all of our community. The philosophy that he put in practise in South Africa's Police Service has been a permanent quality throughout Jackie Selebi's career.

While he was assigned to the United Nations he brought together countries from all over the world to bring into force an anti-land mine convention. At INTERPOL, he has brought the Chiefs of Police of southern Africa together to establish a terrorist early warning system. He has provided INTERPOL's Executive Committee with forceful, yet sensitive, leadership. Jackie Selebi believes that we can only succeed if we march as one, and as long as he is President of INTERPOL, he will make sure that our member countries march as one. So, when we thought of who we would want to lead off this historic conference, we agreed that it should be our President, Jackie Selebi.

I give you, Mr. Jackie Selebi, President of ICPO-INTERPOL.

### **[Secretary General Noble's introduction of French Interior Minister Dominique de Villepin]**

Monsieur le Ministre/Messieurs les Ministres,  
Mesdames et messieurs,

I am particularly honored to have Monsieur Dominique de Villepin, the French Minister of the Interior, Internal Security and Local Rights, attend this conference as our special guest. After all, INTERPOL is France's special guest.

Minister de Villepin is an acclaimed author and lover of history, especially French history. So let me share with all of you a little bit about INTERPOL's history in France.

Following World War II, INTERPOL was looking for a home, and INTERPOL's police chiefs decided that we needed to find a country where we could work and grow independently. France graciously offered to host INTERPOL first in Paris, and since 1989, here in Lyon.

Thanks to the support of the Préfet Michel Gaudin, Director General of the French National Police, France is the country that has seconded the highest number of police officers to work at our General Secretariat in Lyon. Several French police officers hold key positions at INTERPOL, including my friend and colleague Jean-Michel Louboutin, who is Executive Director for Police Services.

This long tradition of supporting INTERPOL is also apparent with the presence of Madame Mireille Ballestrazzi on INTERPOL's Executive Committee.

On a more personal note what can I say about Minister de Villepin that you already do not know. He is eloquent, thoughtful and fearless when he speaks and acts. As Minister of Foreign Affairs, he left an impression on all of us who listened to him. As Minister of the Interior, he has identified important initiatives for the French police for Europol. All of what he has done requires not only intelligence and skill; it also requires courage.

It is, therefore, indeed a great honour for the INTERPOL staff and myself to have, for the first time, the French Minister of the Interior address an official INTERPOL meeting during my tenure as Secretary General. Minister de Villepin, I hope that you always will remember that right here in France, you have a great institution, INTERPOL, that welcomes your support and the support of France in helping to protect the world from the threat of terrorism and all serious international crime. It gives me great pleasure to give the floor to Minister Dominique de Villepin.