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Connecting the Police Securing the world



Mr. President and Members of the Executive Committee,
Monsieur le Délégué Général,
Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Greetings in Arabic, Spanish, French and English

It is a great honor for me to address you this afternoon. Today I wish to speak about INTERPOL's activities over the last year and about INTERPOL's priorities over the next few years in order to show you how we have become a New INTERPOL. I will integrate the discussion of both during my remarks.

Before I go any further, let me acknowledge the invaluable contribution that the General Secretariat has received from the [President](#) and the [Executive Committee](#) in terms of tireless support and superb guidance. Let me also thank the NCBs for reporting back to us what changes that have been implemented over the last year have been working well and what changes still needed additional refinements. Finally, I wish to recognize my staff at the General Secretariat, and when I say General Secretariat, for those of you who do not know, the General Secretariat includes our Sub-Regional Bureaus and Bangkok Liaison Office. Although my staff may come from 43 countries and may possess different backgrounds and cultures, they have come together as one in order to support me and the Executive Committee in a way that has permitted INTERPOL's General Secretariat to better serve our NCBs, [member countries](#) and the Organization as a whole.

The Year, September 2001 to October 2002

In discussing the activities of the General Secretariat over the last year, one cannot escape the impact that terrorism, in its many forms, has had on our member countries, on police forces worldwide, on our NCBs and on the General Secretariat. Think about it: last year our [General Assembly](#) convened just a little more than a week after the terrorist acts of 11 September had occurred in the United States. Terrorist acts that cost the lives of thousands of people from 77 countries. No matter what any of us might have thought was our Number 1 priority before 11 September, terrorism instantly became our Number 1 global priority, if not the Number 1 crime priority, on that date.

More than a year has now passed, and yet once again our General Assembly meets just a little more than a week following another terrorist attack. This time in Bali, Indonesia. The Bali bombing has cost the lives of over 187 people from several countries and has attracted the world's attention. And, if the Bali terrorist bombing were not enough to convince us of the importance of continuing our efforts to fight terrorism,

then the terrorist bombings in the Philippines and letter bombs in Pakistan that took the lives of other innocent people just several days ago should remove all doubt that fighting terrorism must **remain** one of our highest global crime priorities. It should not become our only global crime priority, but certainly one of our most important.

Indeed, in between 11 September 2001 and the very recent bombings in Bali, the Philippines and Pakistan, other terrorist incidents or potential terrorist incidents have targeted our communities worldwide, have caused the national police and INTERPOL to redirect resources and have captured the world's almost daily attention. Whether we live in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe or the Middle East, the number of terrorist incidents accompanied by graphic images witnessed by us over the last year should make each of us feel that terrorism could indeed strike any of our countries, organizations or colleagues anywhere in the world at any time.

What we have learned from the terrorist incidents over the last year is that constant police co-operation is essential before, during and after terrorist attacks. We also have learned that in establishing a framework to fight terrorism, we also are establishing a framework to fight all serious crime that has an international element. In fighting both terrorism and any serious crime, constant police co-operation is needed before, during and after any serious international crime incident.

We have therefore reshaped INTERPOL's General Secretariat and based our approach on the lessons learned from our anti-terrorist fight. The New INTERPOL is now constantly readying itself to respond not only to terrorism but to any serious crime threat requiring a swift, co-ordinated and comprehensive worldwide response. We have put this new structure and approach into action during the last year and we have in the process demonstrated time and time again that we are not the same INTERPOL that existed before 11 September 2001.

The New INTERPOL is getting stronger each and every day. We are more aggressive, we are more alert and, most importantly, we are more responsive to the needs of you - our member countries and NCBs.

The New INTERPOL is not simply a collection of databases and communication networks. The New INTERPOL is also human. You have heard me use the expression - the INTERPOL police family. It is an expression that we wish to turn into reality. When we see, hear or read about an incident wherein our member countries' police officers have been harmed or their citizens endangered, we at INTERPOL's General Secretariat want to react to help just as if the harm were happening to citizens of our own country. INTERPOL officers and employees assigned to the General Secretariat must overcome any bilateral problems between the countries of one's citizenship that impede international police co-operation. Conflicts between our countries that occur outside the INTERPOL network of police co-operation must not prevent us from providing all member countries with the highest quality of support within the INTERPOL police network. And, we welcome Afghanistan and East Timor to the INTERPOL police family.

The only limitation to our supporting any one of our member countries should be our Constitution's prohibition against involving ourselves in matters of a political, racial, religious or military character.

And, when an officer in one of our NCBs passes away after having dedicated almost his entire professional life to INTERPOL, we should take a moment to acknowledge his passing. Very recently, our dear friend, Yousif Al Marzouki, of Bahrain's NCB passed away. He had attended General Assemblies, participated in regional meetings and helped INTERPOL to fight crime for over 35 years. He is and will be missed by us all. Our sincerest condolences go out to his family and to NCB Bahrain.

Let me take this opportunity to do something that we always do during our opening ceremonies. We stand for a moment of silence in recognition of police officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty worldwide. Let me ask all of us to stand now for a moment of silence in recognition of our fallen brothers and sisters.

Thank you.

NEW INTERPOL

The New INTERPOL has revealed itself several times: on 11 September; during last year's General Assembly; over the last year; and most recently, just over a week ago, following the Bali terrorist bombing. Let me give you examples that demonstrate how we have changed and how one can see the change in our priorities through our action.

11 September 2001: On 11 September, when we saw televised reports that the United States Government buildings, including the USNCB, were being evacuated following the terrorist attacks, the General Secretariat in Lyon offered to process messages destined for the USNCB during the time that the USNCB was evacuated. The USNCB trusted us to step in on their behalf for what turned out to be only four hours, and during this time period, we permitted the work of INTERPOL to continue uninterrupted. **The New INTERPOL acted before waiting to be asked and relieved pressure from an NCB during a time of crisis.**

During the General Assembly: Al Zawahiri: Just like the work of the NCBs, work cannot stop during General Assemblies; the work of the General Secretariat cannot stop either and did not stop during last year's General Assembly which was held almost immediately after 11 September in Budapest. While in Budapest, we learned that Osama bin Laden's alleged Number 2 person, **Al Zawahiri**, was suspected of being involved in the 11 September terrorist attacks. Based on an analysis of our databases in the General Secretariat, we knew that Egypt had wanted Al Zawahiri arrested for his suspected involvement in terrorist crimes in Egypt.

As you know, INTERPOL's rules prevent the publication of a red notice on the public web page without the requesting NCB's permission. We, however, knew that the issuance of a red notice and publishing it on our public web page would attract worldwide attention to Al Zawahiri. It also would greatly limit his ability to travel, and it would give the United States time to produce its own request for a red notice. We initiated a bilateral meeting with Egypt during the General Assembly to receive permission from Egypt to publish the Al Zawahiri red notice on the web page. Egypt willingly agreed. We issued the red notice within one day and, within seconds of its publication, the world's entire press corps reported that INTERPOL had issued an international wanted person's notice at the request of Egypt. Other member countries used INTERPOL to issue many red notices, blue notices and green notices and used INTERPOL for issuing diffusions - often at the request of the General Secretariat in the fight against terrorism.

The New INTERPOL proved to all member countries that we could react to emergencies and react swiftly so as to help member countries fight serious crime. INTERPOL thus made itself relevant following 11 September, and it will never become irrelevant to significant international crises.

In short, in the year leading up to 11 September, we at the General Secretariat had been preparing the New INTERPOL for any emergency that might have required the General Secretariat's assistance and when 11 September arrived, we were prepared to respond.

General Secretariat Command and Co-ordination Center

Perhaps our most important priority and our greatest success over the last year has been the creation of a General Secretariat Command and Co-ordination Center that is operational 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. For national police forces and local police forces, the idea of 24-hour service has been an essential part of your work probably forever. You have from the beginning been staffed for such an operation; you have the budget for such an operation, and your staff is hired knowing the obligation to provide 24 hours' worth of service on a daily basis.

This was not the case at INTERPOL's General Secretariat before 11 September. We were more of an international organization than an international police organization. We were not thought of as being able to provide operational support on a real-time basis. Prior to becoming Secretary General, I argued

vigorously that the General Secretariat was in fact an invaluable tool for member countries and NCBs to use if it were given the right mandate and right support from member countries. Over the last year, we have redirected our resources to demonstrate how we could provide you with valuable assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We have made this an essential service that we provide to you and it has added great value to the work of the NCBs in all areas, but especially in the important fight against terrorism.

I will use the recent terrorist incident in Bali as an example.

Bali, Indonesia

On Sunday morning of last week, INTERPOL's General Secretariat Command and Co-ordination Center learned of the vicious terrorist attack that occurred in Bali, Indonesia. When the death toll was immediately reported to be almost 200 people, INTERPOL simultaneously contacted member countries' Disaster Victim Identification teams to ask for help and the NCB in Indonesia to offer help. Several countries including Australia, Germany, Sweden, Hong Kong (China), Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, Japan and Spain immediately offered assistance. All of the countries agreed to use INTERPOL's form and protocol for DVI. All of these forms are available on INTERPOL's public web page. The Indonesian NCB in Jakarta was thus able to have INTERPOL's General Secretariat co-ordinate important activity outside the crisis zone and Indonesia was able to efficiently identify those countries whose help would be needed.

The New INTERPOL reacted to the terrorist acts in Bali before being asked to react and even though no one might have been expecting INTERPOL's General Secretariat to act. The quick response by INTERPOL's General Secretariat helped those member countries who were able to help and the member country in need of help, to co-ordinate their activities as efficiently as possible. A quick response requires the right technical infrastructure, the right people, and the right commitment.

(I-24/7) Over the next 3 years, we will be focusing on building a technical infrastructure that will permit you to communicate with one another and with us more rapidly and efficiently. You have heard us refer to it over the last year; you have heard the President refer to it in his Opening Remarks; and you will learn more about it during this General Assembly. INTERPOL's Global Communication System (that we refer to as I-24/7) will provide the technical infrastructure that will let INTERPOL, its NCBs and its member countries maximize our ability to co-operate in order to combat terrorism and all forms of serious crime.

If you want to get a glimpse of the New INTERPOL, please stop by our simulated NCB at the General Assembly. We installed the I-24/7 system right here in Cameroon so every delegation can see what the new system will look like, how it will work and so that the Cameroonian NCB will have it in place by next week. You can find it right here today outside this meeting room, and it will remain in Cameroon following the General Assembly to be put to good use in helping Cameroon fight serious international crime and to bring its fugitives to justice.

The New INTERPOL will use modern technology, good ideas and hard work to connect the police in a way to secure the world. I-24/7 is one important tool that will help to shape the New INTERPOL. But, a communication system without good content or a network of countries without the right commitment and approach, will not work. The New INTERPOL focuses on content; it provides real-time quality service; and it has dedicated staff both at the General Secretariat and NCBs.

Let me use notices as a way to demonstrate my point.

Notices: Prior to last year, it took INTERPOL, as an organization, 4 to 6 months for a red notice to be requested by a member country and then to be received by INTERPOL's then 179 member countries. The lack of technology was only part of the problem. Although fax machines existed, INTERPOL's system used the cheapest and lowest-priority mail to receive and issue red notices. At the General Secretariat, we had no priorities in place that guaranteed that notices would be processed within a certain period of time. Even when we would work our hardest to get a notice analysed, processed and translated into INTERPOL's 4 official languages within one day, we would not, for reasons of cost, get them to our member countries in the fastest possible way. Instead, we would mail thousands of photocopies back to member countries in

the cheapest and lowest-priority mail. To give you an example of the time lost, it would take anywhere from 4 to 6 weeks for such notices to be sent from the General Secretariat in Lyon and be received by NCB Rome. Imagine that: one day in the General Secretariat but 4 to 6 weeks in the mail for an urgent high-priority notice!

Because we view the issuance of notices to be one of our highest, if not our highest priority, we implemented an electronic notice system and a new policy prioritizing notices that permit INTERPOL to receive, process, translate and issue to our member countries our highest-priority notices within 1 day.

Results

In the first 10 months of this year, we published 968 red notices and, of these, 475 (or almost half) were published electronically in days as opposed to months. This means that wanted terrorists, murderers, organized crime figures, paedophiles, drug traffickers and other serious criminals have had less time in which to roam freely. The good news is that almost half of our notices were published electronically; the bad news is that only 42 member countries have used the electronic system.

The reason for this is twofold. First, NCBs are not fully aware of the benefits or need for training in the use of the electronic notice system and second, many of our NCBs are not technologically equipped to take advantage of our electronic notice system. I-24/7 will provide all NCBs with the needed technology and training, but you in the NCBs will have to take advantage of both.

We should not only be motivated by our desire to improve the quality of service that we provide to our citizens, but we must remember the underlying reasons for which we wish to improve our quality of service.

Imagine, for example, that those responsible for the Bali bombing or Pakistan letter bombs or the Philippines bombings were known to law enforcement, but the red notice request was mailed to INTERPOL for processing and, in the intervening period, these terrorists were able to perpetrate more crimes. Imagine a paedophile who was able to travel internationally, molesting more children because a red notice or blue notice was mailed rather than sent electronically. The electronic notice system will help to avoid such problems.

The electronic notice system will help member countries not only to track fugitives more easily and share information in a less costly manner; it is a clear example of INTERPOL's added value for operational matters.

I will use INTERPOL's Automated Search Facility System or ASF as another example of the New INTERPOL.

Automated Search Facility: We are continuing to improve on existing services in the ASF area. As of September 2002, we have more than 4 million stolen motor vehicles that are accessible through our ASF system. In terms of how active our database is, last year, 693,980 new stolen motor vehicles were entered. In fact, this database is one of the most used databases that INTERPOL has and it can be used by member countries' police forces without any need for the General Secretariat to intervene. In 2001, 647,856 searches of this database for stolen motor vehicles occurred.

Results

What about the results from these searches? On 18,101 occasions a positive reply was received indicating that this vehicle was reported stolen. If we use an average value of USD 10,000 per vehicle, then approximately USD 181,000,000 (one hundred and eighty-one million US dollars) of stolen property was identified in 2001 through INTERPOL's ASF system. But what about vehicles recovered? Of these 18,101 positive replies, approximately 4,824 came from Africa, both a significant increase over last year.

But the Automated Search Facility is of value for more reasons than the economic value of the vehicles that are identified or recovered or for the efficiency savings that the ASF system provides to the General Secretariat and member countries. Indeed, some people tend to minimize the importance of stolen motor vehicle reporting or investigations.

We at INTERPOL disagree. We believe that the sound investigation of seemingly small crimes can help to prevent, investigate and solve big crimes.

Santa Pola, Spain Terrorism Example

Spain and France also would agree and here is an example as to why.

You may recall that on 8 August 2002, a car bomb was exploded near a police barracks in Santa Pola, Spain, by the Spanish terrorist group called ETA. Two people were killed and over 40 wounded.

The international dimension of this terrorist act was not only that international tourists were among the victims, but also the fact that the car used for the bomb was stolen in France. Ordinarily, one does not associate car theft with terrorism, but in France and Spain, their joint experience has taught them otherwise. The sophistication of Spain and France's co-operation is such that following the car bomb in Santa Pola on 8 August, the French police used INTERPOL channels to advise Spain that another car had been stolen in the same vicinity on or about the same time as the vehicle used for the car bomb. Spain was thus alerted about a car for which it must search, or be on the lookout for in order to avert another possible terrorist incident, or in order to gather valuable intelligence in fighting the terrorist group ETA.

In short, the 647,856 searches of vehicle identification numbers is about more than locating stolen cars; it is about arming police with valuable intelligence in deciding whether the vehicle being sought will be a tool for other more serious crime such as terrorism, armed robberies and fugitive flight.

MESSAGES RECEIVED AT THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

In addition to having introduced the electronic notice system and to working to improve the ASF, the New INTERPOL plays a proactive role in reading, processing and acting on messages that it receives from NCBs.

Remember, there are two categories of messages that INTERPOL receives. One category involves a request for information or assistance. When those types of messages arrive, INTERPOL's General Secretariat must react because we are asked to do so. The other category of messages is where INTERPOL receives copies of messages about law enforcement activity completed by an NCB or member country without any request for assistance. The New INTERPOL treats both categories of messages as opportunities to help NCBs beyond the help that they are requesting or information that they are providing.

I will use an example to make this point.

Results

But before doing so, let me give you a few statistics about how active you have been over the last year in using INTERPOL communication channels. You have used our communication system to exchange written police intelligence on 70,200 occasions. Put another way, you will increase your exchange of messages by 40% when compared to last year if you continue at the same rate as during the first 10 months of this year. In all of last year (the year of 11 September), there were 60,840 messages exchanged. There are NCBs whose exchange of messages is even greater than that of the General Secretariat, reaching up to 120,000 per year.

DISMANTLING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY RINGS

I do not like using the word 'messages' because it sounds too sterile. The message traffic by police on INTERPOL's system is police officers exchanging information about crimes committed against our citizens, neighbors and colleagues. This exchange of information occurs with the goal of preventing, investigating and prosecuting serious crime. I will use Operation Landslide as an example of how INTERPOL works to add value to messages we receive and as an example that our messages concern important crimes.

Operation Landslide

Operation Landslide began with a successful investigation being conducted by one of our member countries' police forces. The US Postal Inspection Service identified a company selling access to child pornography sites from the United States. The company charged a modest USD 29.95 for access to each specified site. At its peak it generated USD 1.5 million per month. Let me pause for a moment and repeat those numbers. If USD 1.5 million was generated per month at USD 29.95 per site access, this means that over 50,000 separate sites were subscribed to on a monthly basis at the peak of this operation. 50,000 separate child pornographic sites were subscribed to worldwide.

The danger of cybercrime is made clear by this case. Let me explain why. Forensic examination of the company's computer records identified thousands of individuals from the four points of the globe. That is, although the site was located in the United States, the crime of transmitting child pornography to interested subscribers had no geographic boundaries.

The US Postal Inspection Service could have considered this a United States problem only and not turned over international investigative leads to INTERPOL. Fortunately, it sent the raw data of subscriber information to the INTERPOL General Secretariat's Trafficking in Human Beings Sub-Directorate. With the assistance of our analytical unit, the raw data was filtered and turned into useable data. This data was then transmitted to relevant member countries.

Results

In the end, 36 countries have participated in Operation Landslide, and over 800 search warrants have been executed worldwide. Two quick examples of how INTERPOL member countries proved the importance that they place on fighting child pornography over

the Internet. In April of this year in Austria, 1,100 Austrian police officers executed 275 search warrants and in Ireland, 500 police officers executed 130 searches. But this case did not begin as a landslide.

Operation Landslide is the largest case of commercialized child exploitation that has been investigated worldwide. But Operation Landslide began, like most international investigations, as an investigation of a case in one member country. Thanks to the willingness of member countries to co-operate with each other and through INTERPOL, people wishing to exploit our children are being brought to justice around the world.

There are other projects that you will hear about during this General Assembly that demonstrate how hard we are working with you to add value to your work. Two examples worth noting are our Project Exit, targeting ecstasy trafficking worldwide, and the Fusion Task Force which focuses on INTERPOL's proactively mining the data in its databases in order to establish links between terrorists and those engaged in travel document fraud.

FUGITIVE INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES

The final aspect of the New INTERPOL that I wish to discuss is one of the most exciting services we are attempting to provide. Before I discuss it, let me ask you what is INTERPOL most known for around the world? There are only a few possible answers that I will accept. One is international police co-operation; two is a worldwide communication network; three is bringing international fugitives to justice; and four is establishing special projects or task forces targeting specific crime concerns of worldwide interest.

Murder case example: South Africa and Chile

In August 2002, Chile requested INTERPOL's assistance with a murder case on the basis of a suspect's possible arrival in South Africa.

Our fugitive unit contacted INTERPOL Pretoria who confirmed the suspect's arrival and asked the General Secretariat to send copies of the wanted red notice and identification material and obtain further details from Chile.

After two days during which our fugitive unit co-ordinated action between INTERPOL Santiago and INTERPOL Pretoria, the subject was arrested and discussions for his extradition began between the two member countries involved.

There are 15 other significant cases that the FIS unit has handled over the last year involving member countries from each of our four regions. These cases have resulted in fugitives being brought to justice. Some of these cases required little time for results; some required a great deal of time before results could be seen. Some of these cases involved fugitives for whom we had red notices or Wanted Persons Notices issued over 10 years ago. The New INTERPOL has transformed itself from an organization that believes in fugitives being brought to justice based only on a passive catching system (when for example name checks are done leading to an alert), to an organization that also will bring fugitives to justice by working actively and co-operatively with our member countries. It is our hope that interested member countries will establish specialized fugitive units at home like we have established at the General Secretariat to better co-ordinate our effort.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the New INTERPOL:

1. Combines a new philosophy at the General Secretariat to provide you with a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week service;
2. Highlights the importance of rebuilding our communications infrastructure so that ALL INTERPOL member countries are able to send and receive information on a real-time basis;
3. Recognizes that 181 member countries cannot be serviced from France alone; regional offices are needed, and they should be staffed principally by police officers from the region with a complement of officers from outside the region;
4. Requires intelligent, hard-working and honest officers at the General Secretariat and in the regions to ensure that the regions are serviced and that specialized crime projects such as Operation Landslide, Project Exit and the Fusion Task Force and others are properly staffed and focused;
5. Intends to build databases that can be accessed and used by you depending on your country's or your region's priorities;
6. Permits the rapid issuance of Wanted Persons Notices based on a priority system emphasizing terrorism and other forms of crime that pose a threat to the safety and welfare of people; and
7. Creates a communications network that utilizes a secure web and public web to share critical information with the police.

The New INTERPOL is constantly seeking ideas and people that will help us improve INTERPOL's and its member countries' complementary role in keeping the world safe. INTERPOL never competes with member countries' police forces or NCBs; we exist only to support member countries' police forces and

NCBs. With your help, the New INTERPOL can achieve a better, faster and more effective, secure means of communication between our member countries and the General Secretariat in order to better serve the law enforcement community and to better protect all of our communities.

I thank you for participating in this, INTERPOL's 71st General Assembly. You will notice in the days that follow that we have structured this General Assembly differently. We are using a panel format to encourage greater participation and to hear from you. We are especially pleased to have many national police commissioners and other expert police officials contributing to the success of this General Assembly. You are all encouraged to participate and to give us your views on how we can improve.

Thank you very much. Now let's get to work.