

International Conference on Security Cooperation for the Olympic Games

Beijing, China – 25 April 2008

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

Mr. MENG Jianzhu, State Councilor and Minister of Public Security,
Mr. LIU Jing, Vice Minister of Public Security and Head of the State Olympic Security Coordination Committee,
Mr. MENG Hongwei, Vice Minister of Public Security and Head of NCB Beijing,
Mr. LIU Zhiqiang, Director-General of the International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Public Security,
Bolat NURGALIYEV, Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,
Vice Ministers, Chiefs of Police and Heads of Delegation,
Other distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. Minister, I am pleased to commend you, Vice Minister Liu and everyone from China's Ministry of Public Security for your continued efforts to ensure that these 2008 Beijing Olympics will be safe and secure for the athletes, visiting dignitaries, foreign spectators and, of course, the Chinese people.

At the last conference in September 2007, I said that INTERPOL had received no specific information from police in our 186 member countries on direct terrorist threats to the Olympics.

Media reports indicate the situation has clearly changed since then. For example, the Chinese media has reported on numerous failed plots to disrupt the Games which have been linked to separatist groups.

These attempted plots have included bringing down an airliner; attacking hotels, government offices and military targets in Beijing and other cities with poison, poison gas and remotely controlled bombs; carrying out suicide bombings; and kidnapping foreign athletes, spectators and journalists.

Moreover, just last December, it was reported that police in Indonesia prevented a possible Al Qaeda attack during the Games. Police arrested several alleged Al Qaeda members and seized a map of Beijing with indications and notes for various sports venues, according to media reports.

Unfortunately, an attempted act of terrorism is a real possibility and a real concern that **all** Olympic host countries have shared in recent years.

Recent Tibet-related protests have introduced significant additional complications to the normal security considerations for a major international event like these Olympics.



Demonstrations during the torch relay and reports of attempted attacks on the Beijing Olympics have made security an even greater priority, Secretary General Noble told the conference.



Senior Chinese and Olympic Committee officials at the opening of the security conference.

Who would have thought during the last conference in September that individuals and groups would use organized violence and threats of violence to interfere with the global Olympic torch relay? Yet, that has happened.

As a result, innocent people who were selected to carry the torch because of their belief in the Olympic ideals have been attacked. Even the police protecting the torch bearers have been assaulted.

In light of recent events, all countries whose athletes will participate and whose citizens will attend the Beijing Olympics must be prepared for the possibility that the groups and individuals responsible for the violence during the global torch relay could carry out their protests at the actual Games.

These activities could range from disruptive behavior, like blocking major transportation routes or infrastructure or interfering with competitions, to more violent acts like assaulting Olympic officials or athletes or destroying property.

Worse yet, we must be prepared for the possibility that Al Qaeda or some other terrorist group will attempt to launch a deadly terrorist attack at these Olympics.

The threat is compounded by the very nature of the 2008 Summer Olympics. China will open its doors to hundreds of thousands of foreign visitors and journalists and an audience of billions watching on television. This could provide easy cover for terrorists and ensure any attack during the Olympics would have an immediate global impact.

The organizers of the Beijing Olympics knew that securing an event – and countering a threat – of this scale would require not only a comprehensive domestic strategy but an equally vigorous international effort. Even while the competition venues were still being built, they began addressing the issue of security and enlisting the support of INTERPOL.

Since last year, INTERPOL has been producing threat assessments for Chinese authorities; following up on reports of terrorist and other criminal incidents which could affect the Olympics; and conducting training sessions in crisis and major event operations.

An INTERPOL Major Event Support Team (IMEST) will arrive here prior to the start of the Games to train Chinese officers in crisis and major event operations. The team's expertise has been accumulated from more than 20 deployments to most major international sporting events since the first IMEST in 2004.

The IMEST will work out of the International Police Liaison Centre alongside Chinese and foreign liaison officers from 22 countries. It will provide immediate on-site technical and operational police support in all of our four official languages and, for the duration of the Olympics, our unofficial language – Mandarin!

The team will be supported around the clock by INTERPOL's Command and Co-ordination Centre and the police resources of our 186 member countries.

We are also now working with Chinese authorities to implement a system for conducting checks of INTERPOL's database of more than 14 million stolen and lost travel documents at Beijing's airport and other major border entry points. This is absolutely crucial if we want to prevent terrorists or dangerous criminals from entering China.

In my view, it is essential that China put this system in place prior to these Olympics, just like the Caribbean region did before the 2007 Cricket World Cup. We are confident China is capable of doing so.

In closing, let us not forget that the interlocking Olympic rings symbolize the five regions of the world and the flags of all nations. The Olympic theme for the 2008 Beijing Games of "One World, One Dream" conjures an ideal that we can overcome our differences in the common pursuit of athletic achievement and global unity.

As an organization embracing 186 different member countries, INTERPOL understands the importance of keeping politics out of its work. Indeed, INTERPOL's Constitution strictly forbids it. I believe that politics have no place in international policing – or in the Olympics, for that matter.

INTERPOL is committed to transcending language, culture, geography and politics to help police in China and in our 186 member countries ensure the safety and security of all those who will participate in or attend the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The athletes who have trained and dreamed most of their lives for this opportunity to compete against the best at the Olympics deserve to do so in a safe environment.

Mr. Minister and Mr. Vice Minister in charge of Olympic security, INTERPOL commends you on the preparatory work you have done so far, and we continue to look forward to helping China deliver an amazing – and safe – once-in-a-lifetime experience here in Beijing for all to enjoy.

Thank you.