

## 18th INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference

Manila, Philippines 16 March 2004

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

Honorable Executive Secretary to the President Romulo,  
Ambassador Fianza,  
Director General of the Philippine National Police Ebdane,  
Deputy Director General Velasco,  
Executive Committee Members Boustani and Takizawa,  
Distinguished Colleagues from INTERPOL's Member Countries,  
dear Distinguished Members of the Dais,  
dear colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Preventing Terrorism. Fighting Terrorism. Investigating Terrorism.. Prosecuting Terrorism. Tracking down fugitive terrorists.

Even if the March 11, 2004 terrorist attacks in Madrid, Spain had not occurred, you would have agreed that fighting all of the above aspects of terrorism should continue to be among INTERPOL's highest priorities.

INTERPOL's [181 member countries](#) and its 80+ year history have given us much experience about the importance of fighting terrorism wherever it might occur. Whether it be what has happened in Afghanistan, Algeria, Colombia, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Morocco, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, the UK, the US, Uzbekistan or Yemen just to name some of the many countries that have suffered terrorist attacks, INTERPOL knows that terrorism must be fought wherever it appears.

Despite already having a long history of reminders of the danger of terrorism, just a few days ago we were once again brutally reminded that the type of attacks that Al Qaeda-like terrorist groups use are among the most troubling to us as law enforcement officials and to us as a world community.

Not Europe, not Africa, not the Americas and not Asia can think of the problem of Al Qaeda-like terrorist attacks as being some other region's problem.

No region of the world is exempt, and no region has been spared from Al Qaeda-like atrocities.

Even before being confirmed as Secretary General, I have publicly said that INTERPOL is absolutely essential not only to the world's anti-terrorist fight but to any one country's fight against terrorism.

For INTERPOL whether those responsible for the Madrid attacks are terrorists from Al Qaeda, ETA, a combination of Al Qaeda and ETA or from a yet unnamed terrorist group, INTERPOL's structure and priorities provide real time operational police support to fighting any kind of terrorist group that threatens your country.

Having said this, INTERPOL believes that Al Qaeda-like techniques present the greatest concern and challenge for us as police officials and as a world community.

The Madrid attacks of March 11th presented many of the aspects of what make Al Qaeda-like techniques of such concern to INTERPOL and its Member Countries.

For example, the nationalities of innocent victims who were killed, maimed or wounded embraced 12 countries, including at least one reported Philippine national.

The size of potential and actual victims was enormous. Thousands were targeted. At least 200 were killed and over 1,500 wounded. And, we must remember that not all of the bombs exploded as planned.

The focus on attacking common forms of transportation such as airplanes, trains and buses had an impact on people other than those who were actually harmed. These targets permitted each of us to imagine ourselves or our loved ones being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The multiple and simultaneous nature of the terrorist strikes makes each country's government, law enforcement officers, security forces, and citizens wonder whether the first wave of reported attacks is but the beginning of a series of attacks.

Each successfully carried out terrorist attack that links itself to Al Qaeda or September 11th undermines public confidence that governments' can shield their citizens from harm. Groups have claimed responsibility for the March 11th attacks and have linked them to the [September 11th 2001 attacks](#) on New York and Washington and the war in Iraq. Some people have pointed to the fact that March 11th 2004 was exactly 911 days following September 11th 2001 also known as 911 in the US. Is it beyond our comprehension that any Al Qaeda-linked group would be able to time such an attack to remind us that the global terrorist danger remains real and present? No.

Finally, any large scale terrorist attack attributable to Al Qaeda or possessing Al Qaeda-like characteristics has a negative impact on the security of citizens not only of those countries directly targeted but also on all citizens.

In light of our experience, INTERPOL believes that no government can honestly say to its citizens that they do not have to be concerned about terrorism. All of us have to be concerned, but none of us has to let the fear of terrorism deprive us of being able to live happy and productive lives.

The Asian region, rich in its diversity, has especially had a great deal of experience in fighting terrorism. I will touch upon our host country's experience to give but one brief example.

The Philippines has been in a long anti-terrorist struggle not only against Al Qaeda, but also against Abu Sayef.

Yet, the Philippines has always worked with INTERPOL and its Member Countries to share critical information and its experience in fighting terrorism. In the early 90s it even warned the US about an Al Qaeda operative who would later attempt to kill thousands in New York City.

In December of 2000, Manila's public transit system was attacked by Jemaah Islamiyah, though the deaths and injuries suffered were not of the scale as those suffered in Bali, Madrid or New York.

And the Philippines knows better than most countries how local terrorists such as Abu Sayef can work together with global terrorists such as Al Qaeda to bring harm to a country's citizens, guests, economy and security.

This is my second time to the Philippines in 16 years. It is evident to me, and I know to you, that people in this country do not live in fear. They live in an open society where one does not hide or run from crime.

One fights crime with great intensity and personal commitment. The Philippine National Police and the people of this country know that in order to fight crime the community must be called upon to help.

This same lesson about the community being called upon to fight serious crime is what INTERPOL believes in. For us, we need you who represent the international police community to help fight serious international crime of any form.

The Philippines represents a great democracy committed to fighting all serious international crime, especially terrorism. The Philippines is deeply committed to protecting its citizens and the world's citizens from serious international crime.

In addition to hosting this week's INTERPOL's Asian Regional Conference, the Philippines will host INTERPOL's Anti-terrorist Fusion Task Force meeting following the conclusion of this regional conference.

Just yesterday, the Philippines National Police Chief promised to send two Philippine police officers (one to INTERPOL's Bangkok Liaison Office and one to INTERPOL's General Secretariat in Lyon, France) to help INTERPOL fight not only terrorism but all serious international crime.

For these reasons and others, in my view as Secretary General, we are fortunate to be having INTERPOL's Asian Regional Conference here in the Philippines.

I will give several quick examples of how INTERPOL as an organization is combining its resources and efforts to help our National Central Bureaus (NCBs) and Member Countries to fight not only terrorism, but all forms of serious international crime.

1. We have made our 24 hour a day/7 days a week Command and Co-ordination Centre fully operational to support the needs of our NCBs in INTERPOL's 4 official languages.
2. We have expedited the processing of [International Wanted Persons Notices](#) so that [Red Notices](#) can be sent around the world in hours rather than weeks or months.
3. As Secretary General, I have taken an interim policy decision to make being charged with membership in a terrorist Organization a crime for which INTERPOL will hunt terrorists internationally using our Red Notices. The first country to request such a Red Notice was Spain in November of last year, and the first arrest based on this Red Notice was made in Jordan in January of this year.
4. We are connecting all of INTERPOL's [181 Member Country](#) NCBs to our state of the art Global Communications System ( [I-24/7](#) ) so that fingerprints, photographs, and information about crimes and criminals can be exchanged swiftly and securely among our member countries. I am happy to report that in less than 2 years we have designed and implemented this system in over 90 INTERPOL NCB's worldwide.
5. We have created a new Security Alert which we call our [Orange Notice](#) to warn INTERPOL Member Countries about criminal threats so that crimes can be prevented, rather than just prosecuted.
6. We now send Incident Response Teams to terrorist attack sites or to countries requiring any form of urgent assistance. We have done so following the Bali, Indonesia, the Morocco and the Madrid terrorist attacks.
7. We have designed a Revolutionary way to fight terrorism internationally through the creation of the Fusion Anti-terrorist Task Force. The more than 90 countries participating know that whatever reports on terrorist activities that the Fusion Task Force produces will be shared with all Member Countries. In a little more than a year and a half, our Member Countries and most of the countries represented in this room have identified over 1500 suspected terrorists who otherwise would have remained unknown to INTERPOL's Member Countries.

8. We have created a Stolen Travel Documents data base that now includes more than 1.5 million stolen passports, visas and national identity documents. We also did this in just over a year.
9. Finally, we have a number of extraordinary projects such as Sydrug, our DNA database project , as our Anti-child pornography over the Internet project, and our fugitive investigative services initiatives that demonstrate the true power of INTERPOL and international police cooperation.

In conclusion, dear colleagues, dear friends, I thank you for demonstrating with your presence and participation in INTERPOL's Asian Regional Conference here in Manila that INTERPOL's Member Countries are committed to working together with people from different countries, religions, races and backgrounds in order to help keep the world safer from terrorism and all other forms of serious international crime.

I congratulate all of you on the success that INTERPOL is having in helping you to fight serious international crime. But, we can and must do more. We shouldn't lose the opportunities to co-operate more and more each and every day. In this conference we hope to identify concrete steps that each of us can take to co-operate more effectively.

I promise you that with the leadership of our Executive Committee Members, Mr. Takizawa from Japan and General Boustani from Lebanon and with the support of the Director General of the Philippines National Police Ebdane, this conference will be a success.

Thank you very much!