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INTERPOL



REMARKS

BY

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INTERPOL SECRETARY GENERAL

**79TH INTERPOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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INTERPOL President, Khoo Boon Hui,
Members of the Executive Committee,
Excellencies,
Chiefs of Police,
Heads of Delegations,
Heads of National Central Bureaus,
Colleagues from the INTERPOL General Secretariat and regional offices,
Dear family and friends who are here with me today,
Special guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am deeply humbled by the honor, privilege and unique opportunities that come with being nominated by the Executive Committee for a third time to serve as INTERPOL's Secretary General – as your Secretary General.

This nomination is different from my first and second in many ways. If confirmed, I know this will be the last time I stand before you to ask you to allow me to lead this great organization, so this moment is very special for me. I recognize now there are still many things I would like to see INTERPOL achieve and perhaps too little time.

I ask you to take note of my CV and accompanying materials about my professional competencies and the accomplishments of our past 10 years together.

I believe, as I did in 2000, that in confirming me, you need to know some aspects of my background that are not obvious on a CV, but that have had a profound influence on my thinking and my actions as your Secretary General.

Ten years ago, I spoke about being born to parents accustomed to confronting and overcoming adversity. Both of my father's parents had died by the time he was 14 years old. He was forced to quit school to help support his brothers and sisters.

My mother's parents had to put her in foster care when she was young. With 10 children, they simply could not afford to take care of her.

My parents taught my brother and me about sacrifice. They also instilled in me the belief that if you worked hard enough, you could overcome any obstacle.

My father used to say: "Ronnie, there will always be someone smarter than you or richer than you, but only you can make sure that there is never anyone who works harder than you."

After World War II, my mother and father met and fell in love in Germany. Although my father was black and a U.S. Army soldier and my mother was a white German, her parents had only one question when my father asked for permission to marry their daughter: Would he respect her religion?

My mother is Catholic and my father, Protestant. My father said he would and my parents were married. Later, my brother was born in Germany, where they lived until my father's military unit was transferred back to the United States.

In the US of the early 1950s, my parents could not travel together freely. As a black man and a white woman, they could not live together as a married couple in certain states and they could not eat together in many restaurants.

I was born in the US in 1956. We frequently travelled at night because my parents could not be seen in the same car without the risk of attack. I still remember my mother dropping off my father, my brother and me at a motel for blacks and her driving somewhere else. As soon as it got dark, she would return to pick us up.

She was the foreigner in America and yet she had more freedom than my father had. But none of us was really free.

We never knew whether we would be served in restaurants when we entered. If refused, my mother would simply buy food and bring it to us in the car. As a result, to this day, I don't care where I eat – I'm just happy to be served.

In 2000, when I spoke about my family, I did so for three reasons: First, I wanted to show that I would be able to serve each of you without bias or prejudice. Because of my parents, I have seen that issues of race, culture, religion and language can separate us, but they never need divide us.

Second, I wanted you to know that I would never walk away from a challenge or quit an assignment. And third, I wanted you to know that being able to overcome obstacles went to the core of who I was as a person.

Thinking back to 2000, I cannot believe how much I have changed as well, professionally but also personally. When I was first elected, I wasn't a father.

I don't have to tell most of you that parenthood transforms you in ways you would have never imagined. My son is always in my thoughts; his well-being guides every decision I make.

In the 10 years since you first elected me, the world has changed a lot as well.

Less than one year into my first term, terrorists attacked the United States, murdering close to 3,000 people – not only Americans but citizens of more than 90 other countries ... your countries ... our countries ... INTERPOL member countries.

All of our regions have been affected by terrorism. We have all been affected.

Enhanced security measures implemented after 9/11 have focused mainly on threats from passengers. These measures, improved sharing of intelligence and just a bit of luck have prevented another successful mid-air terrorist attack.

A few weeks ago, explosives concealed in printers mailed to the US from Yemen were intercepted by police in the United Kingdom and United Arab Emirates. One passed through Qatar.

The shipments could have come from and passed through any one of our member countries. We owe our thanks to Saudi Arabia and Germany for getting specific and actionable intelligence to the United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Qatar and other countries in time.

Half of the world's air freight is transported on passenger flights. Exact numbers on how much cargo is screened worldwide are inconclusive, but experts can all agree that it is well below 100 percent.

The terrorists behind the printer bomb plot picked up on a gap in security measures and they seized it. Authorities around the world will now move to implement changes and regulations to address this new threat.

Terrorists also recognized the immense value of fraudulent passports way before law enforcement and governments did. It wasn't that long ago that blank passports were stored in file cabinets in provincial offices in some countries.

It sometimes feels like we are destined to play catch-up. Terrorists and other transnational criminals have proven themselves to be extremely adaptable ... quick-thinking ... resourceful.

But I can say with a fair degree of certainty that, for the first time, we may actually know where the next major threats will be coming from, where the battle is heading.

In the last 10 years, the world has undergone a technological revolution that has made our work so much easier in some ways, but infinitely more difficult in others.

Last year, there were an estimated 247 billion e-mails sent every day – or 36 messages for every man, woman and child on the planet; 2.8 million e-mails every second.

Eighty percent of that global message traffic consisted of spam and viruses. This means the majority of stuff that hits our inbox carries potential risk – of corrupting the security of our data ... of hurting our economic well-being ... of endangering our personal safety and that of our children ... of threatening our national security.

Data theft and breaches from cyber-crime rob businesses of as much as \$1 trillion globally in lost intellectual property income and repair costs, while worldwide, three in four Internet users report having been victims of online crime at least once.

The process of terrorist radicalization used to take years potentially, but the Internet has made it easier, faster and more undetectable than ever before.

Mere curiosity can evolve into fanaticism and extremism with alarming speed and intensity.

It is no longer a case of the enemy being at the gate; he is already in our homes.

He is lurking on our computers, in our email accounts and, increasingly, on our mobile phones and other electronic devices.

But we have an advantage, because INTERPOL, together with the NCBs in our member countries, has been laying the groundwork for this fight over the years.

Technology has always played an important role for INTERPOL, from those early cables sent in Morse code to the diffusions to locate and arrest someone our NCBs disseminate around the world in minutes.

As an organization, each new development we have achieved together has built on the ones before it and has served as the foundation for the ones to come.

Our NCBs can publish their own notices and diffusions because of the creation of the I-24/7 secure global police communications network and the I-Link system.

Front-line officers in our member countries can access our global database of stolen and lost travel documents and other critical databases thanks to the development of the MIND/FIND technical tools.

Outside this hall, there is an exhibitor's stand for our INTERPOL Travel Document team. There, you can get more information about our state-of-the-art Travel Document, which you overwhelmingly approved yesterday for use by our membership.

We forged important partnerships with leading companies in this field, EDAPS and Entrust, and the International Civil Aviation Organization to bring this important tool to you at no cost. Yesterday's historic vote is the first major step towards making our travel and work around the globe faster and more effective.

The idea for the Travel Document grew out of what I witnessed and heard during my visits as Secretary General to 140 of your countries. I saw how we were all hurt by unnecessary and otherwise avoidable delays in providing INTERPOL staff and our National Central Bureaus with visas – when we were actually travelling to your countries to help you.

We turned an obstacle into an opportunity to inspire our private-sector partners to create a multi-purpose tool for use by you. Thanks to your vote, we now have a better chance of achieving the same ease of mobility as the criminals we are chasing.

Technology like what I have described enables us to respond to challenges we never could predict.

And we must stay ahead of the game.

Later this morning you will be asked to consider a proposal for the creation of the INTERPOL Global Complex in Singapore.

It is the next step INTERPOL must take in its evolution. Our current financial situation is not sustainable for the long term. We will see greater demand for our services, but fewer mandatory statutory contributions from you.

We will have to do more, with less, or identify more countries and entities willing to provide us with voluntary financial support.

For the INTERPOL Global Complex in Singapore, we have found one country willing to help us take our collective security to another level in a profound way.

With Qatar's generous commitment to invest 2 million US dollars in this initiative, we have quickly demonstrated the value proposition all countries can find in supporting this initiative.

Let me be clear: we would not be building just a new facility; we would be setting the foundation for our future.

Given the challenges in front of us, I do not see any other viable option.

There is a severe shortage of skills and expertise in fighting cyber-crime, not only at INTERPOL but in law enforcement everywhere.

Who here can raise their hand and honestly say they have all of the resources they need to counter this threat?

Cyber-criminals can operate almost anywhere. They can steal credit-card numbers in one country and sell them on the cyber black market to the highest bidder anywhere in the world.

An effective cyber-attack does not require an army; it takes just one individual.

Law enforcement will continue to be outsmarted and out-resourced if we do not act.

The INTERPOL Global Complex continues our culture of innovation and puts us closer to more opportunities, wherever they may exist.

It will help us raise our game in tackling transnational organized crime networks in the region, and it will put us in a better position to provide urgent assistance to the countries in Asia that are both blessed and cursed by their proximity to nature.

Just as critically, it will allow INTERPOL to undertake more intensive capacity-building activities in the region and around the world.

The creation of the INTERPOL Global Complex in Singapore will not be without pain and it will not be without risk, but we owe nothing less to our citizens and our countries.

When we endeavored to create I-24/7, we didn't know how or when every member country would be connected. Exceeding all expectations, the last country, Somalia, was connected just four years later.

This is a testament to you, our member countries, who embraced it and supported it and made it possible.

When we launched our database of terror suspects, skeptics said countries would never share sensitive information on terrorism investigations. Today, we have a network of more than 200 designated contact officers who work with us in fighting terrorism.

More than 120 member countries contribute data on active terrorist groups, and our registry currently includes close to 10,000 names of wanted or suspected terrorists.

Again, this is because of your trust in us.

The creation of the International Anti-Corruption Academy in Vienna is progressing at a steady clip. INTERPOL and I remain committed to its objectives, which is why we have donated funds to it and I have spoken in such strong support of it.

Dear colleagues,

In 2005, in Berlin, before my re-election to a second term, I spoke of ideals – an ideal of broad international police cooperation across borders, religions, races and cultures; the fundamental ideal of police helping police anywhere in the world.

Five years later, I think we are closer to achieving that.

Cooperation has never been stronger. You need look no further than our website, where you will find amazing stories of operations involved several NCBs and resulting in hundreds of arrests.

You will find out about successful operations targeting fugitives and organized crime networks spanning continents. This type of cooperation would have not been possible just a few years ago.

As one example, I would like to show you a video for an operation that you may not have heard about called “Cascades”.

I have spent time today talking about cyber-crime and the threats of tomorrow. But this operation is remarkable because it tackled an age-old crime through mostly old-fashioned cross-border police cooperation, with some high-tech assistance.

It is in line with many of the themes I have discussed, including the importance of preserving and protecting family and future generations.

That is the tie that binds us all; that is the reason we've all chosen the particular career paths that have brought us together in Doha today.

My brothers and sisters,

Where do we want INTERPOL to be in 2015?

Do we want to have stayed content with all that we had achieved? Or do we want to have dared to reach higher?

These are the questions I pose to you today.

You put your trust in me 10 years ago to lead the organization. You re-elected me in 2005. And you will have the opportunity to re-elect me for a third term today. I ask for your trust – in me, in my judgment – once again.

I would like to thank our Qatari hosts for their great hospitality and organization of this General Assembly. They have been great supporters of INTERPOL and are a model for international police cooperation.

Let me close by thanking you, our Executive Committee members, our NCBs, my staff and all of our police colleagues around the world for the dedication you show and the sacrifices you make each and every day so the world is a safer place for us all.

If you place your trust in me once again by re-confirming me, I commit myself to devoting all of my energy to making myself worthy of that trust.

I will leave the stage with my family and close friends to allow you to deliberate on my nomination. I hope to return to this hall with the honor of knowing that I can continue to serve all of INTERPOL's 188 member countries as your Secretary General.

Thank you.