

Executive Summaries

2007 Dubai Meeting Summary

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL POLICE EXECUTIVE SYMPOSIUM

URBANIZATION AND SECURITY

Dubai, UAE

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Short Conference Summary

Dr Julia Davidson & Elena Martellozzo

This document provides a short synopsis of key conference themes, a more detailed summary of all sessions will be provided. It is not possible to include reference to all speakers but presentations have informed this summary.

The conference theme was 'Urbanization and Security' and representatives from 43 countries participated. The conference was hosted by the Dubai Police, who provided an exceptionally high level of hospitality and facilitated conference planning and organization.

Dubai and the Dubai Police

Dubai has developed since 1990 into a global and financial business hub. There are currently 68 projects underway, including for example the Palm development. The Commander in Chief of the Dubai Police LT. General Dhahi Khalfan Tamim's presentation at the beginning of the conference described some of these innovative projects which conference participants had the opportunity to visit during the cultural tours throughout the week.

Dubai has an exceptionally low crime rate; this is an important aspect in attracting international development and allows residents and visitors to enjoy a high level of security and safety. Director of the Dubai Police Decision Making Support Centre Dr Mohammed Murad Abdulla discussed the important relationship between a strong economy and good security and the necessity of effective collaboration between international police forces. The work of the Dubai Police force is underpinned by key values: honesty; impartiality; politeness and respect. The senior management recognize the importance of an educated police force, have striven to eradicate illiteracy and have supported an increasing number of officers in undertaking post graduate study to masters and PhD level.

The work of the Dubai Police is underpinned by good research; more than 1000 publications have been produced by the Dubai Decision Support Centre. The degree of organization and development of human resources is exceptional, as is the employment of information technology. Conference participants were afforded an opportunity to view the deployment of information technology in action during visits to the Police Operations Room.

Conference Themes

1. Engaging Communities

A clear theme emerged regarding the importance of understanding the local communities, and particularly in attempting to 'build bridges' with minority and disaffected groups. The necessity of actively engaging with these communities was emphasised in many presentations via: the training of police officers; outreach work; and good quality research that explores the perceptions of community groups regarding policing practice. This approach should serve to educate practitioners and to foster

trust. The conference heard, for example about the importance of working with Arab-Muslim communities in the United States, to dispel media myths following 9/11.

2. The Relationship Between Policing And Research

The role of effective intelligence led and pro-active policing based on good quality 'scientific' research was a re-occurring theme. Researchers must work on projects of real concern and relevance to police practitioners, producing findings that will inform the development of practice and training. Speakers presented good examples of such research. Knowledge transfer is however a two way process and researchers must first understand practice and consult with practitioners regarding research need, in order to undertake useful and meaningful research that will inform practice. It is also important for police practitioners to work with academics and researchers in undertaking post graduate degrees and qualifications many of which include a research methods component. This will equip practitioners with the necessary skills to undertake basic research projects and to publish findings.

3. The Sharing Of Police Practice Information

Police forces represented by conference participants have shared interests and experiences, despite the many different cultural, geographical and social contexts in which the forces operate. Some presenters suggested there is a need to develop a better means of sharing information about effective practice and short summaries of research findings to better inform training and practice. IPES have begun this process by bringing researchers and practitioners together. A United Nations recommendation arising

from the conference suggested that a database of good practice models and research summaries be developed.

4. Global Problems And International Solutions

Conference presentations pointed to the importance of international police collaboration in addressing issues of urbanization and security. Many problems are shared and the responsibility to find effective strategies and solutions is also a shared one. Speakers described for example: The illegal trafficking of human beings, emphasizing the victimization of women and children who often suffer abuse and exploitation; drugs trafficking across geographical borders; international fraud and cyber crime. These problems are global and they demand international collaboration and international solutions.

5. Law Enforcement In Developing Countries

Presenters reminded participants that there are also significant differences in experience which reflect the context in which policing is conducted. Participants learned about the difficulty of practicing law enforcement in countries characterized by political instability, where poverty is extreme and survival difficult for much of the population. These countries often experience population displacement which can lead to high rates of crime. This is often accompanied by public mistrust of police regimes. These countries face difficult challenges and where advice is needed in developing effective police practice, it should be offered.

6. Situational Factors In Policing

Presenters addressed the importance of situational factors and urban environmental design in crime prevention. The positioning of street lighting and furniture for example, can influence the location and extent of crime in an area, as can the general physical appearance of the physical environment.

7. Victims Of Crime And Private Security

Presenters reminded participants that crime has many victims; the poor are more likely to be victims, and repeat victims, of crime for example. The fear of crime, and perhaps the reality of facing crime on a regular basis, has led to an increased demand for and a resulting growth in the private security sector in many countries. There is a limit to the amount of protection a police force can provide for individuals within a community and the wealthier are seeking protection for their property and their families in an increasingly insecure world. As a consequence of this there has been a considerable expansion in the private security market in many countries, presenters suggested that there is an urgent need to review and consider the role of private security alongside that of traditional policing.