

AFP's presence continues to be strong in Lyon

The AFP has attached a number of law enforcement officers to Interpol over the years. The current member, Federal Agent Ian Bain, is Assistant Director in the General Secretariat and Head of the Drugs Sub-Directorate.

Mr Bain said that Interpol is an international, and inter-governmental organisation which was granted Observer Status by the United Nations at its 51st General Assembly in October 1996.

Its origins date back to 1914 when a group of concerned police chiefs met in Monaco to work out how they could establish a more efficient system of cross border cooperation on extradition matters and the setting up of an international criminal records office.

Progress of the proposed organisation was halted with the advent of the first World War. In 1923 it was established as the International Police Commission with its headquarters in Vienna, Austria. Its work was again interrupted in 1939 by World War II and did not re-commence until 1946 when the Secretariat was established in Paris. In 1989 the Secretariat was moved from Paris to Lyon where it was opened for business by the late President Mitterand who officiated at the inauguration ceremony.

The organisation is governed by an Executive Committee elected by the delegates to the General Assembly which is held annually. The committee comprises nine members, three vice presidents and a president who represents the four Interpol geographical regions.

The day-to-day operations of the General Secretariat are the responsibility of the Secretary-General, a post currently occupied by Raymond Kendall, a former British police

officer. Mr Kendall was re-elected for the third consecutive five-year term at the General Assembly held in Beijing in 1995.

There are about 320 people working at the Secretariat of which about a quarter are serving police and customs officers – there are two of the latter, both of whom are attached to the Drugs Sub-Directorate. The non-police staff are mostly French nationals but there are also many British and Spanish nationals, and a range of other nationalities. Interpol has four official working languages – English, French, Arabic and Spanish.

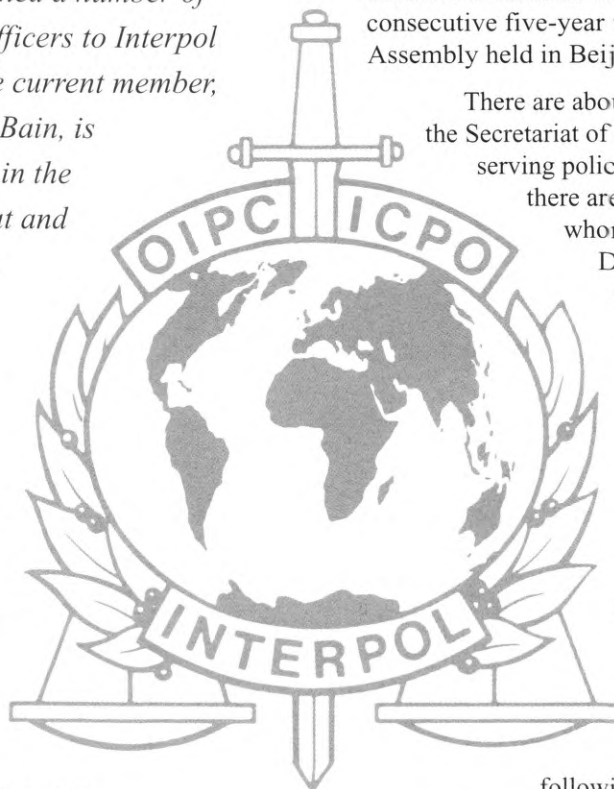
Mr Kendall is assisted by four directors each responsible for one of the following directorates: Personnel and Finances; Criminal Intelligence and Liaison; Legal Services; and Telecommunications and Computer Services.

The Drugs Sub-Directorate (SDIII) is one of six Sub-Directorates under the responsibility of the Director of the Criminal Intelligence and Liaison Directorate. It is currently staffed by 23 law enforcement officers, including two analysts, and three secretarial support staff representing all corners of the globe.

The South-East Asian Drugs Liaison Office in Bangkok is staffed by two police officers and one assistant and is directly responsible to the Head of SDIII. It is expected that those countries which send staff to the General Secretariat will provide officers who have a drugs background as well as other skills.

Interpol's involvement in helping member countries in their anti-drug activities dates back almost to the organisation's inception, but the present version of SDIII evolved from the model which was first established in the early 1970s by its current Secretary-General, Mr Kendall, who was then appointed as its Head.

The role of SDIII is multi-faceted, but it has one common goal – to assist its member countries in tackling illicit drug trafficking to the greatest



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extent possible. The Sub-Directorate consists of two groups, each dealing with two drug types – heroin and cannabis, and cocaine and psychotropic substances, the second group dealing also with precursor and essential chemicals. Both groups are led by a Head of Group, with these positions presently occupied by an investigator from the UK Customs Service and an officer from the German BKA (the German federal police).

Some SDIII functions include: production of documents such as the Weekly Intelligence Message; strategic intelligence reports – Europe and the World; the Drugs Intelligence Gazette; the results of special studies (such as the World Wide Study on LSD and the World Wide Study on Controlled Deliveries); modus operandi concerning the concealment of drugs; reports for other international organisations such as the World Health Organisation; statistical reports concerning world wide drug seizures; and the General Assembly Report.

Activities of SDIII include

- liaison visits to areas of special interest;
- liaison missions conducted with other organisations such as the United Nations Drug Control Program;
- organising and holding Interpol-initiated drugs meetings both in Lyon and other locations;
- participation in meetings of other organisations (such as Europol, World Customs, United Nations, World Health, non-government organisations, and law enforcement);
- monitoring illicit drug trafficking through drug seizure reports, reports received from other monitoring agencies, mission reports and annual reports forwarded by member countries;
- assisting in controlled deliveries; providing technical assistance (such as rogatory commissions); and
- holding working meetings concerning operational matters involving a number of member countries. Mr Bain is tasked with ensuring that these functions are undertaken and carried out on time – a role which requires great tact and skill considering that staff within SDIII are from all corners of the globe

and have diverse cultures, religions, work backgrounds and experience and their expectations and standards can vary considerably.

Mr Bain plans SDIII activities two years in advance which requires carefully considered planning of the number of meetings to be held, their duration and location.

Maintenance of staffing levels is also a significant function. Mr Bain said there is a constant staff turnover and the procedures for the replacement and /or extension of officers could be extremely cumbersome when dealing with some ‘sending’ administrations, and required much forward planning.

Liaison, particularly with other international organisations at the appropriate level, was also a significant part of the role.

Apart from attending and participating in most of the meetings organised by SDIII, the Head was required also to represent the organisation and, on occasions, the Secretary-General at meetings organised by other parties to discuss policy issues, present papers and discuss international aspects of the illicit drug trade.

“Holding meetings away from Lyon and therefore the headquarters situation adds to the logistical problems normally associated with such activity,” Mr Bain said.

“Any such problems must be solved, with the Head of SDIII being ultimately responsible for the outcomes. 1997 has been no exception to the rule with meetings held in Alicante, Spain; Genoa, Italy; Algiers, Algeria; Puerto Vallarta, Mexico; and Isfahan in Iran.”

The latter meeting organised by SDIII together with Iranian authorities took Mr Bain to the border area of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan to

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examine first hand the measures taken by the Iranians to prevent drug traffickers from crossing into their territory.

Federal Agent Bain said that he encourages new officers to SDIII to create their own projects to complement their set tasks, providing that such projects are of benefit to member countries.

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“The Interpol data base contains many hundreds of thousands of pieces of such data which can be linked with ongoing operations.”

Mr Bain gave an example of one such operation, which he said gives a feel for what can be achieved with having access to world-wide data.

“In the summer of 1996, the Drugs Sub-Directorate working in tandem with several National Central Bureaus (NCBs) in Europe, isolated from among thousands of drug seizure records, several individuals who appeared to share common links. They were identified through the analysis of airline routes, telephone numbers, code names used by contact persons in several countries, and their involvement in the smuggling of a common drug, in this case cocaine.

“Once the framework of what would eventually develop into an extensive trafficking organisation emerged, an ad hoc working meeting (code-named Operation Aroma II) was held at the General Secretariat in Lyon where for two days investigators from half-a-dozen countries discussed each country’s findings.

“At the conclusion of their discussions, a clear picture of a suspect – in this case a Nigerian national travelling on at least two false identities – emerged as the key figure of the organisation’s European chapter.

“Between September 1996 and February 1997, police in Austria, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Ecuador, Curacao, Portugal,

Luxembourg and Denmark, working through their NCBs and a special team at the Drugs Sub-Directorate in Lyon maintained contact and continued to add intelligence to the growing file against the target. The task was not an easy one – it required continuous analysis of thousands of telephone numbers, drug reports and coordination in a multi-lingual environment.

“A second working meeting was held in London a month later to examine new findings. At the onset of the meeting, a Red Notice was issued by Denmark against the subject which conclusively resulted in his arrest in the Netherlands in February 1997. The subject was extradited to Denmark in early September where he is awaiting trial.

“Numerous persons in his organisation were identified and arrested in Portugal, Denmark, Ecuador and the United Kingdom.

“Whilst all of the above was going on, a seemingly inconsequential incident in Luxembourg in September 1996 involving a Nigerian national in heroin trafficking from Thailand was successfully linked to the main suspect in Operation Aroma II.

A thorough review of seizure records on file at the Interpol Secretariat General was promptly undertaken and an even more formidable trafficking organisation was identified. This operation was given the name ‘Operation-Show-Me-How’.

It succeeded in identifying the organisation’s activities in over 30 countries in Africa, Central America, Asia, Europe and North America, and that the same organisation was involved in smuggling both heroin and cocaine.

“The operation revealed how, after losing hundreds of drug couriers to law enforcement around the world in the 1980s and early 1990s, a West African trafficking organisation had skilfully developed a heroin smuggling technique which relied extensively on the international postal system and the express courier industry.

“Operation Show-Me-How has resulted in numerous arrests and heroin seizures, and has also established that the same smuggling technique is being used to smuggle hundreds of kilos of cocaine from South America to Africa, Asia and Europe.”