

Keynote Address

Business Security in the Post 9/11 Environment

Australian Business Group Vietnam
Ho Chi Minh City
10th June 2003

Introduction

Good afternoon. It is a pleasure to be here today to discuss with Australian members of the Ho Chi Minh business community the matter of regional security, particularly in light of 9/11 and the Bali bombings of October 2002.

Before doing so, allow me to say that I am mindful of the calibre of previous speakers to have addressed this distinguished forum. I am also keenly aware that the Ho Chi Minh City chapter of the Australian Business Group in Vietnam represents the working heart of a 3,000-strong Australian expatriate community in this beautiful country.

For those of you who are unaware, the AFP is the principal law enforcement agency of the Australian Government. Its core responsibility is to enforce Commonwealth legislation across Australia and to protect the national interest both at home and abroad.

It means that in addition to prosecuting acts of fraud that may be perpetrated against the Federal Government, the AFP looks to investigate everything from transnational crime, people-smuggling, illicit drug trafficking, money laundering and e-security issues.

A cornerstone of the AFP's regional cooperation approach to doing business has long been its International Network.

On this occasion it is a key reason for my visit to Vietnam.

I am delighted to report that today it will be my pleasure to open the AFP's first such liaison post in Ho Chi Minh City.

Experience suggests it will have the potential to benefit the local business community and further strengthen Australia's regional defences in the current strategies to overcome transnational crime.

I will cover in this presentation how we manage to operate in overseas locations and focus on how we came to be part of the joint investigations into the Bali bombings and the security implications for business arising from the current threats to Australian interests.

The AFP's International Network has been an integral part of the ongoing struggle against transnational crime.

Indeed, the AFP's preferred policy of forging and maintaining personal contact and strategic alignments with foreign governments and law enforcement has since become widely

accepted as a prime strategy in the fight against global terrorism.

It is my firm belief that by being proactive in offshore locations the AFP, in co-operation with strategic allies willing to share intelligence and resources, has the potential to identify and stifle regional terrorist cells wherever they emerge.

In addition to Vietnam, the AFP is moving to open six new posts, as well as placing nine additional AFP officers into existing overseas locations.

If you stop to consider that in October 1979 the AFP inherited overseas offices in Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Jakarta from the former Federal Bureau of Narcotics, our current and expanded network flags a significant shift in strategic thinking.

I trust the South East Asian business community will be heartened by our increased presence not only in Vietnam but also in the broader Asian Region.

The AFP will now have two offices in Vietnam, the first of which was opened in Hanoi in 1998. Analysis suggests sufficient regional criminality to ensure that the Ho Chi Minh City branch will provide equally invaluable service.

For my part this occasion is doubly auspicious. Later this week I am due to open a second AFP office in Thailand, in the city of Chiang Mai.

The fact that the AFP is already operational in places like China, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines suggests we

are trusted members of a regional law enforcement alliance unprecedented in this part of the world.

It also bears relating that the AFP is the first declared Western law enforcement agency to open liaison posts in China and Vietnam, which is indicative of the AFP's vision in terms of the need for global co-operation in law enforcement.

A new post is soon to open in Dubai, in the Persian Gulf, which is in reasonably close proximity to a number of regional crime hotspots.

Another is also soon to open in South Africa to keep up with changing crime trends. The Pretoria post is expected to grow exponentially as crime groups become more active south of the Sahara rather than Nigeria, which has been an active haven for organised crime in Africa.

You will all no doubt be well aware of Nigerian fraud scams which have struck some of our businesses back home.

By September 2003 the AFP will have 55 federal agents stationed at 31 posts in 26 countries, not including the eight advisors already in place in capitals like Honiara or the three serving with Interpol in Europe.

In addition the AFP continues to be engaged in UN peacekeeping. Cyprus, Cambodia, East Timor, Mozambique, Bougainville and the Solomon Islands are recent areas of operation.

However, ever since a fanatical group of religious

fundamentalists launched twin attacks on New York and Washington DC in September 2001 to devastating effect, counter terrorism has become a serious focus of AFP attention.

For those in the expatriate business community trading into global markets like the Middle East where Al Qaeda continues to hold sway, or in South East Asia where Jemaah Islamiah appears determined to spread its own brand of death and destruction, the AFP is mindful of your anxiety.

Last year's events in Bali that saw 202 people killed, including 88 Australians, in a terrorist incident uncomfortably close to Australia's north-western seaboard has spurred the AFP to do all in its power to ensure there is no repeat performance.

However, when it comes to acts of terror perpetrated by individuals with suicidal intent and no thought for the wellbeing of others, there can never be any caste iron guarantee.

In such circumstances vigilance becomes the keyword.

But, as Bali has shown, Australians who live, work or even holiday abroad are also potential targets.

To counter the predicted threat the Federal Government has signed Memorandums of Understanding on terrorism with key countries many of whom are also significant trading partners.

The move has allowed the AFP to continue to strengthen its considerable working ties with regional law enforcement agencies now considered essential to success in the war on terror.

An indicator of how well the relationship is working can be gauged by the spectacular breakthrough made by the Indonesian National Police in the Bali investigation currently before the courts.

By any yardstick it amounted to an outstanding team effort. To reach that point it was necessary for the INP to identify the need to invite the AFP and other overseas agencies to co-operate on a range of crime scene and forensic measures.

But how did we get into Bali as part of the joint operation? As I mentioned earlier, we had been in Jakarta for a number of years and over that time built a level of trust with both the Indonesian Government and law enforcement.

Over time, the AFP had a number of officers work out of the Jakarta office all of whom learnt to speak Bahasa and other critical cultural aspects of Indonesian life.

In 1998 the then AFP Commissioner, Mick Palmer signed a Memorandum of Understanding with his Indonesian counterpart aimed at combating major crimes.

We were also able to maintain positive relationships with the Indonesian authorities during Australia's involvement in East Timor, where a contingent of Australian Federal Police operated under the auspice of the United Nations to oversight and deliver the ballot for independence. The ability to maintain such strong relationships speaks volumes about the value of the international network.

Whenever I visited Dili during that time, I always went to Jakarta on the way into East Timor and on the way back to pay deference to the ruling government. In hindsight, this was an important act of diplomacy.

I suspect, that for our time here in HCM City, I will always travel to this city via Hanoi for the same reason.

The next challenge to the relationship was during the people smuggling crisis. Some will recall the Tampa incident. During that incident the former MOU was set aside by the Indonesian government. Despite that, the Indonesian National Police were prepared to continue to work with us on people smuggling until a new MOU was put in place.

Many of you will be familiar from your professional backgrounds of the value of golf to Asia's culture. It is something that was impressed upon me early in my Commissionership by the head of the Singapore National Police, Commissioner Khoo Boon Hui.

Ironically, it was during a golf game at Jindalooop Resort last June that the Indonesian Police Chief, General Dai Bachtier sought our assistance to deal with bombings in Aceh and Ambon. We signed a new MOU on transnational crime including terrorism.

On October 12 last year when I received the first call alerting me to the bombings in Bali, I contacted General Dai Bactier. When it came to terrorism, we spoke a common language and in the hours and days following we signed a joint operational agreement and set about the task of investigating the attacks.

The person selected to head the operation was an AFP officer who had served in Jakarta during the late 1990's and on the Indonesian side, General Made Pastika was selected. Pastika had trained with the AFP on the management of serious crime with me in 1993.

Many believe that Bali will go down as a working blueprint for the exceptionally high standard of crime scene investigation and forensic expertise brought to the table by both the AFP and the international law enforcement community.

Backed by good, solid, old-fashioned detective work by the INP it proved to be a winning formula that has seen more than 30 people charged in relation to the Bali bombing.

In addition to the MOU on terrorism signed with Indonesia and the AFP's own role in maintaining a close working relationship with the INP, anti-terrorist MOUs have also been signed with Fiji, the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand to further strengthen Australia's security cordon.

More MOUs are currently under negotiation with South Pacific nations that have recognised the need to join the expanding region of closer co-operation in the global war on terror.

Having the agreed framework such as MOU's is one thing, but the critical issue here is to develop personal and organisational relationships.

But what of the business community and its joint responsibility in the global fight against terrorism? Most people in business are

quick to appreciate the need to protect Australia's 'critical infrastructure' the generic term that describes the physical and information platforms that underpin our national economy.

The reality is that most of Australia's critical infrastructure - specifically the computers and software systems that drive everything from power plants to airport landing systems and even regulate water usage - is owned or managed by the State or private sector.

The government cannot protect the nation's critical infrastructure on its own. Which is why it is vital for Government to receive the support, advice and expertise of the business sector; people like you.

Last year the Federal Government established a Business-Government Task Force on Critical Infrastructure to identify and examine key issues of concern. Its recommendations were endorsed. Many are already being acted upon.

Among them was the need to establish a trusted information-sharing network. The Federal Attorney has since acted to set up a Trusted Information Sharing Network (TISN) to improve the strategic responses to critical infrastructure security.

A key part of the TISN will be the Critical Infrastructure Advisory Council whose members are drawn from Commonwealth agencies, State governments and the owners and operators of critical infrastructure.

The council will act as a conduit for high level communications

between industry and government on security issues, reporting to the Attorney-General and feeding directly into Australia's counter-terrorism plans.

The bottom line is that in the private sector everyone has a vested interest in protecting the critical infrastructure of their own business entities, including those that operate in Vietnam.

Closely related to the protection of physical infrastructure is the need to protect the national information infrastructure (NII), information systems that underpin day-to-day activities such as banking and finance, transport and distribution, telecommunications, energy and utilities and emergency services.

Just as in any physical attack, cyber attacks can take many forms. Because there are terrorist groups prepared to launch on-line attacks via the Internet, it behoves the business community to be aware of the threat and gear to meet it.

Malicious hackers who enter key government or business sites by stealth with the intention of wreaking havoc, or those who create worms and viruses to take down entire systems, are an unseen enemy.

To meet the challenge the AFP is in the throes of establishing the Australasian High- Tech Crime Centre (AHTCC) to deal with acts of cyber crime and threats of cyber terrorism.

Already operating on a unilateral basis, the centre will be officially launched next month.

Comprising experts from a range of services including the AFP and State high-tech crime units, the AHTCC will be in the front line against cyber crime.

The unit will complement the Australian Computer Emergency Response Team (AusCERT) and is intended to warn businesses about potential threats and vulnerabilities to their own computer systems.

AusCERT has the capacity to collect data from software and anti-virus vendors as well as IT research organisations around the world. It appears destined to become a useful tool in protecting Australian businesses from malicious attack no matter their geographic location.

Australia also continues to play a leading Asia-Pacific role in developing and fostering co-operation to protect the vital information infrastructure through APEC and its Telecommunications and Information Working Group known as APEC TEL.

As an added precaution Australia is taking in-country CERT training to Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia with help from its international fund agency AusAID.

And in conjunction with Canada, Japan and the US, Australia has been instrumental in winning funding from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to extend the project into Chile, Peru, Mexico as well as the Russian Federation.

To sum up, no one needs reminding that the battle against terrorism represents a new kind of warfare without a 'traditional' battlefield. Nor is the enemy easy to define or detect.

With no defined rules of engagement, no adherence to laws that govern armed conflict and no leader with whom to negotiate, there is no way of knowing if the battle has been won or lost.

And yet it is precisely because the war on terrorism is so difficult to define that the AFP, in association with fellow Government agencies including the security services, continues to work with like-minded neighbours to minimise the regional threat to us all.

At this time there is no reliable indicator to suggest how successful our joint efforts have been. Nor can there be any guarantee as to how long Australians, whether at home or abroad, will remain safe from attack.

Regrettably the most recent terrorist incidents in Saudi Arabia and Morocco are stark reminders that Western democracies remain very much in the Al Qaeda firing line.

In our region the threat is more likely to come from Al-Qaeda's lethal offshoot Jemaah Islamiah - the group we believe to be responsible for the bombings in Bali.

For the expatriate business community in Vietnam the message is simple.

Remain vigilant and protect your communications infrastructures.

With the continued backing of our regional neighbours - and so long as there remains the public will to defy tyranny wherever it appears - there is every reason to believe Australia can withstand any adversity in defence of its hard-won democratic principles.

Despite political differences, it has always been my view that when we enter a foreign country we do not impose our own values and systems of judgement upon them. Instead, we need to listen and learn how they do their business on their patch.

What works in one country will not necessarily work in another. Indeed, what works in one part of a country may not necessarily work everywhere.

What does this mean for Australian businesses such as yourselves in Vietnam?

Firstly, I want you to know that our work to combat terrorism has always had a business outcome in mind. That is, if we focus our attention on preventing terrorism, then we maximise the opportunities to protect business and investment.

The tourism industry around the world has suffered greatly from the impact of terrorism and is an area of current focus in our work with the airline industry and airport operators in Australia.

Secondly, I want to assure you that ourselves and our partner agencies are working in a whole of government approach to this issue. It is simply not good enough if government departments are fighting turf wars and lack co-ordination in times of crisis.

Post Bali the Federal Government allocated almost \$2 billion in extra resources over five years for national security and border protection. Of that sum \$49 million was earmarked to enhance the technological capabilities of the AFP, ASIO and Australian Crime Commission.

On that point, I would like to remind you that Mr Nick Warner, Australia's former High Commissioner to PNG has been appointed as Australia's Ambassador on Terrorism.

Lastly, I would encourage you to develop strong ties with the government agencies represented here in Vietnam. While Federal Agent Steve Mullins can talk to you on security matters, the Consul General Dr Stephen Hennington and his staff are an important connection for you to maintain.

Finally, there are the lessons we in the AFP have learned about our operations in the region and how we conduct ourselves.

The most important we in the AFP have learnt is that it is not so much "The business you do but how you do your business" which will offer the best opportunities.