

7 Police liaisons as builders of transnational security cooperation

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Transnationalization of security services

This section of the volume turns to the specific area of police cooperation as a way of understanding the challenges to broader cooperation in intelligence practices as well as the potential for its success. While Chapter 6 looked at the factors underlying successful police cooperation efforts, this chapter focuses on one aspect of police cooperation – police liaisons – and explores their role in building up a cooperative transnational response to security issues, in particular, terrorism. The chapter begins with a discussion of the kinds of initiatives that have been and continue to be made in the area of security cooperation; a discussion broadly structured on the basis of the discussion provided in Chapter 1 of different realms of security relations (state-centric and multi-centric) as well as along a traditional dividing of actors into two broad types: liberal and realist. Exploring the resulting categories and the initiatives that can be grouped accordingly, reveals that the most progressive and arguably effective developments in combating transnational threats have been occurring in the realist state and multi-centric domains.

The transnationalization trend in security cooperation practices

The liberal/state-centric domain

With respect to security cooperation practices in general, it is possible to cite considerable activity having taken place over the years within the liberal/state-centric domain – that is, formal relations or initiatives formulated among state-based international organizations or entities (see Figure 7.1, below). Beginning with the cooperation efforts of large international organizations (IO), such as the United Nations, to those IOs with agendas more specifically focused on security, such as INTERPOL or EUROPOL, these organizations have traditionally drawn up conventions agreeing on ways of addressing particular security threats, and created regimes of expected norms and behaviors towards those threats.

The deployment of police liaison officers to international organizations also falls within the liberal/state-centric domain. This practice involves states appointing

		Forms of Cooperative Security Relations	
		<i>State-Centric Interactions</i> (Formal relations formulated by central state organs)	<i>Multi-Centric Interactions</i> (Informal relations formulated by a mix of state, sub-state, or non-state entities)
A C T O R S	<i>Liberal Forms of Actors and Practices</i>	International Organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conventions • regimes Judicial Cooperation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (e.g. Extradition) Administrative Cooperation (Customs) <i>Police Cooperation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Police Organizations • United Nations • INTERPOL/EUROPOL 	Non-Govt. International Orgs Independent/Individual initiatives Private Security Regime <i>Police Cooperation</i> Local initiatives (e.g. civilian cooperation with the police)
	<i>Realist Forms of Actors and Practices</i>	Interstate Relations (Diplomacy) <i>Police Cooperation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally established and formally functioning police liaisonship structures 	<i>Police Cooperation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal functions of police liaisonship • Formally established but informally functioning structures

Figure 7.1 Framework of police cooperation

officers to work at international organizations of which their country is a member, such as French officers appointed to EUROPOL. Variations on this practice also occur, such as the employing of liaison officers from *non*-member states to member-based international organizations. Examples of this include the employment of American FBI, Secret Service and DEA liaison officers to EUROPOL. Similarly, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Australia and Colombia also have liaison officers in EUROPOL, although they are not EU member countries. We also see examples of the reverse: employing liaison officers from international organizations to non-member states, for example, having officers from EUROPOL posted as liaisons in Washington, DC.¹ And finally there is increasing practice of liaison officers being appointed *between* international police organizations, as is the case with liaison officer exchanges between EUROPOL and INTERPOL.² All three of these trends in liaison officer exchanges by international organizations and non-member states have taken place in the post 9/11 era and all with an overt purpose of responding to terrorism.

Activity within the liberal/multi-centric domain

It is possible to say that security cooperation practices by and among the existing non-governmental groups and organizations of the liberal/multi-centric domain are growing, and many new organizations have even emerged in recent years.

Some early examples of initiatives in this area can be seen in the establishing of non-governmental international police organizations, e.g. the International Police Association (IPA), the International Association of Women Police (IAWP), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and the International Police Executive Symposium. These organizations have contributed to the shared understandings between police officers around the world in different ways. The IPA, for example, is a worldwide police organization, which aims to increase social and professional interactions among its members, while the International Police Executive Symposium is an academic platform, which organizes conferences to discuss specific police problems. All these organizations contribute to the establishment of a discussion ground for members, however, they do not necessarily serve the aim of building up transnational security cooperation, since they tend to lack the jurisdiction and muscle to enforce wide-reaching security cooperation practices.

A second area of development in this liberal/multi-centric domain can be seen in the growth of private entities providing various security services not only to private companies but to governments as well. Private security firms have long been cooperative partners for states in countering terrorism, but have certain shortcomings made most obvious in the recent example of Blackwater and its activities in Iraq. Basically, such private security services are ultimately businesses, and as such lack the vision and public service conscience that should be present in a non-profit governmental organization or entity. In terms of serving to the promotion in particular of cooperation on security matters, these private services have yet to offer anything of significance, and may even prove a hindrance.

Another development in this realm is the founding of private organizations that provide information and reports to clients – including government, intelligence and law-enforcement bodies. Examples include organizations such as IntelCenter (www.intelcenter.com) and the Search for International Terrorist Entities (SITE, www.siteinstitute.com). The SITE institute's activities, for example, consist of surfing internet web pages and chat rooms to trace terrorist content.³ According to the information on the institute's website, their experts translate four kinds of sources: transcripts of terrorist leaders' speeches, videos and messages; terrorist books, magazines, *fatwas* and training manuals; terrorist communiqués; and terrorist chatter discussing potential targets, methods of attack and other relevant material.⁴ These translations are then provided to the institute's clients.

In the security realm, and in particular the fight against terrorism, which has always been accepted as the domain of the state, this involvement of private organizations is an interesting development, and such institutes/entities may be able to provide valuable information, but this information may also be controversial. To give an example from the SITE case, a basic search on the internet reveals numerous websites raising cautionary calls against Rita Katz, the owner of SITE, because of her personal background and the killing of her father by the Saddam regime in Iraq. Such allegations inevitably raise questions about the reliability of the information her organization provides. In general, these and other non-governmental organizations can be criticized as being more likely to be open to penetration and manipulation than official state organizations or groups, to possess

less organizational capacity, and be prone to less coordination capacity given possibly very different perceptions and definitions of what constitutes a threat.

Yet another new development in this realm is the strategy of local state or sub-state authorities building up transnational capacities on their own, in the sense of coordinating with non-governmental entities or individuals. To illustrate, an example from the New York police may be useful. The NYPD has in its employ an individual of Turkish origin, who serves as a liaison officer between the NYPD and the Muslim community in the city.⁵ I met with this individual after he finished up his prayers at the Turkish Fatih Mosque in Brooklyn. During our interview I learned how he established links with the New York Police after organizing a support rally in response to the disastrous earthquake in Turkey in 1999. He now serves as community coordinator, but carries a police ID, and works at Police Headquarters directly under the Police Commissioner. During our interview I learned that he has also been involved with establishing NYPD liaison offices around the world, and described his role in working with them in this way:

Overseas liaison officers have my name in their phone books. When they need to know anything special about Islam or culture there, they just call me and ask. I inform them about what they would like to learn ... I take part during the international visits of police forces from Muslim countries to NYPD and Raymond Kelly. This situation surprises visiting delegations because although I am originally a civilian I have a role in official circles.⁶

He stressed his close working relationship with the police commissioner: “Raymond Kelly wants me to visit him at least two times a month. Beside community meetings, I join some of the staff meetings with him.” Interestingly, this may hint at one of the problems with this type of local initiative, which is that, though they constitute positive moves, they may be the brainchild of a single individual – in this case New York Police Commissioner Kelly – and thus run the risk of being discontinued or sidelined when a new person takes over. This risk was in fact directly communicated to me by another NYPD liaison officer posted in the Middle East, who expressed the opinion that it was “all Raymond Kelly” behind the liaison program. According to at least that one officer, the program would be in jeopardy of failing after Kelly left.

In considering complications or shortcomings of the various modes of cooperation within the liberal state and multi-centric realms, it appears that even one of the most common methods, the appointing of police liaisons to IOs, has limitations. First, it should be noted that there are several ways of appointing liaison officers (see Figure 7.2), but the two main methods of using liaison officers can be categorized as government-to-government (appointing them in a bilateral manner between two states) or government-to-international organization (state appointments of LOs to an international structure). Sending officers to an institutional setting such as EUROPOL is an example of the latter, while the former describes the traditional bilateral system, in which two countries appoint liaison officers to serve in the partner country, thus falling into the realist/state-centric domain.

		LO Employing Entity			
		<i>State</i>		<i>International Organization (IO)</i>	<i>Local Authorities</i>
LO Receiving Entity	<i>State</i>	1 Stationing in one country	Bilateral appointment at general police headquarters	EUROPOL LO appointed to USA	NYPD LOs appointed to other countries
			State-to-state employment bid, stationing in other cities		
			Lack of police representation, rep. by other diplomatic personnel, usually military LOs		
		2 Accredited to other states in the same region			
		3 Representing other states in the host country			
	<i>Intl. Org. (IO)</i>	1 Membership structure (e.g. EUROPOL)		LOs appointed between INTERPOL and EUROPOL	NYPD LO appointed at INTERPOL
		2 Appointment of non-member countries' LOs to an IO			
	<i>Local Authority</i>				European examples, esp. between border cities

Figure 7.2 Methods of liaison officer deployment

Traditionally, this bilateral kind of liaisonship has been established between the central police structures of two countries, though in some cases, bilateral liaison officers may be used as accredited liaison officers for other regional countries. As yet another pattern, in Scandinavia, a liaison officer from one Nordic country may represent all Nordic countries in the host country.

The relative benefits and disadvantages of these two primary forms of liaisonship (state-to-state, state-to-IO) are frequently discussed by police officers in the field. The general impression based on a series of interviews with active liaison officers and police managers is that appointments to organizations such as EUROPOL may be useful for policy setting, establishing common standards and creating

data warehouses, but when it comes to actually solving crimes or following up on cases, they can face problems. First, they note that the bureaucratic structure of international organizations can be a negative characteristic. A liaison officer with experience both at international organizations and in bilateral appointments argued that:

Bureaucracy dominates the relationships at international organizations. Processing a request at an international organization may take months. On the other hand bilateral liaison officers may conclude the same requests in hours and even in minutes.⁷

Similarly, a deputy National Police Commissioner with whom I spoke, argued that:

Through our normal [bilaterally appointed] liaison officers, we can get very important and urgent information in quite a short time when we need it. Otherwise we could have waited for days through other channels. Therefore we give special importance in employing liaison officers directly to areas of our concern.⁸

These comparisons and the resulting impression of the inefficiency of LOs at international organizations raises an interesting point about speed and effectiveness. Being together at an international organization like EUROPOL means that LOs can be physically gathered together quickly in order to inform them about urgent issues, for example, to share among them intelligence that an attack may take place somewhere in Europe. On the other hand, if we are to look at the efficiency and speed of investigations, there is a general consensus that international organizations are not always productive. In the words of one PLO:

International organizations such as EUROPOL and INTERPOL are good for coming together, talking on issues, setting agendas and planning the future but I do not believe that they help in cases when urgent response is needed.⁹

The shortcomings of international organizations like INTERPOL or EUROPOL are also suggested by the fact that some member states of these international organizations still feel the need to appoint separate, bilateral liaisons in other member countries – a practice that should not theoretically be necessary given that their officers work alongside each other at the organization. One Deputy National Police Commissioner told me that they had been “receiving requests of direct Liaison Officer employment by our partners more and more because quite a lot of police organizations believe that employing liaison officers is an important way of succeeding timely and successful cooperation”.¹⁰ Yet another liaison officer blamed the need for reverting to bilateral practices as being the result of the “impotencies of EUROPOL channels”.¹¹ Even information given on INTERPOL’s web page shows that member countries such as Austria, Germany, France, the Czech Republic,

the Nordic Countries, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Spain all have LO posts in these and other European countries, even though they are all members of EUROPOL. This situation shows that states still feel the need to establish bilateral relations although they are in the same IO and, in fact, there is an ongoing debate about the use of EUROPOL. One European police manager interviewed, pointed out the organization's limitations, saying:

Using *only* EUROPOL channels and the liaison offices at the EUROPOL headquarters between member states, and ending the practice of liaison officer appointments bilaterally between member states, has been proposed by a few countries, but accepting such a proposal seems to be impossible right now.¹²

The realist/state and multi-centric domains

When we look at the realist/state-centric domain and its role in cooperation practices, we see that diplomacy has long constituted the main practice of the realist/state-centric domain for coordinating cooperation on security matters, together with other state-related forms of cooperation such as in the judiciary,¹³ where various practices, from extradition, to recognizing foreign penal judgements, to cross-border freezing and seizing of assets, all have been and continue to be used to counter threats – including increasingly transnational ones. Diplomacy may be the most traditional form of building up cooperation on security matters, but when it comes in particular to twenty-first century transnational threats, diplomacy and the diplomats who conduct it may face critical challenges. There remain, as always, the traditional complexities of state-to-state relations, such as states looking out for their own national interests, the lack of trust, the drive for survival, and so on, but in addition, there may be slowness on the part of these state diplomats to adapt to new kinds of threats and to adopt the kinds of transnational responses necessary to face them. Diplomats still tend to remain traditionally trained and to hold fundamental beliefs in a state-centric and state-dominant world. They may be more likely to view the post-9/11 period as just that – an interim period within a long history of state-to-state security domination – rather than a sign of a broader shift. Thus, in both vision and in preparedness/training, they are not likely to be quick to adapt to new, transnational practices.

Increasingly, however, we see diplomatic efforts being accompanied by other statist actors acting in a more transnational manner – in other words, becoming what we might call transgovernmental, or, as suggested in this volume, “statist transnational” actors. Since these actors establish transnational links beyond the strict control of foreign offices or departments of state, their actions may constitute moves into the realist/multi-centric domain. These government entities nevertheless remain part of the state system. They act on behalf of states, and even when they create entities above the borders of states, they may use diplomatic or state channels to do so. As for police liaison officers working in a traditional bilateral manner, their appointments and official functions remain in the state-centric realm (for example, they are often stationed at their countries' embassies abroad)

though, as we will see later on, their actual practices often spread into the realist/multi-centric domain.

Europe has often led the way in examples of such transnational relations between sub-state actors. For decades, various sub-state entities have initiated their own transnational cooperative ventures. Such sub-state initiatives have generally been established on a regional basis, with an aim to controlling borders. They include, for example, the regular meetings of the heads of police from Berlin, Bern, Bratislava, Budapest, Munich, Prague and Vienna,¹⁴ and the close cooperation that has existed since the 1980s in the trinational Upper Rhine Area between Basel (Switzerland), Freiburg (Germany) and Mulhouse (France).¹⁵ The Netherlands have also established Police Partnership Programs (PPP) with Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, for purposes of exchanging professional knowledge and experience, and building up mutual understanding and respect.¹⁶ Perhaps the most famous example of sub-state actors setting up cooperation practices is that of the transnational police cooperation that exists between France and England, for the purpose of securing the Channel Tunnel Region.¹⁷

Yet another example is the Metropolitan Police of London, which includes a Counter-Terrorism Command responsible for undertaking counter-terrorism investigations not only in London but throughout the UK and abroad. Although the Metropolitan Police is mainly established as an agency for the Metropolitan area of London, in this particular structure they also function as a support agency for investigations outside of the city. Most importantly, the Counter-Terrorism Command of the Metropolitan Police is the “single point of contact for *international* partners in counter-terrorism matters” with an ability to investigate overseas attacks against British interests.¹⁸

Outside of Europe, perhaps the most interesting case is that of the New York Police Department. As mentioned earlier, the NYPD has, on its own initiative, sent police liaison officers to a variety of countries, including England, Jordan, Singapore, Israel, Canada, France and the Dominican Republic. This case bears some rather unique characteristics. The NYPD example shows us that a local entity may initiate an international cooperative strategy in the field of counter-terrorism, which has traditionally been accepted as a state-level issue (see Nussbaum, this volume). Also noteworthy is the fact that this strategy of a city sending its own PLOs has been established for countering terrorism in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, and has a very much local primary aim of protecting the city of New York. The interest raised by New York’s counter-terrorism liaisonship strategy is very much evident, particularly when we consider that other cities have expressed interest in copying this practice, including the police departments of Los Angeles, Miami, Las Vegas and Chicago.¹⁹ For cost-efficiency purposes, it has even been proposed that some of these local police departments come together to establish such an overseas liaison system.²⁰

Liaison officers as masters of informal cooperation practices

As was suggested above, although the police liaison system is established within the realist/state-centric domain, in one interesting, overall sense, it is possible to argue that its usage has been extending into the realist/multi-centric realm. That is, while police liaisonship preserves its formally established and thus state-based nature, it is functioning *informally* in several ways. Formal cooperation, it should first be noted, takes place within the bureaucratic circles of the relationship. Mutual agreements, conventions and all other relevant legal documents shape the formal functioning of the relationship, and the rules for these formal relationships have long been established. Informally, however, a liaison officer spends his time with his colleagues in the host country, often hosted by and given an office in the local police department. Consequently, a liaison officer's time is devoted to establishing cooperation and interaction with his counterparts in the name of his organization. In the process of working on requests or cases, liaison officers are able to learn more extensive and more detailed information. Consequently, the liaison officer learns the story of the cases. If there is any procedural problem in sharing the knowledge, informal ways of overcoming those difficulties can be discussed. S/he can learn about the local details and intricacies of the cases in questions, on site, and work more easily to find a solution.

The informal relationships that develop enable LOs to positively contribute to formal procedures by establishing a degree of cordiality, friendship and trust between parties. Informality also helps smooth over some of the bureaucratic processes that may slow down the investigation process. For example, formal relationships take place within the boundaries of official procedures in a mechanistic manner such as the institutional channels and communication of police cooperation. These official procedures may require notifying higher-level administrators for permission, using official written forms to request information or permission, even using particular formal language when requesting or sending messages. In order to set up and conduct contacts between countries, there may be requirements to copy these messages to other state-related departments, from the Interior Ministry to the Foreign Ministry or even the Prime Minister's Office. Not only might these formalities slow down the process of information exchange and cooperation, but may also slow down individuals' willingness to share information, as they might be intimidated by the necessity to write formal requests that anyone can later refer back to. Experiences reported by various LOs also revealed that the frustrations involved with such procedures are exacerbated because of the nature of investigative communications which often require extensive follow-up, back and forth, and exchange of ideas – all of which can take considerable time when going through formal channels.

On the other hand, informal cooperation eases up the process of communication about particular cases and developments within them. During informal communication with counterparts, police liaison officers share their experiences. During those information exchanges both parties give each other information about what is going on in cases, what kind of developments they are seeing in criminal strategies and

are able to share ideas about specific problems. Sharing information in this way gives both parties understanding about current and emerging trends. In that way parties build up common understandings about current problems and threats. An important example of how this may work was pointed out by a police officer at the NATO conference that produced this volume:

After an explosion took place, we have found that the perpetrator had lived in a European Country before. We asked the LO of this country information about this person and we got all the information. However we could not have gotten the same information via letters of rogatory from the judicial authorities of the same country.²¹

This example shows how the informal practices enabled by the liaison system may be beneficial in urgent cases.

Such information, gathered quickly in informal communication, is also more likely to be able to be used for preventive policing and for establishing preventive strategies, especially in countering terrorism. Learning about threats that others are experiencing may lead the way to taking necessary steps to avoid similar threats in one's own country. As terrorism is global today, a terrorist method used in one country may spread all over the world in just a few days, thus learning more about a terrorist method both promptly and in detail may be an invaluable asset for pre-emption of an attack in another country.

The importance of informality as a facilitator

It is clear from the above that a key underlying factor that runs throughout the developments within police cooperation in general is informality. Simply put, informal interaction implies daily contact between actual police officers. Not only is this perhaps the unspoken rationale behind setting up formal institutions or organizations for cooperation, but in practice, it is informal interaction that makes these institutions work and tends to spur unconventional developments of a more transnational nature.

The importance of informal interaction is evident in the fact that a definition is featured on the web page of the police department in Kent, England, a county which is a gateway from England to Europe both via the Channel Tunnel and several ports. It serves therefore as an important police authority to establish cooperation with international partners. Although this definition is established to describe the cooperative structure between the Kent Police and its international partners, it can guide our understanding of what informal cooperation entails:

[informal refers to the] natural consequence of day to day contact through meetings, visits, telephone conversations, use of LinguaNet system, e.g. information required/given on a police to police basis by the spoken word or simple documentation. Such information would only be used for police purposes and cannot be used in judicial proceedings. The use of the information can, by

negotiation, be upgraded to the levels and associated procedures of *formal* or *FORMAL* information.²²

Informal cooperation gives several advantages to police organizations. First of all, informal cooperation makes communication between parties faster and easier. As the above definition notes, it may also be possible for cooperation to include the use of a shared computer system. Any questions can be directly forwarded to partners to discuss on the issue. Based on those discussions, the parties may decide to take steps to establish formal procedures. Secondly, informal cooperation may help to increase trust and reliability between parties. As informal cooperation relies on day-to-day interaction, it helps parties to learn and trust each other. The higher the level of trust, informal cooperation may be more productive. Informal cooperation allows for sharing of stories about crimes and partners, and thus for learning about trends.

An equally critical factor allowing police cooperation to work as an essential tool between police organizations is the presence of a shared identity of “police culture”. Police culture allows police officers to understand problems in the same way. As one liaison officer put it:

Although the country that I work in has diplomatic tensions with mine, I never feel those tensions with my police counterparts, because as police officers we look at crime and criminals, including terrorism, in the same way.²³

In essence, this officer is describing what Deflem formulates conceptually as, “the objective of counter-terror policing is de-politicization of terrorism and seeing terrorism as a crime”.²⁴ This point reflects the identity of police in evaluating terrorism: when seeing terrorism as just another crime, cooperation becomes easier.

Police liaison officers: masters of the frontier

The first half of this chapter has shown that across different domains of state and multi-centric activity, attempts are being made and initiatives introduced to “transnationalize” the response to transnational security threats. Whether it is the spread of sub-state or non-state actors into realms previously limited to state actors, or the increasingly *informal* use of formal state actors or processes, there is no doubt that a changing nature of security threats has bred changes among those responsible for responding to those threats. At the forefront of the most effective changes we find the police, and, in particular, we can see evidence of innovative uses of police liaisons. Who are these pioneers of informal transnational security cooperation and what trends do we see in their deployment and nature?

Actors of the states’ transnationalization: who are the PLOs?

The following definition of liaison officers by the European Council reflects the general characteristics of the term “liaison officer”:

“liaison officer” means a representative of one of the Member States, posted abroad by a law enforcement agency to one or more third countries or to international organisations to establish and maintain contacts with the authorities in those countries or organisations with a view to contributing to preventing or investigating criminal offences.²⁵

Research on the police liaison system in Europe has described the characteristics of police liaison officers as being on the margins of the police world, often multilingual, having some form of advanced education, being “urbane” and “cosmopolitan” and recognizing each other as belonging to the same small elitist and political world.²⁶ According to the same study, they see their position as a form of promotion with financial and symbolic benefits, and note their job’s emphasis on strategic analysis requiring analytical skills and the ability to make comparisons between states.

Liaison officers have also been described more cynically in the limited literature about them:

The second model is that of the liaison, in the dual role of formal representative and informal “fixer”. Like the assorted representatives of the many non-law enforcement agencies that increasingly crowd U.S. embassies, few of whom engage in detective-like activities, U.S. law enforcement agents stationed abroad are expected to act both as official representatives of their agencies and as “fixers” for the assorted requests and problems that come their way. U.S. agents abroad often find their days crowded with fielding inquiries from U.S. based agents, transmitting requests for information and other assistance between local police agencies, serving as hosts for fellow agents flown in on specific investigations, arranging reservations and programs for visiting politicians, and high level officials, dealing with the media, giving speeches, and attending assorted social functions.²⁷

The somewhat unenthusiastic nature of this definition of the LOs’ duties and the image of the LOs as existing on some line between a real police officer and a diplomat, perhaps naturally leads to tensions at times between the LOs and the diplomatic corps. Relations between police liaison officers and diplomats tend to fall into two main categories: one in which there is little or no interaction between the two groups; or a second in which they have frequent contact. The first case is what happens when LOs are serving at international organizations or appointed in border areas where they travel daily between the countries. The second scenario is the general case in a bilateral appointment, when the LOs serve in their embassy abroad, and function there as part of the diplomatic mission.

Among the latter cases it is possible to see even greater distinctions between types. In some cases, such as in that of the USA, the country aims to establish police liaisonship as an important part of the diplomatic relationship. US government institutions are increasingly involved in international police matters because the US government views the international crime problem as a “component of

foreign policy and national security, not just as a law enforcement issue,”²⁸ and police assistance is seen as part of the foreign policy of the US.²⁹ On the other hand, in countries that do not have well established liaisonship programs, there are more likely to be problems and tensions arising between LOs and the diplomats they serve alongside. One liaison officer from a European country described his relationship with the diplomatic mission as follows: “My Ambassador asked me quite a lot of times what I am doing as a liaison officer. And he still wonders why our country needs me.”³⁰ The liaison officer of another country complained about his Ambassador, saying that he “did not want to give me a room at the Embassy. He doesn’t see my work necessary.”³¹

The complexities and potential contradictions noted in the earlier quote and in the above description of the relations between LOs and diplomats, all seem to reflect the “hybrid” nature of police liaisons – they are between roles, between duties. But this does not have to be a negative quality. This hybrid character might be quite uniquely positive, particularly with respect to their formality/informality. They have formal legitimacy, but informal capacity; they are formal in terms of the passports they carry, but informal in their actions. It is this bridging of the formal/informal gap in particular that makes them successful pioneers of the transition from the international, state-centric realm, into the transnational, multi-centric one.

What is also interesting about police liaison officers, is that they are not a new phenomenon. The appointing of police liaison officers as a practice goes back to the late nineteenth century when the world witnessed several decades of Anarchist and revolutionary violence. Writing about the mid-1800s, Deflem argues that the Police Union of German States appointed a German police officer at the German embassy in London and other agents were placed in Paris, London, Brussels, and New York.³² It has also been noted that during the same era the Russians established a special bureau in Paris, and other cooperative initiatives in Berlin and several other European cities, with an aim to police revolutionary activity organizing abroad against the Russian Empire.³³ Even the US Marshals Service, which was founded in 1789, has had among its aims the establishing of international cooperation, while US customs involved sending or stationing agents abroad.³⁴

In the early decades of the twentieth century, liaison posts emerged in response to the communist threat, for example, Switzerland allowed French, British and American agents to serve in embassies in Bern to “observe the communist presence.”³⁵ But it was really in the 1970s that the use of liaison officers increased dramatically, and this was due to drug-related issues. The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 encouraged the usage of liaison officers. In Paragraph 1-e of Article 9 of this Convention, member parties are urged to “Facilitate effective co-ordination between their competent agencies and services and promote the exchange of personnel and other experts, including the posting of liaison officers.”³⁶ In fact, due to the focus on drugs, police liaison officers were for a long time referred to, particularly in Europe, as drug liaison officers. This situation began to change in the 1990s with the spread of cross-border terrorism, and the subsequent gradual

growth in states permitting the involvement of police liaison officers with terrorism cases. It has even been argued that today's global counter-terrorism campaign is built on previous policing efforts against drugs.³⁷

Looking at things historically, we can say that police liaison officers have been used flexibly by states. Introduced during the Anarchist era to counter cross-border political concerns, liaison officers later became important for their use in international drug enforcement. Now, with terrorism having taken on a transnational nature, we are observing the increasing importance and employment of liaison officers to counter this threat.

Growth of bilateral PLOs

If police liaisonships of various types are evolving in the fight against terrorism, are they also growing in number? How many actual police cooperation agreements have been signed, and how many police liaison officers have actually been appointed in the more traditional bilateral manner? These are seemingly simple questions, but surprisingly difficult to answer. The data that do exist are difficult to keep up to date because of the flexibility states have in appointing liaison officers. States appoint LOs based on their immediate needs, and as soon as that specific need is gone, the states may quickly decide to draw the liaison officer back. Even more problematic though, is that such data simply are not easily found in public documents. International organizations do not always provide information on the numbers of agreements and liaison officers. INTERPOL provides the names of the member countries on its web page, but country-specific information can be found only on the European Police and Judicial Systems page, and there only 21 of the 186 member countries provide detailed information about their police and judicial system – including numbers of liaison posts.³⁸

A more direct effort to collect such information helps flesh out the picture a bit more. The information provided in the following section was collected both by directly contacting national police organizations via their e-mail addresses, and by conducting internet searches for “police cooperation agreements” and “police liaison officer” and examining the resulting news reports, reports of international organizations, and web pages of police/law enforcement organizations. Also taken into consideration were the web pages of national police organizations of various countries' interior ministries. These latter web pages provided complete and accurate numbers, but not many countries have them. Numbers from international organizations or news reports are more easily found, but are less likely to be accurate because the facts change quickly. Directly contacting the national police organizations was the best way to get the most accurate and up-to-date information, but as a method it also had some practical complications. The primary problem was that of the 145 countries whose police organizations or relevant ministries' e-mail addresses were found and to whom e-mails were sent requesting information, 40 bounced back as failed delivery.

Numbers of PLOs worldwide

To understand how extensive the use of PLOs is worldwide, we can look at the numbers of PLOs actually posted. Based on the various searches used for this study, 54 countries were found to deploy police liaison officers to around 650 different sites, with 13 countries found to send liaison officers to more than 10 different sites. The number of those sites does not necessarily reflect the total number of actual officers posted, however, since more than one officer may be appointed to a single liaison office. There is also no clear correlation between the sites for posting and the number of countries covered by those posts, since some liaison offices may cover an area greater than a single country. In other words, an office established in one country may be responsible for other countries in the same region. For example, the FBI legal attaché office in Nigeria is also responsible for Ghana, Togo, Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome' and Principe, and Cameroon. Yet another example, the FBI has liaison offices in 60 countries around the world, but it covers a far greater number because each liaison post is responsible for more than one country.

In general, the numbers noted here are almost certainly underestimates the total number of PLOs stationed around the world currently. Direct contact with national police organizations revealed more liaison agreements and postings than those revealed by the internet search. For example, no information about Lebanese police agreements was available on the internet, but an e-mail from Lebanese authorities showed that they actually have bilateral police cooperation agreements with four other countries, and while the internet search showed only four LOs stationed in Lebanon, the e-mail response attested to a total of 15. Similarly, the internet search found just eight Slovak LOs posted abroad, one foreign LO in Slovakia, and a total of eight police agreements between Slovakia and other countries. Direct reporting by the Slovakian authorities revealed, however, a total of 10 Slovak LOs abroad, six foreign LOs in Slovakia, nine foreign LOs in third countries with agreements to work on behalf of Slovakia, and 26 police agreements with other countries. With respect to future numbers, the e-mail replies also point to intentions to increase the numbers of LOs currently posted. Polish authorities predict increases from current numbers of 7–10 LOs to about 15 in the next few years, and Slovakia also reported intentions to open up two additional LO posts in the coming year. During my research, I have also observed that other countries expressed the desire to create more posts, but pointed to budgetary or political restraints preventing this expansion.

Overall, the USA seems to have the lead in appointing liaison officers. This is in part because the USA has more than one agency appointing officers, each with a different focus. These include the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, the State Department, and the Department of Immigration and Naturalization. Among these, the DEA and the FBI are the most well known ones in terms of using liaison officers. The DEA has offices in 62 countries around the world, while the FBI, responsible for serious crimes and terrorism, has offices in 60 countries. With such numbers, both organizations clearly have

already a global reach, but in fact the numbers of American liaison posts is on the rise. Looking specifically at the FBI, in 1992 there were only 16 offices worldwide, but due to increasing international terrorism³⁹ this had grown to 44 in June 2001, when then FBI Director Louis Freeh left the office, and to 57 after 9/11.⁴⁰ Former FBI director Louis Freeh testified in post-9/11 hearings that “the FBI needed to significantly increase its international role and liaison with our foreign law enforcement and security counterparts”⁴¹ and in reference to the 1996 Khobar bombings, stated that he would have done much better if he had “had an FBI agent in Riyadh on June 25th, 1996, when that tragedy occurred, who had the trust and the relationship that the legate had three years later when he set up the office.”⁴²

Though perhaps not quite with the worldwide reach of the Americans, the liaison system is also an important aspect of policing in Europe, both internally between European countries and also externally in establishing relations with other countries. There is of course EUROPOL, a structure based on liaison understanding, in which member countries appoint liaison officers for the purpose of establishing police cooperation between each other. Bilateral police liaisons between European countries also continue, with Britain, Germany and France taking the leading roles in appointment of bilateral liaison posts.

Another region where the importance of police liaisons against terrorism is increasingly being recognized is Oceania, particularly after 9/11 and the attacks in Bali. The web page of the New Zealand Police announces that establishing new liaison posts is seen as an important step in increasing capability to pre-empt and respond to terrorist attacks,⁴³ and the Acting Deputy Commissioner of the New Zealand Police has said publicly that “International co-operation is vital in responding to terrorist attacks” and that therefore their liaison officer network has been expanding since 2001.⁴⁴ The international network of Australian LOs gives them reach into virtually every corner of the globe,⁴⁵ and has been compared in its vastness to that of the USA, with references to the “new regional policeman”.⁴⁶ In Asia, the ASEAN countries have several efforts focused on improving cooperation on crimes, particularly terrorism, and the exchange of LOs is becoming an important component of this cooperation. The 5th ASEAN ministerial meeting in 2005 focused on the establishment of police liaison officers in the member countries.⁴⁷ Korea and Japan also contribute to cooperative efforts in the region, and a Xinhua News Agency report in 2004 notes China’s calls for closer cooperation and for greater exchange of LOs.⁴⁸

The results of this inquiry into the growth of police liaisons reflects at least two important issues. First, while the numbers are on the rise, still, only about a quarter of all countries are able to send LOs to other countries, and only a quarter of *those* countries have managed to establish liaison posts widely – i.e. in more than ten countries. The USA, France, Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy, Canada, and Australia can be accepted as the leading countries in appointing LOs, and so we can safely say that this is a method used predominantly by western states and by those that are economically strong.

Second, it is important to consider the sensitive nature of establishing police agreements and LOs. While sending out e-mail requests for information on LOs,

the responses were not always positive. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, for example, replied only that police cooperation agreements are classified and that it was therefore not possible to release these numbers publicly. Similar replies were also received from Italy and the Czech Republic. Some other countries however, went out of their way to provide up-to-date and accurate information. What is interesting about this is the varying degrees of sensitivity with which different countries treat the issue of sharing this information. While some states openly place this information on their web pages, others refuse to make the information public for any reason.

This fact in itself indicates the gray area in which this type of cooperation takes place. It is not necessarily seen as part of the traditional, completely secretive national security way of thinking, but it is not completely open either. It thus has clearly the potential to be invaded by a national security mentality. If this happens, police liaisons will become a part of international practices, with their age-old limitations for cooperation, such as mistrust. If it can remain a less nationalized, more transnationalized practice, it will remain a powerful potential for cooperation.

Conclusion

Reflecting the arguments in Chapter 1, this chapter looked in concrete terms at the widening gap between the nature of terrorist activity and the response to this terrorist threat. The widening of this gap has accelerated since the end of the Cold War, as terrorism has become an increasingly transnational phenomenon while the response has remained largely at the international level.

Recent efforts of police organizations show, however, that as one of the key actors in fighting against terrorism, they are trying to find ways of closing this gap. Police forces are establishing transnational networks, the most significant example of which is in the deployment of liaison officers. The increasingly informal behaviors of formally appointed liaison officers can be viewed as an example of statist-transnational relations, which is a significant sign of a move into a more post-international era. It is via the police liaison officers that states are showing they have the capacity to go transnational in response to the transnational threat of terrorism. They represent, therefore, a revolutionary change and a sign of states adapting into the transnational world.

Notes

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- 2 Cooperation Agreement between INTERPOL and EUROPOL, Brussels, 5 November 2001.
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- 5 For newspaper coverage of this case see R. Canikligil, “New York polisinin Islam fobisini kirdi” [A New York policeman broke the Islam phobia] in *Hurriyet-USA*; Shulman, R. “Liaison Strives to Bridge Police, Muslim Cultures”. *Washington Post*, 24 January 2007. Page A02; and S. Witt, “Islam and the 70th Police Pct. – Liaison helps foster understanding between cops and the community.” *Kings Courier*, 8 February 2007.
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- 8 Interview with a Deputy National Police Commissioner, 27 September 2007.
- 9 Interview on 17 August 2006.
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- 11 Interview on 17 August 2006.
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- 20 Thompson, op. cit., p. 11.
- 21 Words of a police officer at the NATO conference, Ankara, Turkey, 6 December 2007.
- 22 <http://www.kent.police.uk/About%20Kent%20Police/Policy/n/n95.html>. It should also be noted that the Kent police distinguish between “FORMAL” (regulated by national or international law) and “*formal*” (required by locally negotiated agreements).
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- 24 M. Deflem, Presentation at NATO conference, Ankara, Turkey, 6 December 2007.
- 25 Council decision 2003/170/JHA of 27 February 2003.
- 26 D. Bigo, “Liaison officers in Europe: New actors in the European security field”, in J. W. E. Sheptycki (Ed.), *Issues in Transnational Policing*, London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 67–99.
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