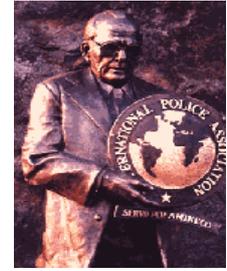




International Police Association

Professional Commission



Arthur Troop Scholarship 2018 REPORT

Name of Scholar: Alannah Cooper

IPA Section: Australia

Course attended: 'Understanding Terrorism' at IBZ Gimborn

Background:

As a Detective Senior Constable attached to the Counter Terrorism Command, Victoria Police, I have learned first-hand of the necessity of intra- and inter-agency collaboration and information sharing to combat the transnational nature of terrorism. Upon receiving the 2018 International Police Association (IPA) Arthur Troop Scholarship, I was excited by the opportunity to join the five-day seminar to share knowledge surrounding terrorism with law enforcement from 11 nations.

Summary:

Held between the 19th and 23rd March 2018 at the IBZ Schloss Gimborn, Germany, the seminar attended was entitled 'Understanding Terrorism'. Initially created as a 'Nordic seminar', it comprised of participants largely from Denmark and Norway, though later expanded to include participants from both Europe and elsewhere, including Germany, Greece, Malta, New Zealand and Pakistan. In addition, speakers also came from Ireland, Belgium, Sweden, and Britain. It was this breadth of nationalities that offered numerous perceptions, opinions, methodologies, and discussion points.

The schedule for the seminar was generally structured around two speakers per day, offering three to four hours per speaker to present their topic. However, as all participants and speakers ate meals together and attended the castle bar (The Turmbar) of the evening, further discussions were held regarding topics presented, and, of course, 'war stories'.

Speakers and Topics:

Eight speakers attended the seminar for the week, each with a unique topic and method of presentation. Although all speakers presented with the aid of a projector in a PowerPoint-like format, some encouraged interaction from participants, others presented case studies like a primetime TV show, and some focused on facts and statistics. The format was as follows:

Day 1:

Participant introductions: job descriptions and reason for attendance.

Ranging from uniform police, investigators, analysts, and other specialised areas such as snipers, the range of participants was impressive. The introductions offered a brief insight into each role of the participant, but also the reasoning behind attendance, and interest in terrorism. With most participants coming from Europe, a general theme of discussion was immigration, both positive and negative.

Frankfurt Research Centre on Global Islam.

'Generation Allah and its challenges - radicalization and recruitment.'

A speaker with a research background, this presentation reviewed the emerging pop-culture of Salafism, often referred to as Generation Allah, as well as trends in radicalisation and recruitment of youth in Germany.

Day 2:

Brussels Police.

Molenbeek case study.

Molenbeek, a municipality in Belgium, has been labelled in the media the 'Jihadi capital of Europe', due to the number of terrorists and foreign fighters that have emerged from the area. Belgium not only has the highest number of foreign fighters in Syria from any other nation, but in 2016, 47 foreign fighters were from Molenbeek. In Paris, the next highest producer of foreign fighters, there were only 12. These statistics, among others, provided the basis for this presentation, detailing the history of Molenbeek, case studies, and the way forward.

Swedish Police.

Policing in Rinkeby.

Rinkeby is a suburb of Stockholm that comprises almost entirely of public housing in a remote and closed-in area. It has become an area with high-level unemployment, low education, and a hotspot for crime. This presentation reviewed the difficulties in policing this environment, largely due to a reluctance from civilians to assist police, a hostile environment with a high amount of violence against police, and 'parallel social structures' such as the community having their own legal / justice processes when one of 'their own' commits a crime.

German Police.

'Policing in Muslim communities in immigration countries.'

The German speaker with a Turkish background works closely with the Turkish Muslim community near Cologne. She discussed the distrust of police from the Turkish community, as well as the distrust that emerges from police when the community refuses to engage. This presentation focused on cooperation and community reforms to assist in bringing together the Muslim community and the police to achieve a common goal of a safe community.

Day 3:

National University of Ireland, Galway.

'Violent online radicalization; Understanding the source, the message and the target.'

As a psychologist, this speaker took participants back to basics about human reactions to messages. Presenting from a marketing / sales technique, the presentation examined vulnerabilities used to persuade audiences, as well as the structuring of messages to gain appeal. This was then used to explain the methods of radicalisation and recruitment to terrorist organisations: why certain organisations seem appealing, how violence can be justified, and why the removal of content from the internet might not be the answer.

Visit to a Mosque in Cologne.

This afternoon consisted of discussion with the Imam and his wife on topics from Muslim customs and prayers, difficulties faced by Muslim immigrants in Germany, and a case study of a terrorist act in their suburb and the police response. This was a good opportunity to have an open and frank discussion, all whilst sitting within the Mosque, as well as having traditional Turkish tea in the common room next to the Mosque.

Day 4:

Oslo Police, Norway.

Anders Breivik case study.

The case study of the 2011 attacks in Norway by the far-right Breivik delved beyond the information provided by media accounts. It commenced with his childhood and teenage years, moving through to the time where he started planning his attacks. It concluded with an appraisal of the police capability and response, and methods that have since been implemented.

Counter Terrorism Specialist, London Metropolitan Police.

The jihad terrorist incidents in London (three case studies) and their consequences on the policing environment in the UK.

Covering case studies from the Westminster, London Bridge, and Parsons Green attacks in London, this presentation offered insight into the details of each case, as well as considerations for police responses in future attacks.

Day 5:

British Transport Police Trainer, London.

'Behavioural detection tactics to disrupt and detect terrorism'

This presentation largely focused on Project Servator, a British Transport Police operation using intelligence-lead deployments in both overt and covert capacities to deter, detect, and disrupt criminal activity on and around the rail network. With a focus on behavioural indicators, and impressive results, it provided several ideas to take back to Victoria Police.

Final thoughts:

In an increasingly globalised world, law enforcement agencies are required to not only cooperate in the battle against crime, but also learn from each other. This seminar was a fantastic example of the ideas born out of discussions with counterparts from around the world. And, in addition to gaining knowledge and being armed with ideas and motivation on my return to work, I had also made friendships; All in an effort for us to better 'understand terrorism'.