

International Affairs

The International Affairs Group of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service undertook several initiatives in FY 2003 to improve the safety, security, and reliability of international mail products for the U.S. Postal Service. Formed in 1990, the group comprises Postal Inspectors assigned to offices at the U.S. Postal Service's National Headquarters and Interpol's U.S. National Central Bureau in Washington, DC; at the Interpol General Secretariat in Lyon, France; at the International

Bureau—Universal Postal Union (UPU) in Berne, Switzerland; and at the Miami International Airport Mail Center in Florida.

International Affairs Group members develop strategies to maintain high-quality service and security for the 189 member countries of the UPU. Chaired by the Chief Postal Inspector, the Postal Security Action Group (PSAG) now comprises 61 member and 33 observer countries, as well as 10 international organizations concerned with postal and aviation security. The group meets biannually in Berne to address such topics as aviation security, bioterrorism, revenue security, mail fraud, drugs and money laundering via the mail, eCommerce security, and strategies for preventing mail losses.

In response to the potential threat of radiological terrorism, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Director of External Relations of the International Atomic Energy

Agency and the Director General of the UPU at the October 2002 PSAG meeting. The groups pledged closer cooperation in ensuring the safety of the international mail network through early detection of the illicit transport of radioactive materials and the safe shipment of accepted materials.

During its April 2003 meeting, the PSAG hosted a workshop, "Postal Financial Services," for UPU member postal administrations that are expanding postal financial services as a means of growing revenue. The dangers of money laundering, especially as it relates to the financial support of terrorism, was discussed by a panel of experts that included representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice, the Financial Intelligence Unit in Liechtenstein, the Ireland Postal Administration, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. Based on the recommendations of the Money Laundering Panel, the PSAG established a Financial Crimes and Anti-Money

Laundering Working Group to develop educational programs and countermeasures, and pledged to share best practices on postal financial services and compliance with applicable laws.

Since 1997, the group has coordinated more than 40 international mail quality assurance and airport security reviews at major hubs. The reviews assess security and operations at the airport and international office of exchange and identify opportunities to improve both the security of service and mail security worldwide. Review teams identify best practices in the industry and share their findings globally through the PSAG and UPU Restricted Unions. The reviews have enabled group members to establish a professional network of airport coordinators, operations personnel, and stakeholders at the major international airports.

International Affairs Group members also reviewed international airport operations in Milan and Rome, Italy; Madrid, Spain; Singapore, Republic of Singapore; Lima, Peru; La Paz and Santa Cruz, Bolivia; Oranjestad, Aruba; and St. Johns, Antigua, during FY 2003.

An International Affairs Group Inspector and Postal Inspector-Team Leader from the Miami Division represented the UPU as lead instructors for the UPU—United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in an initiative titled "Countering Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering via Postal Systems



in Africa during FY 2003.” Funded by the UPU and UNODC, the initiative teaches technical skills to frontline Postal Inspection Service, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and other law enforcement officials throughout Africa. Over the past year, courses were held in Dakar, Senegal; Accra, Ghana; Rabat, Morocco; and Cairo, Egypt.

The group continued its support of the U.S. State Department’s Anti-terrorism Assistance Program, which included providing instructors for a Postal Chemical and Biological

Incident Management Course on handling and screening procedures for explosive and biochemical components in the mail. The group taught courses for law enforcement, hazmat, and postal officials in Pretoria, South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Amman, Jordan; Cairo, Egypt; Athens, Greece; Ankara, Turkey; and Bogotá, Colombia. The program is the result of an interagency agreement between the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Department of State’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

The group coordinated a four-day

A Postal Inspector from the International Affairs Group, who is Chairman of the Mail Security Task Force of the Caribbean Postal Union, visited the islands of Antigua and Aruba with a team of Inspectors and security specialists during FY 2003 to review their handling procedures for the mail. Inspectors offered the postal administrations recommendations to improve mail-handling operations, such as controlling access to the mail at airports and establishing a screening program for mail leaving the islands.



workshop, “Countering Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering via Postal Systems in the Caribbean,” at the United Nations’ Office on Drugs and Crime in Barbados. Designed to increase awareness of how the mail is used to transport illicit narcotics and laundered money, the workshop included drug screening and identification programs. Thirty-eight representatives from 20 countries participated, resulting in new investigative protocols for postal, customs, and law enforcement managers.

The International Affairs Group coordinated a visit for 15 representatives from the Diplomatic Security-Antiterrorism Assistance Program and Greek Olympic Committee security experts at the Baltimore Processing and Distribution Center. Attendees were briefed on and given a demonstration of the biohazard detection system (BDS).

A member of the group coordinated the U.S. Postal Inspection Service’s contribution to the U.S. Postal Service–U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) initiative to implement and deploy radiation-detection equipment at gateway postal facilities. The equipment detects illicit shipments of nuclear weapons or related material, radiation-dispersal devices, and other illegal or illicit radioactive material that could be transported via international mail.

During the violent attacks on the Administration of Mexico’s (SEPOMEX) postal officials when U.S. Treasury checks mailed to Mexico City were stolen, Mexican inspectors

met with U.S. Secret Service agents and the U.S. Department of Justice attaché in Mexico City to assist with the investigation. Following the shooting death of an airport manager in Mexico City, a Mexican inspector worked with the Postal Service’s International Network office and Social Security officials to develop short- and long-term security solutions for more than 30,000 U.S. Treasury checks dispatched to Mexico.

Inspectors worked with the Ft. Worth Division’s Financial Crimes Task Force, the Social Security-Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Secret Service, and ICE to advance the investigation. To date, nine suspects in Mexico City have been arrested for mail theft.

In January 2003, the Chief Postal Inspector met with Secretary General Ronald K. Noble in Lyon, France. They discussed the Interpol–UPU Memorandum of Understanding and the continued support of Interpol by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. The meeting afforded the Chief Postal Inspector a rare opportunity to meet with senior Interpol officials on crime trend issues and the threat of international terrorism.

The International Affairs Group coordinates the MARIA program (International Mail Loss Reporting System) for the United States and other major regions of the world. By quantifying and identifying losses of outbound, inbound, and transiting international mail, the program reinforces the public’s confidence in the mail by identifying international mail-loss

trends, high-risk airports, and high-risk routes for mail flow.

In collaboration with Inspectors from the Postal Inspection Service’s Information Technology Division and regional coordinators in Germany, Portugal, Sweden, and Uruguay, group members developed a new eMARIA computer application that enables UPU postal administrations to enter and receive eMARIA data via the Internet. The user friendly version significantly advances the creation of an international mail event database for postal security officials worldwide.

The International Affairs Group also coordinated these initiatives in FY 2003:

- Hosted the Security Coordinator for TPG Post, Netherlands, in Washington, DC, and New York to share techniques used by Postal Inspectors in conducting mail theft investigations.

- Presented the Security Action Group’s 2003 Work Plan for the 27 member countries and results from 2002 during the Consultative and Executive Council Meetings of the Postal Union of the Americas, Spain and Portugal (PUASP) in Montevideo, Uruguay. A Postal Inspector serves as manager of the Security Action Group, which is responsible for improving the quality and security of mail throughout the Western Hemisphere, its islands, Spain, and Portugal. A Postal Inspector also serves as security consultant to the General Secretariat of the PUASP.

- Presented the 2003 Work Plan and results of the CPU Mail Security Task Force at the 7th Caribbean Postal



Union (CPU) Conference in the Cayman Islands for postmasters general and ministers. An Inspector is chairman of the task force, which is responsible for airport security reviews, training and security missions, and operational reviews of key postal facilities throughout the region.

- Hosted four senior law enforcement officials from Spain during the Department of State's International Visitor Program and made presentations on Postal Inspection Service initiatives to combat international crime. A key topic included the African initiative, "Countering Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering via Postal Systems," and prohibited mailing issues, such as mail fraud and the sexual exploitation of children through the mail.

- Participated in a seminar hosted by La Poste in Paris, France, "European Cooperation on Postal Security—The Anthrax Crisis and Beyond" to discuss the anthrax crisis in Europe and its impact on postal operators, using crisis-management practices to anticipate future problems, and improving European coordination by bringing together crisis units in each country.

- Represented the Director General of the UPU at the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee in a special meeting at UN Headquarters in New York. Discussions centered on improving global counterterrorism responses, methods of disseminating best practices, and the value of using the committee for international coordination. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressed the group on ways to enhance communications and

share best practices in the international community.

- Assisted Internal Affairs

Division staff during the Postmaster General's visit to Davos, Switzerland, to attend the World Economic Forum. A Postal Inspector assisted with logistics, coordinated security with Zurich Airport Police and American Embassy security officials in Berne, Switzerland, and provided on-site security.

- Coordinated a one-week security and investigative training course in San José, Costa Rica, for postal security officials from Central America, the Dominican Republic, and Venezuela. Sixty officials from eight countries discussed external and internal crimes investigations, crime prevention, mail bomb investigations, and the airport coordinator program.

- Coordinated a one-week security mission to Athens, Greece, to review postal operations and investigative strategies addressing the theft of mail sent from the United States via Amsterdam to Greece. The Director of the Hellenic Post, airport administration and security officials, and Hellenic Police stationed at the new Athens Airport also discussed methods of improving the security of U.S.-originating mail.