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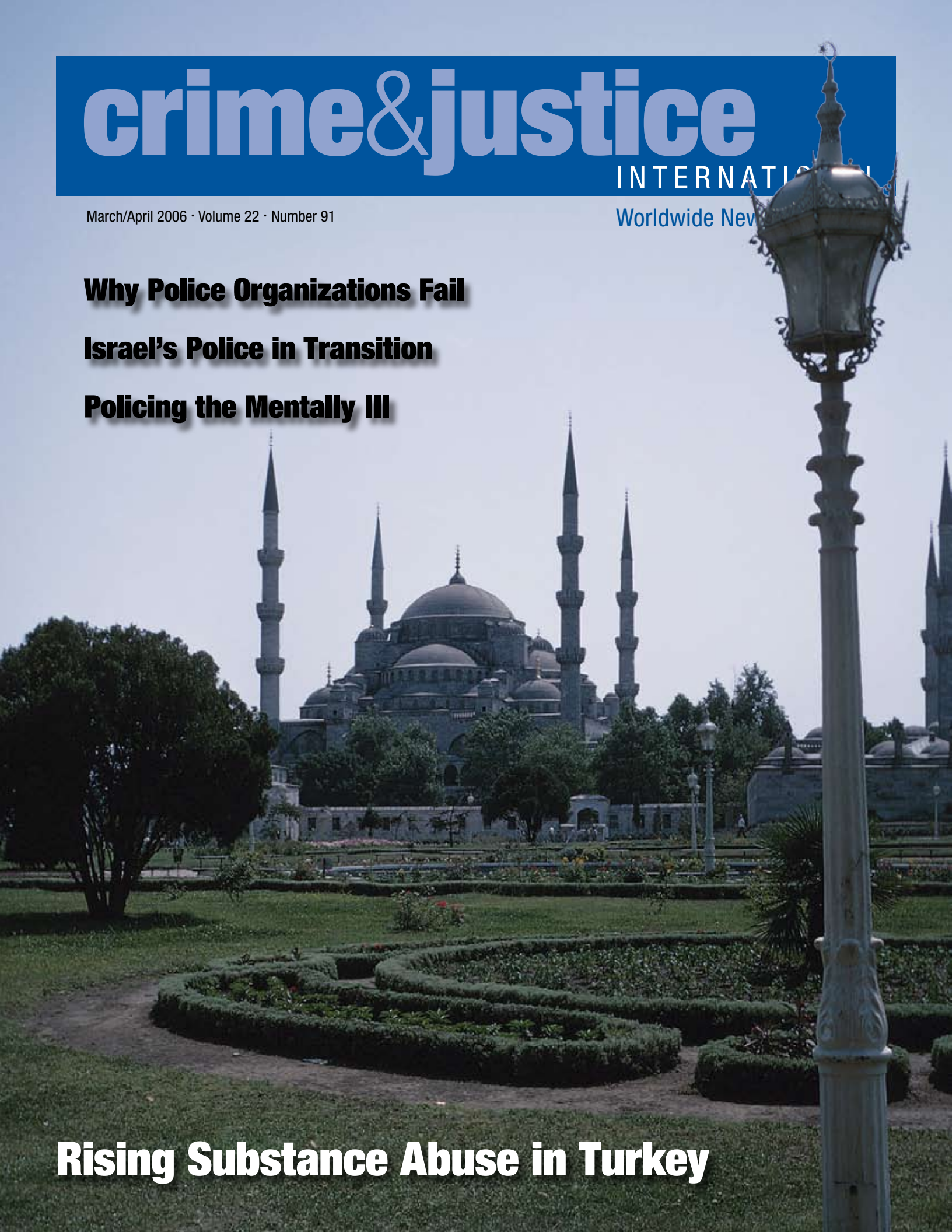
Worldwide News

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INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Making the Connection

by Kathleen Kiernan
Special to CJ



In October 2005, the newly created Director of National Intelligence (DNI) released the National Intelligence Strategy. Contained within this important document is the stated need for the intelligence community to partner with the public and private sector. It recognizes that the complexities of national security demand a much different structure than that which was appropriate at its creation over a half century ago. It identifies risk as a natural state of play and, further, states that eternal vigilance is no longer sufficient—a reference to the infamous quote by Thomas Jefferson regarding the price of freedom.

The strategy calls for a partnership with federal, state, local, and tribal policing, which was unheard of in the past. Law enforcement officers have historically been excluded from access to the intelligence community and to classified data for a host of reasons related to the need to protect the critical, yet fragile, sources and methods utilized to prosecute foreign-based threats to our Nation. Broad access to security clearances for law enforcement personnel have been discussed often, and as often relegated to the “too hard to do” category. This strategy signals the need to evolve to a system which recognizes and values other kinds of intelligence, other forms of collection, and other (but not of lesser quality) dissemination of products based on that intelligence. It is a process of inclusion that is revolutionary in design, yet will need to be proven in practice with the building of trust between the communities. It will require the continued protection of vital technological collection systems, and carefully placed human sources. However, it will also require a commitment to ensure that valid threat information is passed to those who need to have it in an expedient and lawful way, through appropriate dissemination channels. In most cases, that distribution will occur through the Department of Homeland Security, a valuable member of the Intelligence Community.

The Director of National Intelligence recently announced the creation of an open-source center to exploit information of intelligence value which is freely available, a discipline which is known in the trade as OSINT. This Center will build upon the historical expertise of the CIA's Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), and its functions will include collection, analysis, and research. Key to the success of this important strategic

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initiative will be the ability to first understand and then harness the expertise of open-source collection and use existent in the public and private sector, much of it within the realm of everyday policing responsibilities.

Law enforcement has historically utilized their own form of sources and methods which do not rely on technical systems as much as they do on human interactions. While the vernacular may be different, the skill set which is utilized by law enforcement has many similarities to that of the tradecraft of intelligence. These techniques include the ability to flip a criminal to become an informant and to garner the trust of residents which engenders information passage in the institutionalized practice of community policing. It involves skilled interviewing techniques, keen observation skills, and thorough reporting.

Cultural context is an invaluable analytical skill and one that is in ample supply within community policing practices, yet not always part of the experience of intelligence analysts. Police officers are assimilated into neighborhoods, where they speak the various native languages, understand religious diversity, and earn the respect of controlling factions—including street gangs. They become part of the fabric of the communities and over time they come to understand the rhythm of prevailing social networks. This visceral understanding allows them to spot changes which impact the social order. Good cops tell you they can actually sense and smell the changes before they happen. These changes include the potential movement of new players who may seek to harm the country, not just commit crime for profit. In large measure this information is contained within police reporting systems or embedded within the knowledge and experience of police officers.

Heretofore, there has neither been an incentive for not training to recognize the potential impact of pocket litter and informant debriefings on homeland and national security. The bridge between the two communities is occurring with another revolutionary move by the Department of Homeland Security with the embedding of analysts within police departments, first New York, and now Los Angeles, with many more scheduled to occur. These professionals will grow to understand the true value of open-source exploitation and the cumulative value of street experience. They will impart as well a demystification of national level strategy and priorities. In the exchange, I suspect there will be more similarities than differences and perhaps the debate about security clearances can be replaced by one about true information exchange. 🌐