

# Advancing Security in the Asia-Pacific Region

By Michael Pepper CPP PSP, ASIS Region 39 Vice President

Over 200 security professionals gathered in Hong Kong during the first week of February for the ASIS International (ASIS) Asia-Pacific Conference. This was the third time ASIS has organised a conference specifically for our region and it is now set to become an annual event. Delegates attended from across the whole Asia-Pacific Region as well as from the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and North America.

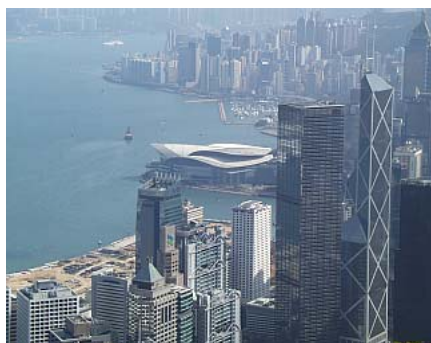
## What is ASIS International?

ASIS International is the largest organisation for security professionals, with more than 36,000 members worldwide. Founded in 1955, ASIS is dedicated to increasing the effectiveness and productivity of security professionals by developing educational programmes and materials that address broad security interests, such as the ASIS Annual Seminar and Exhibits, as well as specific security topics. ASIS also advocates the role and value of the security management profession to business, the media, government entities and the public. By providing members and the security community with access to a full range of programmes and services, ASIS leads the way for advanced and improved security performance.

Membership in New Zealand is currently 123 with 34 members holding the coveted Certified Protection Professional (CPP®) certification. Eight members hold the Physical Security Professional (PSP®) certification; five of whom also hold the CPP®. The third certification awarded by ASIS is the Professional Certified Investigator (PCI®). The current New Zealand Chapter Chairman, David Horsburgh is one of only 23 ASIS members worldwide to hold all three certifications. These figures reflect the high level of commitment within New Zealand to the advancement of the security profession in general and towards education in particular. Objectives such as these are an integral part of the conferences and seminars organised by ASIS International.

## Hong Kong

Hong Kong is, as anyone who has been there can tell you, a vibrant city. There is so much to do and see. Having arrived a few days early along with Stewart O'Reilly, MD of Training Systems and Solutions Limited, former ASIS New Zealand Deputy Chair and a Conference speaker, full advantage was taken of the opportunity to explore the sights. As first time visitors we were impressed by the New Year fireworks at Victoria Harbour, the public transport system and the sheer number of people. The street markets were a very interesting diversion most evenings.



**Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from Victoria Peak**

As other delegates gathered in Hong Kong on 3 February, members of the ASIS Asia-Pacific Advisory Council met with the Chief Executive, Michael Stack and other executives from ASIS International Headquarters. Discussion centred on a range of issues including planning for the 2010 Conference. It was also an opportunity to put faces to names; something that is always refreshing since much of the discussion that had preceded this event had been via telephone conferencing. The Council meeting was followed by a Chief Security Officers' Roundtable meeting where specially invited top security executives from major corporate entities had the opportunity to exchange views on a range of security issues.

The prelude to the Conference was the Senior Regional Vice President's Reception. This was held in the Conference Venue; the truly impressive Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. A very well attended event, it provided the opportunity to renew old acquaintances, including a few New Zealand ex-pats, as well as network with other security professionals from across the globe.#

## The Conference

The Conference opened on the morning of 4 February with a traditional Dragon Dance to welcome all the delegates, sponsors and exhibitors. Then it was down to business. The first Keynote Speaker was Mr Henrique Sii-hong Koo, Directors of Operations and Senior Assistant Commissioner of the Hong Kong Police. He provided a fascinating insight into the policing of major international events within Hong Kong. This was not just a case of “how we did it”, but an illustration of close cooperation between police forces in different countries to achieve best practice.



**Conference Opening Ceremony**



**Stewart O'Reilly speaking at the Conference**

The rest of the working day was taken up with

educational sessions. For each session, delegates had three

topics and speakers to choose from. Examples of the topics covered included Information Security, Intellectual Property Protection, Risk Management, Crisis Management, Urban Design and Security Training (with our own Stewart O'Reilly).

Worthy of particular mention are Dr Marc Siegel, ASIS International ISO/TC 8 Delegation Head and Captain Raghu Raman, CEO, Mahindra Special Services Group and former Indian Armed Forces Officer.

Dr Siegel spoke about the impact of ISO28000; Auditing Security Management Systems and the Supply Chain. There is evidently a growing demand for conformance to the standard, but there is also a shortage of auditors. Readers should watch for an ISO28000 training course that is likely to be delivered in Australia during early July. Details will be published on the ASIS New Zealand website <http://www.asis.org.nz> as soon as they become available.

Captain Rahman provided a stunning presentation about the background to the recent terrorist events in Mumbai, the attacks themselves and their aftermath.

That evening, delegates boarded coaches to travel to Aberdeen and make the short ferry crossing to the Jumbo Kingdom Floating Restaurant. The top deck was the venue for the President's Reception and was hosted by the President of ASIS International, Michael R. Cummings CPP®. Not only was the food excellent, but even more networking opportunities presented themselves. All too soon it was over and we departed for our various hotels.

Day Two of the conference was opened by Mr Stephen Selby, Director of The Intellectual Property Department, Hong Kong SAR. A student of Chinese military history, his entertaining presentation discussed the problem of intellectual property protection from the standpoint of Sun Tzu's 'Art of War'; essentially fully understanding one's own and the enemy's strengths and weaknesses. Mr Selby suggested that the objective should not be to utterly destroy the enemy but to win him over. He posed the question, is it better to spend huge sums on litigation and seek to bankrupt offenders, or is it better to license such individuals and engage them to manufacture legitimate product for the benefit of both parties? An interesting concept.

Once again the rest of the day was taken up with educational sessions. Topics included Supply Chain Security, Merging Guard Services with Technology, Security Risk Management and Crime Prevention.

An intriguing presentation was delivered by Superintendent Mark Medwecki, Commander of the Hong Kong Police Crime Prevention Bureau. He discussed the chequered history of the Hong Kong Police (warts and all) and provided an explanation of why Hong Kong is now one of the safest cities in the world even though most of its population live in high rise buildings in compact estates. Many delegates were surprised at the low level of crime given the experience of other cities, particularly in Europe and North America.

## Going the Extra Mile(s)

Very often when a conference ends, its simply pack bags and go home. Not this time. A reasonably priced travel package made a visit to Beijing very attractive, particularly with the prospect of being able to establish good business contacts at the same time. Meetings were duly arranged in advance and conducted across the four days in Beijing. Tourism opportunities were also taken up with visits to the Temple of Heaven, the Forbidden City and of course the Great Wall. Somehow I don't think I'll ever climb those last 480 steps again. The last night in Beijing coincided with the end of the Chinese Lunar New Year. At around 7pm the entire city literally exploded. I have never before been subjected to a 6 plus hours fireworks display. The noise was incredible. Although I wouldn't have wanted to miss the experience, the very early departure to the airport for the return home came all too soon.



**Only a few more to the top**

## Conclusion

The success of any conference such as this depends on the quality of the speakers as well as the organisation and management. For ASIS conferences, all speakers are subject to peer review once the presentation abstract has been submitted. Certified ASIS members from around the world critically examine each abstract and the credentials of the speaker to ensure that the highest quality is maintained. The ASIS Asia-Pacific Conference is managed by ASIS International Headquarters through its Sydney Bureau. Assistance from Chapter and Regional Volunteers is essential to ensure things run smoothly.

The Hong Kong Conference may have been a lot smaller than the Annual Seminar and Exhibits held in the United States each year; however it maintained the high quality standards that ASIS members and others in the security industry have come to expect.

In due course I would expect to see the Conference come to New Zealand. Unfortunately it will not be Rugby World Cup Year; however 2012 or 2013 are possibilities that may be considered.

I for one, look forward to 1-3 February 2010 when the 4<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Conference goes to Sydney, Australia. The time to start planning is now, especially given the current economic climate. The call for presentations has gone out and the deadline for submissions is 25 June 2009 so I'm also looking forward to seeing quality speakers from New Zealand. Furthermore, New Zealand companies with regional interests may wish to consider sponsorship or exhibiting. Full details can be accessed via the ASIS New Zealand website at <http://www.asis.org.nz> or by visiting ASIS International at <http://www.asisonline.org/education/programs/sydney/default.htm>.