

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

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**THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S BUREAU OF COUNTERTERRORISM:
BUDGET, PROGRAMS, AND POLICIES**

**HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, NONPROLIFERATION,
AND TRADE**

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Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Sherman, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee. The establishment of the Bureau of Counterterrorism and our work on strategic counterterrorism are important steps forward for the Department of State. These two steps, taken together, have significantly increased the State Department's contribution to our worldwide effort against terrorism and terrorists.

As many of you know, the Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT) was established early this year. Establishing the Bureau fulfilled part of the agenda set by the QDDR, the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. The QDDR is at the heart of Secretary Clinton's effort to make the State Department more effective and to respond to the changing dynamics of the world.

Secretary Clinton is committed to "smart diplomacy" and to civilian power. The underlying principles of the QDDR are about interagency cooperation, breaking down silos, and tapping institutional capacity wherever it exists. As an organization, the State Department is critical to maintaining and extending American leadership in the world, and will be called on to do more, in more places, more frequently – with limited resources.

But let me speak specifically about the Bureau of Counterterrorism. In recent years, largely through the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, the State

Department has assumed a growing role in counterterrorism. Frankly the Department's role is considerably different from what it was 40 years ago when the office was established. We have moved well beyond "coordination" and into policymaking and programming.

In brief, the new bureau's mission is to lead the Department in the U.S. Government's effort to counter terrorism abroad and to secure the United States against foreign terrorist threats. The bureau has a number of concrete responsibilities. In coordination with Department leadership, the National Security Staff, and U.S. Government agencies, it will develop and implement civilian counterterrorism strategies, policies, operations, and programs to disrupt and defeat the networks that support terrorism. The bureau leads in supporting U.S. counterterrorism diplomacy and seeks to strengthen homeland security, counter violent extremism, and build the capacity of partner nations to deal effectively with terrorism.

All of these efforts taken together constitute what we refer to as strategic counterterrorism. It is an approach that the Secretary has championed that takes as its basic premise that US CT efforts require a whole-of-government approach that must go beyond traditional intelligence, military, and law enforcement functions. As the National Strategy for Counterterrorism released last year makes clear, we are engaged in a broad, sustained, and integrated campaign that harnesses every tool of American power – civilian, military, and the power of our values – together with the concerted efforts of allies, partners, and multilateral institutions to address a short-term and a long-term challenge. Our tactical abilities – as exemplified by the extraordinary mission against bin Laden last year – answer a critical national need, but are only one part of our comprehensive CT strategy that also includes concerted action to reduce radicalization, stop the flow of new recruits, and create an international environment that is inhospitable for all the kinds of activity that precede terrorist violence. That includes stopping training, fund-raising, recruitment, illicit travel and other forms of support and activities that are required to sustain international terrorist organizations.

Achieving these ends requires smart power and the integration of all our foreign policy tools – diplomacy and development with defense, intelligence, and law enforcement capabilities. It requires advancing our values and the rule of law. Only this way can we empower our partners so that they can deal with the threats within their borders and their regions – so they can deal with local and regional threats before they become global ones that demand a much more costly response.

The State Department has a prominent role to play on the strategic side, as these elements of our CT work are really civilian-led activities. They are about building the capacity of partners to counter the CT challenge themselves, while maintaining respect for human rights and the rule of law. And while our counter-recruitment programs are still in their early stages, we've spent an extraordinary amount of time and energy ensuring that new and innovative Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) work is a focus for the US interagency and our allies and partners overseas.

Our ability to oversee and implement civilian counterterrorism capacity building programs was strengthened by the establishment of the CT Bureau. The CT Bureau still reports directly to the Secretary for critical threat and operational issues, but is also now housed within the J Bureau family. Being housed under the civilian security umbrella will allow for a more effective implementation of our strategic counterterrorism agenda. For instance, the co-location of the CT Bureau together with the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) Bureau helps ensure that our mission is well coordinated with the law enforcement programs run by that bureau. This more effective organization allows CT and INL, as well as the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Overseas; the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor; the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; and others, the opportunity to work together even more efficiently.

As part of our bureau standup, we are reorganizing and taking steps to make the new bureau effective across a wide range of policy and program activities. For example, we reduced the number of Deputy Coordinators to make the organization flatter and more efficient. We also created a new Strategic Plans and Policy Unit to improve our ability to plan strategically, and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our programs. Finally, we have made changes that will tighten coordination between country-level policy and programmatic issues, and are doing more to improve program implementation.

As you know, looking at last year's numbers, CT manages nearly \$300 million in foreign assistance related to counterterrorism. Our ability to oversee and implement the various CT capacity building programs mentioned earlier in this testimony, which covers everything from police training and combating terrorist financing to countering the AQ narrative, will be strengthened as a bureau. For one thing, we now have our own internal budget office. We control a bit less than half of these resources directly, and Embassies and regional bureaus control the other half. We work together, of course, to make sure that CT resources are directed in the right places and meeting U.S. interests.

I want to emphasize that the CT Bureau used existing resources in FY12 to establish the bureau. New requests we've made for increases in FY13 are unrelated to the establishment of the bureau per se – these are for areas of our mission that have expanded over time and have been chronically understaffed. For example, the request for twelve new FTE positions, a 17% increase in FY2013, will allow us to be more effective in addressing the civilian counterterrorism challenges that I mentioned earlier. These will support our various programs, such as designating Foreign Terrorist Organizations; regional policy coordination and program oversight; monitoring and evaluation programs; and Homeland Security coordination.

We have advanced our agenda in a number of ways, over the past few years.

1) Building Partner Capacity. One element of our strategic counterterrorism effort is building partner capacity. One of the central challenges to our security is that weak states serve as breeding grounds for terrorism and instability. When there is a recognition that these gaps exist, we can help with specific capacity building programs. Through many programs we are working to build effective law enforcement capacity, good governance, and fair and impartial justice and the rule of law around the world. Our goal is to increase the ability of partners to address threats to public security by improving security sector capabilities, reforming the justice sector, strengthening regional linkages, facilitating compliance with international standards, and connecting these efforts to existing multilateral initiatives and forums. This involves helping countries develop their law enforcement and legal institutions to do a better job tracking, apprehending, arresting, prosecuting, and incarcerating terrorists, while at the same time respecting human rights and securing their borders.

Our flagship capacity building program remains the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program. While one of the goals of the program certainly is to build relationships with partner nation law enforcement, we have been working hard to ensure that ATA is most active where there is a nexus of CT threats, U.S. interests, and our partners' operational needs and political will. The ATA program is most effective in countries which have the combination of political will and basic law enforcement skills to be able to effectively use and ultimately sustain the advanced training ATA provides. This formula has been especially successful in Indonesia, Turkey, Colombia, parts of North Africa, and Jordan.

2) CVE. Countering violent extremism is also at the core of a strategic counterterrorism policy, and is really about interrupting the flow of new recruits.

We have to address both the drivers of extremism pushing people toward violence, and the AQ propaganda – their narrative – that pulls people into the fold. To counter terrorist propaganda, the CT Bureau helped stand up the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC), an interagency operation, housed under the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. The CSCC takes the lead in coordinating, orienting, and informing whole-of-government communications activities – particularly online activity – directed at overseas audiences to counter violent extremist messaging, particularly that of al-Qa’ida (AQ) and its affiliates. The CT Bureau works closely with the Center and I sit on its executive board.

CSCC’s work in confronting terrorist narratives and extremist activity online is critically important. CSCC offers a moderate voice in a space dominated by extremist ideologues, and works with key embassies to combat AQ’s propaganda. While we can’t fully prevent the existence of violent extremist websites and narratives, we can work to reduce their impact and effectiveness.

Another pillar of our CVE strategy works at the local level, emphasizing micro-strategies customized for specific communities at risk of radicalization and recruitment. When programs are owned and implemented by local civil society or government partners and address specific local drivers, they have a better chance of succeeding and enduring.

Finally, we must build partners’ capacity to counter radicalization themselves. In this vein, the CT Bureau is sponsoring an initiative on prison radicalization and the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremists led by the United Nations’ Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the International Center on Counterterrorism - The Hague (ICCT). This initiative provides a forum where policymakers, practitioners, independent experts, and multilateral organizations can share best practices. Through this initiative, countries can also request technical assistance from UNICRI in addressing issues of violent extremism within their prisons.

3) Bilateral and Multilateral Diplomacy. Moving into the 21st century, it was clear to us that counterterrorism diplomacy required an effort to reshape the international architecture to take a truly strategic and action-oriented approach. There were already plenty of venues for diplomats to meet, but we wanted to create a platform for counterterrorism practitioners and experts from different regions to engage over the long term and develop innovative solutions to the common challenges we face.

To this end, the Bureau of Counterterrorism created the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), the Obama Administration's signature initiative to strengthen the global counterterrorism architecture. The Forum is filling a critical gap in the architecture, while complementing and reinforcing the efforts of the UN and other regional organizations. Our goal is to make the GCTF the international "go-to" venue for pursuing innovative civilian-led counterterrorism cooperation and capacity-building initiatives.

The GCTF brings together counterterrorism coordinators, prosecutors, judges, police, border control, and prison officials from our traditional allies, emerging powers, and Muslim-majority countries (29 countries plus the EU) to identify threats and weaknesses, devise solutions, mobilize resources, and share expertise.

From the beginning, we thought it was crucial to underscore the action-oriented approach of this new body. The September launch produced two significant deliverables in the core areas of the GCTF mission: strengthening rule of law institutions and countering violent extremism.

The rule of law deliverable was that GCTF members had already mobilized some \$100 million to support the training of prosecutors, judges, police, and prison officials in countries seeking to shift away from repressive approaches to counterterrorism. This will assist countries transitioning from authoritarian rule to democracy as they draft new counterterrorism legislation and train police, prosecutors, and judges to apply the laws in keeping with universal human rights.

The Countering Violent Extremism deliverable was that the United Arab Emirates is going to sponsor and host the first-ever international Center of Excellence on countering violent extremism. We are working closely with the Emiratis to develop the center, which is scheduled to open in Abu Dhabi later this year. Its target audience will include government policymakers, police, educators, media and on-line communicators, and religious and other community leaders from around the world.

Besides working with the UN, the GCTF, and other multilateral organizations, we have formal bilateral counterterrorism consultations with many countries. These consultations have strengthened our counterterrorism partnerships so we can complement one another's efforts in pursuit of a comprehensive approach to our common challenges.

The CT Bureau marked the preceding year with two additional milestones.

1. In 2011, the Department of State took concrete efforts to degrade the capabilities of the Haqqani Network by designating a number of key leaders under E.O. 13224, including Badruddin Haqqani, Sangeen Zadran, and now captured Haji Mali Khan.

2011 marked the highest number of new Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and Executive Order 13224 designations carried out since those authorities were originally conceived in 1997 and 2011, respectively. CT's Office of Terrorist Designations and Sanctions completed the domestic designation of 20 organizations or individuals under FTO and/or E.O. 13224 authorities; eight of which were also listed internationally at the UN's 1267/1989 al-Qa'ida and 1988 Taliban Sanctions Committees. Over the past two years, CT has designated a total of 36 organizations or individuals, more than the preceding eight-year period combined.

From our perspective, as I will discuss at greater length below, this is a powerful illustration that while al-Qa'ida core is seriously degraded, the threat we're facing is still a serious one, and we must remain vigilant in our CT efforts.

2. A total of thirty countries have signed arrangements or agreements to exchange terrorism screening information, pursuant to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6 (HSPD-6). Such information sharing is a requirement for continued participation in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). So far, 24 of 36 VWP countries have signed HSPD-6 agreements, and we are currently in or will soon be engaged in negotiations to complete the remaining agreements with VWP countries.

Global Threat Environment

Now I'd like to back up and take a few minutes to briefly outline the global threat environment. As we look back at the last year, there is no question that Usama bin Ladin's departure from the scene was a landmark in the fight against al-Qa'ida. Bin Ladin was an iconic leader whose personal story had a profound attraction for violent extremists, and he was the prime advocate of the group's focus on America as a terrorist target. The loss of bin Ladin – and many other key al-Qa'ida lieutenants – puts core al-Qa'ida in Pakistan on the path to defeat and that will be difficult to reverse.

These successes are attributable, in large part, to global counterterrorism cooperation, which has put considerable pressure on the al-Qa'ida core leadership in Pakistan. But despite blows in western Pakistan, al-Qa'ida and its affiliates and adherents remain adaptable, have shown resilience, retain the capability to conduct regional and transnational attacks, and thus constitute an enduring and serious threat to our national security.

For example, we have seen al'Qa'ida use Iran as a core pipeline through which it has moved money, facilitators, and operatives from across the Middle East to South Asia. In July 2011, the United States designated six members of an al-Qa'ida network headed by Ezedin Abdel Aziz Khalil, a prominent Iran-based al-Qai'da facilitator, operating under an agreement between al-Qa'ida and the Iranian government.

As al-Qa'ida's core has gotten weaker, we have seen the rise of affiliated groups around the world. Among these al-Qa'ida affiliates, al-Qa'ida in Yemen represents a particularly serious threat. Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula had taken control of territory in southern Yemen and continues to exploit unrest in Yemen to advance plots against regional and Western interests.

In the Sahel, al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has historically been the weakest of the AQ affiliates. Yet in the last couple of years, the group has managed to fill its coffers with ransom from kidnappings. These newfound resources together with its efforts to take advantage of the recent instability in Libya and Mali have raised concern about this group's trajectory.

Earlier this year (February), al-Shabaab's emir, in Somalia, and al-Qa'ida's Ayman al-Zawahiri released a joint video to formally announce a merger of the two organizations. However, with the assistance of both the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somalia's neighbors, the Transitional Federal Government made significant gains in degrading al-Shabaab capability and liberating areas from al-Shabaab administration over the last year. Yet much work remains to be done in this region to continue reducing the threat of terrorism while working to provide humanitarian assistance safely, including to those in al-Shabaab-controlled territories who are denied access to outside aid.

With the United States withdrawal of its final forces from Iraq, Iraqi Security Forces have continued to confront the al-Qa'ida affiliate there, showing substantial capability against the group. Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) has suffered leadership losses, and remains unable to mobilize a Sunni community that turned

decisively against it after the carnage in the previous decade. However, AQI is resilient, as noted by its intermittent high-profile attacks in country, and is likely to carry out additional attacks into the foreseeable future. In fact, towards the end of 2011, AQI was believed to be extending its reach into Syria and seeking to exploit the popular uprising against the dictatorship of Bashar al-Asad.

For all the counterterrorism successes against al-Qa'ida and its affiliates, al-Qa'ida-like ideology and rhetoric continues to spread in some parts of the world. While not a formal al-Qa'ida affiliate, the group known as Boko Haram launched widespread attacks across Nigeria, including one in August against the United Nations headquarters in Abuja that signaled its ambition and capability to attack non-Nigerian targets. The Sinai Peninsula is another area of concern. A number of loosely knit militant groups have formed in the Sinai, with some claiming ties and allegiance to al-Qa'ida – though no formal links have been discovered. Last August we saw a group of heavily armed militants who entered southern Israel through the Sinai and conducted a series of coordinated attacks against Israeli civilian and military targets near Eilat, killing eight.

We remain concerned about threats to the Homeland. In the last several years, individuals who appear to have been trained by al-Qa'ida and its affiliates have operated within U.S. borders. Najibullah Zazi, a U.S. lawful permanent resident, obtained training in Pakistan and, in 2010, pled guilty to charges that he was planning to set off several bombs in the New York City subway. And on October 14, 2011, Nigerian national Umar Abdulmutallab pled guilty to all charges against him in U.S. federal court in Michigan regarding his unsuccessful attempt on December 25, 2009, to detonate an explosive aboard a flight bound for Detroit, Michigan at the behest of al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula. While these individuals had direct ties to international terrorist groups, so-called “lone wolf” terrorists also pose a threat to the U.S. homeland – one that can be difficult to detect in advance.

Al-Qa'ida, its affiliates, and adherents are far from the only terrorist threat the United States faces. Iran, the world's leading sponsor of terrorism, continues to undermine international efforts to promote peace and democracy and threatens stability, especially in the Middle East and South Asia. Its use of terrorism as an instrument of policy was exemplified by the involvement of elements of the Iranian regime in the plot to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador in Washington, a conspiracy that the international community strongly condemned through a UN General Assembly resolution in November. We also suspect Iran was behind

recent operations and disrupted attacks against Israeli interests in Georgia, Thailand, India and Azerbaijan.

Despite its pledge to support the stabilization of Iraq, Iran continues to provide lethal support, including weapons, training, funding, and guidance, to Iraqi Shia militant groups targeting Iraqi forces. Iran also provides weapons, training, and funding to Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups. Since the end of the 2006 Israeli-Hizballah conflict, Iran has provided significant volumes of weaponry and funding to Hizballah, in direct violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701. Furthermore, the Iran-backed disrupted plot to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. indicates Iran is more willing to support attacks in the U.S. Homeland than previously assessed.

Both Hamas and Hizballah continue to play destabilizing roles in the Middle East. Hizballah's persistence as a well-armed terrorist group in Lebanon – one that is willing to use force and threats to intimidate the Lebanese people – as well as its robust relationships with the regimes in Iran and Syria, continued engagement in international attack planning, involvement in illicit financial activity, and acquisition of increasingly sophisticated missiles and rockets, continues to threaten U.S. interests in the region. Hamas retains its grip on Gaza, where it continues to stockpile weapons that pose a serious threat to regional stability.

CONCLUSION

To wrap up, protecting the United States, the American people, and our interests abroad will remain a challenge in the 21st century. New terrorist threats will require innovative strategies, creative diplomacy, and even stronger partnerships. Secretary Clinton believes we have an approach and a set of tools that are right for the challenge, which is why she upgraded the Office of the Coordinator to a full-fledged bureau within the State Department. This transformation will continue the process of strengthening civilian-led diplomacy as a key counterterrorism tool. Building partner capacity, countering violent extremism, and engaging partners bilaterally and multilaterally are all essential tools for dealing with a changing terrorist threat. As I hope you will agree, we have made a lot of progress. But, there remains much to do. Together, I believe we can accomplish our goals and make the world a safer place for all of us.