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OVERSIGHT OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S ANTITERRORISM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

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OVERSIGHT OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S ANTITERRORISM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, June 4, 2008

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John F. Tierney (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Tierney, Welch, Shays, Platts, Duncan, and Foxx.

Staff present: Dave Turk, staff director; Andrew Su, professional staff member; Davis Hake, clerk; Dan Hamilton, fellow; Rebecca Macke, graduate intern; A. Brooke Bennett, minority counsel; Nick Palarino, minority senior investigator and policy advisor; Todd Greenwood, minority professional staff member; and Bridget Mahoney and Jeanne Neal, minority interns.

Mr. TIERNEY. Good morning.

A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs hearing entitled, "Oversight of the State Department's Antiterrorism Assistance Program," will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent that only the chairman and the ranking member of the subcommittee be allowed to make opening statements, and without objection, that is so ordered.

And I ask unanimous consent that the hearing record be kept open for 5 business days so that all members of the subcommittee will be allowed to submit a written statement for the record. That is also ordered without objection.

Good morning everybody, and thank you for joining us here. This hearing, obviously, is on the Antiterrorism Assistance Program, so I want to start by thanking the ranking member, Representative Shays, for actually requesting this hearing and for asking for the Government Accountability Office's report, asking them to take a look at that.

This program is not one I venture to guess that many people, many American people or many Members of Congress for that matter, probably know enough about. I think it's important for a number of reasons, which is why we agreed to have this hearing and followup on it.

The first reason of importance is that the Antiterrorism Assistance Program is the State Department's largest counterterrorism program. It received $171 million in fiscal year 2007.

Second, its geographic reach is extensive, having trained police from about 140 countries since the program's inception in 1983.

And third, the program's focus, providing training to the police from other countries, is one that has received scant attention during this situation where we're dealing with terror on a regular basis. While we continue to fund submarines at the cost of $2 billion apiece and a new fleet of fighter planes that will cost a quarter of a trillion dollars, efforts that have proven to pay real dividends today too often have to fight for a few extra dollars here and there.

During this subcommittee's most recent oversight trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan in March of this year, we heard repeatedly from U.S. military officials and diplomats, from Afghan and Pakistani officials, from business leaders and from others about the vital importance of improving the police forces in those countries. These officials repeatedly stress that having a fair and professional police force free from corruption is an absolutely vital bulwark against law-and-order voids that too often result in being filled by al Qaeda or Taliban or like forces. Helping to train and professionalize law enforcement in other countries, as well as providing modern police technology and equipment, can have a powerful impact in supporting our partner nations, many of which do not have the means or the expertise to build effective forces on their own.

I want to thank our two State Department witnesses for your service to our country and for being with us today to share your experiences and your expertise in running the Department's Antiterrorism Assistance Program.

I also thank our witness from the Government Accountability Office. To judge whether this program or any other is as efficient and cost effective as possible, we need more than just anecdotal evidence or raw information on the number of courses that are offered or police officers that are trained. We greatly appreciate the work of the GAO's extensive audit and investigatory functions here and look forward to your testimony. Through your work, you can help ensure that we're getting the best bang for our buck.

They found some room for improvement in the Antiterrorism Assistance Program, and I'm really encouraged that the State Department views this critique as constructive. I think that's a great way to move forward.

Instituting best practices and ensuring proper oversight is not only important to America and the taxpayers in this country, but it's also to ensure that we're maximizing global efforts to stop terrorist acts and therefore enhancing our own national security.

My hope is that by the end of this hearing, we'll all know a lot more about the State Department's Antiterrorism Assistance Program than we knew coming in. And I also hope that the discussion we're about to have will help inform the ongoing broader debate about the most effective way to deal with a terrorist threat currently facing our country and our world.

So, again, let me thank all of you for being here. I look forward to your testimony.

And at this point, I would like to invite Mr. Shays to make his opening remarks.

[The prepared statement of Hon. John F. Tierney follows:]

Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs hearing entitled, "Oversight of the State Department's Antiterrorism Assistance Program"

June 04, 2008

Opening Statement of Chairman John F. Tierney

Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us this morning for our oversight hearing on the State Department's Antiterrorism Assistance program.

Let me start by thanking the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Representative Shays, for requesting this hearing and for asking the Government Accountability Office to take a look at this program.

The State Department's Antiterrorism Assistance program is not one, I venture to guess, that many American people or Members of Congress know a whole lot about. But I think it's an important one for a number of reasons, which is why I agreed with Ranking Member Shays to conduct this oversight hearing.

First, the Antiterrorism Assistance program is the State Department's largest counterterrorism program, receiving $171 million in fiscal year 2007. Second, its geographic reach is extensive, having trained police from over 140 countries since the program's inception in 1983.

Third, the program's focus – providing training to police from other countries – is one that has received scant attention during this so-called "war on terror." While we continue to fund submarines at a cost of $2 billon a piece and a new fleet of fighter planes that will cost a quarter-trillion dollars, efforts that have proven to pay real dividends today too often have to fight for a few extra dollars here or there.

During this Subcommittee's most recent oversight trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan in March of this year, we heard repeatedly – from U.S. military officials and diplomats, from Afghan and Pakistani officials, from business leaders, and from others – about the vital importance of improving the police forces in these countries. These officials repeatedly stressed that having a fair and professional police force free from corruption is an absolutely vital bulwark against law-and-order voids that too often in recent history have been filled by al Qaeda and the Taliban.

Helping to train and professionalize law enforcement in other countries, as well as providing modern policing technology and equipment, can have a powerful impact in supporting our partner nations, many of which do not have the means or the expertise to build effective police forces on their own.

I thank our two State Department witnesses for your service to our country and for being with us today to share your experiences and expertise in running the Department's Antiterrorism Assistance program.

I also thank our witness from the Government Accountability Office. To judge whether this program – or any other – is as efficient and cost-effective as possible, we need more than anecdotal evidence or raw information on the numbers of courses offered or police officers trained. We greatly appreciate the GAO's extensive audit and investigatory functions here and look forward to your testimony. Through your work, we can help ensure that we're getting the best bang for our buck.

GAO has found some room for improvement of the Antiterrorism Assistance program, and I'm very encouraged that our State Department views this critique as constructive. Instituting best practices and ensuring proper oversight is not only important to American taxpayers, but it also ensures that we are maximizing global efforts to stop terrorist acts, and therefore, enhancing our own national security.

My hope is that by the end of this hearing we all will know a lot more about the State Department's Antiterrorism Assistance program than we knew going in. I also hope that the discussion we're about to have will help inform the ongoing, broader debate about the most effective way to deal with the terrorist threat currently facing our country and our world.

Thank you again to all our witnesses for being here today. I now yield to the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Representative Shays.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance [ATA] Program. I appreciate your willingness to hold this hearing, and I especially appreciate the efforts by your staff director, David Turk, and the rest of your staff in working so closely with minority staff to bring this hearing to fruition. I might also add, I appreciate that all briefing materials for this hearing have been prepared jointly, which is testament to the bipartisan nature of this hearing.

While some might say the ATA Program is only several hundred million dollars, it is an important program because it is a critical part of the U.S. effort to combat terrorism. It is also important because the program is focused on coordinating closely with other countries to increase their counterterrorism capacity. This appears to be exactly the type of soft power discussion by Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye in their recent report, something that we in Congress should be discussing and promoting.

Since September 11th, fighting international terrorism has been a top priority for our Nation. The extraordinary efforts of the men and women in our armed forces deployed around the world, our Homeland Security personnel, and our first responders right here at home are some of the most visible examples of this effort. However, they are not the only ones in the front lines of this fight.

The Department of State's ATA Program is another mechanism for the United States to help our allies and enhance their own counterterrorism capabilities by providing training and equipment to deter terrorists. This includes in-country small-scaled training programs that are tailored to the specific needs of law enforcement officials in those countries. The program offers courses on everything from crisis management and cyber terrorism to dignitary detection, bomb detection and hostage response. The ATA Program, with its local, tailored hands-on training, is providing a specific benefit to our allies and supporting large efforts against terrorism worldwide.

The ATA Program has included providing resources for the U.S. Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative in North Africa where we've seen the proliferation of al Qaeda groups; training for anti-kidnapping and anti-extortion in Colombia, whereas, of 2005, ATA had trained 143 Colombia national police officers and 176 Colombia military personnel in crisis response techniques; and training programs for law enforcement personnel in Pakistan, Indonesia, Philippines, Kenya and other countries.

Although the ATA Program is functioning well, it could be improved. The Government Accountability Office [GAO], recently reported that although the Department of State has coordinated antiterrorism efforts among other agencies as well, establishing goals for the ATA Program had fallen short. Building an individual Nation's capacity to fight terrorism and train their law enforcement personnel has never been so critical. A cookie cutter approach to program development is not the answer. Streamlined national objectives and means to measure success and sustainability are simply good management.

We look forward to hearing about how the Department of State is addressing these concerns and improving upon the ATA Program.

And, finally, Mr. Chairman, I welcome all our witnesses here today, thank them for their important work, both in implementing the ATA Program and in conducting critical reviews to make sure it's operating at maximum effectiveness.

And I thank you again for holding this important hearing.

And I am a little awkward in saying that I am going to leave for a very brief time because we have sheiks from Iraq who are here, and I want to show them proper respect, but I'm going to hustle right back. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you Mr. Shays.

So now the subcommittee will receive testimony from the witnesses that are before us, and I want to begin by introducing them. Mr. Charles Johnson, Jr., is the Director of the International Affairs and Trade Team at the U.S. Government Accountability Office. Mr. Johnson has had an extremely distinguished 27-year career with GAO, having won numerous awards, including a special commendation award for outstanding performance, leadership, management and high congressional client satisfaction.

So the committee thanks you and everyone associated with this project in particular for the extensive efforts that you've made in this job.

We also have with us the two point people at the State Department for the Antiterrorism Assistance Program.

Ms. Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, Deputy Coordinator of Programs and Policy for the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, you have an excellent selection of ties this morning. It shows great character and taste.

Ms. Abercrombie-Winstanley is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service having joined the Department in 1985. I should also note that she has previously served as a fellow in Congress but in the other body, but that's OK.

Ms. Linda Tibbetts, Acting Director for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Office of Antiterrorism Assistance. Ms. Tibbetts has served among other posts as a diplomatic senior special agent and a senior intelligence agent within the State Department. It's the policy of this subcommittee to swear you in before you testify, so I ask you to please stand and raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. TIERNEY. Will the record please reflect that all parties answered in the affirmative.

I do note that your full written statement will be put in the hearing record so that if you choose to just make comments as opposed to reading from that statement, that's perfectly acceptable and oftentimes welcome if it adds new information. We ask you to keep your oral statements to 5 minutes if you can. We'll give you a little bit of leeway on that, but we would like to keep it in there so we get some good questions and answers and probably cover as much ground as we possibly can.

We'll start with Mr. Johnson, and then we'll move on from his side, left to right as I face you.

So, Mr. Johnson, I would welcome your remarks.

STATEMENTS OF CHARLES M. JOHNSON, JR., DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRADE, U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE; AND GINA ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY, DEPUTY COORDINATOR, PROGRAMS, POLICY, BUDGET AND OPERATIONS, OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR FOR COUNTERTERRORISM, ACCOMPANIED BY LYNDA TIBBETTS, ACTING DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ANTITERRORISM ASSISTANCE, BUREAU OF DIPLOMATIC SECURITY

STATEMENT OF CHARLES M. JOHNSON, JR.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee. I am pleased to be here today to discuss the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance Program.

First, I will address the adequacy of State's guidance for determining foreign country recipients and types of assistance to provide. Second, I will describe how State coordinates ATA with our U.S. counterterrorism programs. And, finally, I will address the extent to which State establishes clear ATA goals and measures program outcomes.

My statement today is based on our February 2008 report which focused on ATA's program efforts from fiscal year 2001 to 2007. Before I discuss findings, I would like to note that the ATA Program is a key mechanism in State's efforts to assist foreign countries in deterring and countering terrorism. Funding for the ATA Program has gone from $38 million in fiscal year 2001 to, as you've noted earlier, just over $170 million in fiscal year 2007. Much of the program's assistance is for training provided in foreign countries and for equipment to enhance foreign government efforts to combat terrorism. Within the State Department, the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, which I will refer to as S/CT, and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Office of Antiterrorism Assistance, DS/T/ATA, oversee and manage the program.

With respect to the adequacy of guidance, our work revealed that S/CT had provided minimal guidance to help DS/T/ATA determine priorities and assure the assistance provided supports broader U.S. policy goals. Although there have been recent efforts to hold quarterly meetings between the two units, the guidance S/CT provided to DS/T/ATA was primarily a tiered list of priority countries. However, this list at the time of our review did not provide guidance on country-specific program goals, objectives or counterterrorism-related training priorities that could be used to help ensure consistency with the U.S. policy objectives.

In addition, we found that other factors may influence which countries receive program assistance, such as an increase in the U.S. Government's diplomatic or political interests in the country. For example, in fiscal year 2007, we found that 10 countries on the ATA tier list did not receive ATA assistance, while 13 countries not on the tier list received $3.2 million in assistance. According to State guidance, assessments ought to guide ATA resource decisions and form the basis of country-specific assistance plans. However we found that S/CT and DS/T/ATA did not consistently or systematically use country-specific needs assessments and program reviews to plan the types of assistance to provide partner nations.

Concerning coordination, S/CT had established mechanisms to coordinate ATA with other U.S. international counterterrorism efforts. S/CT helped bi-weekly interagency meetings with the Departments of Defense, Justice, Treasury and other agencies, as well as Ambassador-level regional strategic meetings to help coordinate international counterterrorism assistance and to avoid duplication of efforts. In four countries we visited during our review, we did not find any significant duplication or overlap among the various U.S. international counterterrorism efforts.

Concerning efforts to assess outcomes, State had made progress in establishing goals in intended outcomes for ATA but did not systematically affect the outcomes of program assistance. State planning documents state that enabling partner nations to achieve advanced and sustainable counterterrorism capabilities is a key program outcome. However, S/CT and DS/T/ATA had not set clear measures of sustainability and had not integrated sustainability into program planning. As a result, State cannot assess the extent to which the ATA Program is meeting its longer-term objectives.

Another area of concern related to the accuracy of State's annual ATA reports that were provided to Congress. We found that the reports contained inaccuracies and lacked comprehensive information in program results that would be useful in evaluating effectiveness. For example, the most recent ATA annual report submitted to Congress contained inaccurate data on the number of students trained and courses offered. There's more extensive information in the statement that's included in the record.

In conclusion, as I noted earlier, ATA plays a central role in U.S. efforts to assist foreign partners in deterring and countering terrorism abroad. However, minimal guidance for determining recipients and type of assistance to provide; inconsistent use of country-specific needs assessments and program reviews; and the lack of systematic assessments and reporting outcomes have made it more difficult to determine the extent to which ATA is focused on addressing partnering nations' greatest counterterrorism needs and broader U.S. counterterrorism policies.

To address these findings, we recommended in our February 2008 report that the Secretary of State revisit and revise its internal guidance to ensure clear roles and responsibilities for DS/T/ATA and S/CT and that there is clear guidance for determining which countries should receive ATA assistance. We also recommended that the Secretary of State review how needs assessments are used to determine country-specific assistance plans and establish clear measures of sustainability and program outcomes.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, this concludes my prepared statement. I'll be happy to answer any questions at this time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Johnson follows:]

United States Government Accountability Office

GAO

Testimony

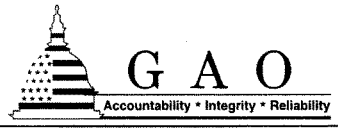
Before the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

For Release on Delivery
Expected at 10:00 a.m. EDT
Wednesday, June 4, 2008

COMBATING TERRORISM

Guidance for State Department's Antiterrorism Assistance Program Is Limited and State Does Not Systematically Assess Outcomes

Statement of Charles Michael Johnson, Jr., Director
International Affairs and Trade



GAO-08-875T

June 4, 2008

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Highlights

Highlights of GAO-08-875T, a testimony before the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

COMBATING TERRORISM

Guidance for State Department's Antiterrorism Assistance Program Is Limited and State Does Not Systematically Assess Outcomes

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of State's (State) Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program's objectives are to provide partner nations with counterterrorism training and equipment, improve bilateral ties, and increase respect for human rights. State's Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism (S/CT) provides policy guidance and its Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Office of Antiterrorism, Assistance (DS/T/ATA), manages program operations. GAO assessed (1) State's guidance for determining ATA priorities, (2) how State coordinates ATA with other counterterrorism programs, (3) the extent State established ATA program goals and measures, and (4) State's reporting on U.S. counterterrorism assistance. This statement is based on a February 2008, GAO report titled *Combating Terrorism: State Department's Antiterrorism Program Needs Improved Guidance and More Systematic Assessments of Outcomes*, GAO-08-336 (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 29, 2008).

What GAO Recommends

In its report, GAO suggested that Congress reconsider the requirement that State prepare an annual report on U.S. counterterrorism assistance. GAO also recommended that State review its use of needs assessments, and measures for assessing the ATA program. State generally agreed with the recommendations regarding the ATA program, and supported the matter GAO suggested for congressional consideration.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on GAO-08-875T. For more information, contact Charles Michael Johnson, Jr., at (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

S/CT provides minimal guidance to help prioritize ATA program recipients, and S/CT and DS/T/ATA did not systematically align ATA assistance with U.S. assessments of foreign partner counterterrorism needs. S/CT provided policy guidance to DS/T/ATA through quarterly meetings and a tiered list of priority countries, but the list did not provide guidance on country counterterrorism-related program goals, objectives, or training priorities. S/CT and DS/T/ATA also did not consistently use country-specific needs assessments and program reviews to plan assistance.

S/CT had established mechanisms to coordinate the ATA program with other U.S. international efforts to combat terrorism. S/CT held interagency meetings with officials from the Department of State, Defense, Justice, and Treasury and other agencies as well as ambassador-level regional strategic coordinating meetings. GAO did not find any significant duplication or overlap among the various U.S. international counterterrorism efforts, in the four countries we visited.

State had made progress in establishing goals and intended outcomes for the ATA program, but S/CT and DS/T/ATA did not systematically assess the outcomes and, as a result, could not determine the effectiveness of program assistance. For example, although sustainability is a principal focus, S/CT and DS/T/ATA had not set clear measures of sustainability or integrated sustainability into program planning.

State reporting on U.S. counterterrorism assistance abroad was incomplete and inaccurate. S/CT had not provided a congressionally mandated annual report to Congress on U.S. government-wide assistance related to combating international terrorism since 1996. After 1996, S/CT has only submitted to Congress annual reports on the ATA program, such as the number of students trained and courses offered. Moreover, these reports contained inaccurate program information. Additionally, the reports lacked comprehensive information of the results on program assistance that would be useful to Congress.

June 4, 2008

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to be here to discuss the results of GAO's examination of the Department of State's (State) antiterrorism assistance (ATA) program.[1] Our work focused primarily on the time period from fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2007, although we included more recent data where available.

State's ATA program has assumed an increasingly important role in U.S. counterterrorism efforts, and is a key mechanism in State's efforts to help foreign nations improve their ability to combat terrorism. ATA's legislatively mandated[2] objectives are to (1) enhance the antiterrorism skills of friendly countries by providing counterterrorism training and equipment; (2) improve bilateral ties with partner nations by offering assistance; and (3) increase respect for human rights by sharing modern, humane and effective antiterrorism techniques with foreign civil authorities. Funding for ATA has increased over fourfold in recent years—from $38 million in fiscal year 2001 to almost $171 million in fiscal year 2007. Over the period, State provided counterterrorism assistance to nearly 100 countries. Much of this assistance is equipment and counterterrorism training provided in the country by trainers on temporary duty, as well as six programs, which use permanent, in-country training facilities.

Within State, the Coordinator for Counterterrorism (S/CT) is charged with the overall supervision (including policy oversight of resources) and coordination of the U.S. government's counterterrorism activities.[3] The broadly mandated[4] role of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Office of Antiterrorism Assistance (DS/T/ATA),[5] includes implementing security

[1]GAO, *Combating Terrorism: State Department's Antiterrorism Program Needs Improved Guidance and More Systematic Assessments of Outcomes*, GAO-08-336 (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 29, 2008).

[2]22 U.S.C. §§ 2349aa, 2349aa-1.

[3]22 U.S.C. § 2651a.

[4]State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security in its current form is an outgrowth of the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986 (Pub. L. No. 99-399, §§ 104-105).

[5]ATA is part of a training directorate within Diplomatic Security comprised of the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance, the Office of Training and Performance Support, and the Office of Mobile Security Training.

programs to protect diplomatic personnel and advise chiefs of mission on security matters.

Today, I will discuss (1) State's guidance for determining country recipients and types of counterterrorism assistance to provide; (2) how State coordinates ATA with other U.S. government counterterrorism programs; (3) the extent to which State establishes clear ATA goals, and measures sustainability of program outcomes; and (4) State's reporting on U.S. international counterterrorism assistance. Over the course of our work, we reviewed and analyzed State planning, funding, and reporting documents concerning ATA. We interviewed officials from State's offices in Washington, D.C., including ATA program managers responsible for each of the six in-country programs—Afghanistan, Colombia, Indonesia, Kenya, Pakistan, and the Philippines—and visited four of the six in-country programs.[6] In these countries, we reviewed country-specific program documents, and interviewed ATA in-country program managers, course instructors, and other contractors; U.S. embassy officials responsible for managing counterterrorism assistance and activities; and partner nation government officials. We also observed various types of ATA training and equipment that were provided to partner nation security units.

We conducted our work for the ATA report from November 2006 through January 2008 and, for purposes of this statement, we updated certain data in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Summary

At the time of our review, S/CT provided minimal guidance to help determine ATA priorities and ensure that assistance provided supports broader U.S. policy goals. In addition, S/CT and DS/T/ATA did not systematically use country-specific needs assessments and program

[6]We visited Colombia, Indonesia, Kenya, and the Philippines. These four countries comprised about 55 percent of total ATA funding for training and training-related activities in fiscal year 2006, and about 43 percent of funding in fiscal year 2007.

reviews to plan what types of assistance to provide partner nations in accordance with State policy guidance.

- S/CT provided a tiered list of priority countries for policy guidance to DS/T/ATA through quarterly meetings. However, this list did not provide guidance on country counterterrorism-related program goals, objectives, or training priorities that DS/T/ATA could use to implement a country-specific counterterrorism program and ensure that assistance provided is consistent with U.S. policy objectives. As a result, neither S/CT nor DS/T/ATA could ensure that program assistance provided to specific countries supports broader U.S. antiterrorism policy goals. In addition, some countries not on the tiered list received assistance because of unanticipated circumstances, such as an increase in the U.S. government's diplomatic or political interest in a country.

- S/CT and DS/T/ATA did not consistently use country-specific needs assessments and program reviews to plan what types of assistance to provide to partner nations. In the five countries receiving the largest amounts of program assistance since fiscal year 2002, we found that program managers did not use the assessments as the basis for developing ATA country-specific plans. According to State policy documents, the assessments are to guide ATA resource decisions and form the basis of country-specific assistance plans. However, the assessments included broad-ranging recommendations for counterterrorism assistance, but they generally did not prioritize assistance to be provided. Consequently, the assessments did not consistently provide a basis for targeting program assistance to the areas of a partner nation's greatest counterterrorism need.

S/CT had established mechanisms to coordinate ATA with other U.S. international efforts to combat terrorism. S/CT held biweekly interagency meetings with officials from the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Treasury, and other agencies as well as ambassador-level regional strategic coordinating meetings in order to help coordinate all U.S. government international counterterrorism training assistance and avoid duplication of efforts. Based on our review of program documents and interviews and meetings with counterterrorism officials in the four countries we visited, we did not find any significant duplication or overlap among the various U.S. international counterterrorism efforts.

State had made progress in establishing goals and intended outcomes for ATA, but S/CT and DS/T/ATA did not systematically assess the outcomes of program assistance. Since fiscal year 2006, State planning documents listed sustainability—that is, enabling partner nations to achieve advanced

counterterrorism capabilities and maintain them—as a key intended program outcome. However, S/CT and DS/T/ATA had not set clear measures of sustainability, and had not integrated sustainability into program planning. As a result, State could not determine the effectiveness of program assistance or assess the extent to which ATA was meeting its longer-term, congressionally mandated objectives.

S/CT had not provided a congressionally mandated report to Congress on U.S. government-wide assistance related to combating international terrorism since 1996.[7] After 1996, S/CT has only submitted to Congress annual reports prepared by DS/T/ATA on just the ATA program. Moreover, we found that the ATA annual reports contained inaccuracies, such as the number of students trained and courses offered. Additionally, the ATA annual reports lacked comprehensive information on the results of program assistance that would be useful to Congress in evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

Given changes in the overall scope and nature of U.S. international counterterrorism assistance and the fact that State had not submitted the mandated report on such matters since 1996, we included a matter for congressional consideration regarding the legislative requirement for State's reporting on U.S. counterterrorism assistance. Additionally, to ensure that ATA, as a key element of State's broader international counterterrorism efforts, is focused on improving partner nations' counterterrorism capabilities and aligned with overall U.S. counterterrorism policy goals, we recommended that the Secretary of State improve internal program guidance. We made other recommendations to help S/CT and DS/T/ATA more effectively link assistance needs to resource allocations and better assess program outcomes.

Background

Congress authorized State's ATA program in 1983 through the Foreign Assistance Act.[8] According to the legislation the purpose of ATA is "(1) to enhance the antiterrorism skills of friendly countries by providing training and equipment to deter and counter terrorism; (2) to strengthen the

[7]22 U.S.C. § 2349aa-7 (requiring the Secretary of State to report annually on the amount and nature of all assistance provided by the U.S. government related to international terrorism).

[8]Pub. L. No. 87-195, Pt. II, §571, as added by Pub. L. No. 98-151, §101(b)(2), 97 Stat. 972 (1983) (codified at 22 U.S.C. § 2349a).

bilateral ties of the United States with friendly governments by offering concrete assistance in this area of great mutual concern; and (3) to increase respect for human rights by sharing with foreign civil authorities modern, humane, and effective antiterrorism techniques."

ATA Program Assistance

ATA offers a wide range of counterterrorism assistance to partner nations, but most assistance consists of (1) training courses on tactical and strategic counterterrorism issues and (2) grants of counterterrorism equipment, such as small arms, bomb detection equipment, vehicles, and computers. ATA curricula and training focus on enhancing critical counterterrorism capabilities, which cover issues such as crisis management and response, cyberterrorism, dignitary protection, and related areas. According to DS/T/ATA, all its courses emphasize law enforcement under the rule of law and sound human rights practices.

ATA Program Funding

ATA is State's largest counterterrorism program, and receives appropriations under the Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs account. Fiscal year 2002 appropriations for ATA increased to about $158 million—over six times the level of funding appropriated in fiscal year 2000. Appropriations have fluctuated since fiscal year 2002, but increased to almost $171 million in fiscal year 2007. From fiscal years 2002 to 2007, program assistance for the top 10 recipients of ATA allocations ranged from about $11 million to about $78 million. The top 10 recipients represented about 57 percent of ATA funding allocated for training and training-related activities over the 6-year period. ATA funding for the other 89 partner nations that received assistance during this period ranged from $9,000 to about $10.7 million.

ATA Program Management

The Coordinator for Counterterrorism, the head of S/CT, is statutorily[9] charged with the overall supervision (including policy oversight of resources) and coordination of the U.S. government's counterterrorism activities. The broadly mandated[10] role of the Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, the head of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, includes implementing security programs to protect diplomatic personnel

[9]22 U.S.C. § 2651a.

[10]State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security in its current form is an outgrowth of the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986 (Pub. L. No. 99-399, §§ 104-105).

and advise chiefs of mission on security matters. Specific roles and responsibilities for S/CT and DS/T/ATA regarding ATA are described in a 1991 internal policy guidance memorandum, the Omnibus Diplomatic Security Act of 1986,[11] and incorporated into State's Foreign Affairs Manual.[12]

S/CT is responsible for leading the initial assessment of a partner nation's counterterrorism needs, and DS/T/ATA is responsible for developing annual, country-specific plans. Under current program operations, DS/T/ATA conducts an initial assessment of a new participant nation's counterterrorism capabilities, and conducts subsequent assessments—referred to as program reviews—every 2 to 3 years thereafter. In general, the needs assessments include input from the embassy teams, but the assessments themselves are conducted by technical experts contracted by DS/T/ATA. According to DS/T/ATA, the purpose of the needs assessment and program review process is to determine the forms of assistance for a partner nation to detect, deter, deny, and defeat terrorism; and to evaluate program effectiveness.

State's Implementation of ATA Lacks Guidance and Use of Country Needs Assessments

S/CT provides minimal policy guidance to DS/T/ATA to help determine assistance priorities and ensure that it supports broader U.S. policy goals. In addition, S/CT and DS/T/ATA did not systematically use country-specific needs assessments and program reviews to plan what types of assistance to provide partner nations in accordance with State policy guidance. The assessments we reviewed had weaknesses and inconsistencies.

S/CT Provides a Tiered Country List, but Little Additional Policy Guidance

According to State officials, S/CT places countries on a tiered list in one of four priority categories based on criteria that address several factors, including country-specific threats and the level and depth of diplomatic and political engagement in a country. State officials indicated that other factors also may be considered in determining whether and where a country is placed on the list, such as the presence of a U.S. military base or a planned international sporting or cultural event with U.S. participation.

[11]Pub. L. No. 99-399, §§ 104-105.

[12]The general responsibilities for S/CT and DS/T/ATA regarding the ATA program are described in the *2007 U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual, Volume 1–Organization and Functions*, 1 FAM 022.5 and 1 FAM 262.3-1.

Since 2006, S/CT has reviewed and discussed the tiered list—including changes, additions, or deletions—with DS/T/ATA during quarterly meetings. In addition to the quarterly meetings, an S/CT official told us that they had established a series of regional roundtable discussions in 2006 between S/CT regional subject experts and DS/T/ATA counterparts. According to the S/CT official, the roundtables were intended as a means of identifying priority countries and their counterterrorism needs for purposes of developing budget requests.

S/CT provides little guidance to DS/T/ATA beyond the tiered list, although the 1991 State policy guidance memorandum states that S/CT's written policy guidance for the program should include suggested country training priorities. While S/CT provides some additional guidance to DS/T/ATA during quarterly meetings and on other occasions, DS/T/ATA officials in headquarters and the field stated they received little or no guidance from S/CT beyond the tiered list. As a result, neither S/CT nor DS/T/ATA could ensure that program assistance provided to specific countries supports broader U.S. antiterrorism policy goals.

Other factors beyond S/CT's tiered list of countries, such as unforeseen events or new governmental initiatives, also influence which countries receive program assistance. We found that 10 countries on the tiered list did not receive ATA assistance in fiscal year 2007, while 13 countries not on the tiered list received approximately $3.2 million. S/CT and DS/T/ATA officials stated that assistance does not always align with the tiered list because U.S. foreign policy objectives sometimes cause State, in consultation with the President's National Security Council, to provide assistance to a non-tiered-list country.

S/CT and DS/T/ATA Did Not Systematically Align Program Assistance with Counterterrorism Needs

According to the 1991 State policy guidance memorandum and DS/T/ATA standard operations procedures, ATA country-specific needs assessments and program reviews are intended to guide program management and planning. However, S/CT and DS/T/ATA did not systematically use the assessments to determine what types of assistance to provide to partner nations or develop ATA country-specific plans. Although the 1991 State policy memorandum states that S/CT should lead the assessment efforts, a senior S/CT official stated that S/CT lacks the capacity to do so. As a result, DS/T/ATA has led interagency assessment teams in recent years, but the assessments and recommendations for types of assistance to be provided may not fully reflect S/CT policy guidance concerning overall U.S. counterterrorism priorities.

DS/T/ATA Did Not Consistently Use Country Needs Assessments

DS/T/ATA officials responsible for five of the top six recipients of ATA support—Colombia, Kenya, Indonesia, Pakistan, and the Philippines[13]—did not consistently use ATA country needs assessments and program reviews in making program decisions or to create annual country assistance plans. In some instances, DS/T/ATA officials responsible for in-country programs had not seen the latest assessments for their respective countries, and some said that the assessments they had reviewed were either not useful or that they were used for informational purposes only.

- The Regional Security Officer, Deputy Regional Security Officer, and DS/T/ATA Program Manager for Kenya had not seen any of the assessments that had been conducted for the country since 2000. Although the in-country program manager for Kenya was familiar with the assessments from her work in a previous position with DS/T/ATA, she stated that in general, the assessments were not very useful for determining what type of assistance to provide. She said that the initial needs assessment for Kenya failed to adequately consider local needs and capacity.

- The Regional Security Officer and Assistant Regional Security Officer for Indonesia stated they had not seen the latest assessment for the country. The DS/T/ATA program manager for Indonesia said that he recalled using one of the assessments as a "frame of reference" in making program and resource decisions. The in-country program manager also recalled seeing one of the assessments, but stated that he did not find the assessment useful given the changing terrorist landscape; therefore, he did not share it with his staff.

- The DS/T/ATA Program Manager for Pakistan stated that decisions on the types of assistance to provide in Pakistan were based primarily on the knowledge and experience of in-country staff regarding partner nation needs, rather than the needs assessments or program reviews. He added that he did not find the assessments useful, as the issues identified in the latest (2004) assessment for the country were outdated.

[13]Each of these countries received a range of ATA training and other assistance through an in-country presence. The sixth in-country program, Afghanistan, also received significant program assistance during this period. But, according to DS/T/ATA officials, the Afghanistan in-country program was focused principally on training and monitoring a Presidential Protective Service.

Needs Assessments Generally Lacked Prioritized Recommendations and Were Inconsistent

We reviewed 12 of the 21 ATA country-specific needs assessments and program reviews[14] that, according to ATA annual reports, DS/T/ATA conducted between 2000 and 2007 for five of the six in-country programs.[15] The assessments and reviews generally included a range of recommendations for counterterrorism assistance, but did not prioritize assistance to be provided or include specific timeframes for implementation. Consequently, the assessments did not consistently provide a basis for targeting program assistance to the areas of a partner nation's greatest counterterrorism assistance need. Only two of the assessments—a 2000 needs assessment for Indonesia and a 2003 assessment for Kenya—prioritized the recommendations, although a 2004 assessment for Pakistan and a 2005 assessment for the Philippines listed one or two recommendations as priority ATA efforts. In addition, the information included in the assessments was not consistent and varied in linking recommendations to capabilities. Of the 12 assessments we reviewed:

- Nine included narrative on a range of counterterrorism capabilities, such as border security and explosives detection, but the number of capabilities assessed ranged from 5 to 25.
- Only four of the assessments that assessed more than one capability linked recommendations provided to the relevant capabilities.
- Six included capability ratings, but the types of ratings used varied. For example, a 2003 assessment for Colombia rated eight capabilities from 1 through 5, but the 2004 assessment rated 24 capabilities, using poor, low, fair, or good.
- Two used a format that DS/T/ATA began implementing in 2001. The assessments following the new format generally included consistent types of information and clearly linked recommendations provided to an assessment of 25 counterterrorism capabilities. However, they did not prioritize recommendations or include specific timeframes for implementing the recommendations.

[14]DS/T/ATA was unable to provide nine assessments that were reportedly conducted for four of these countries between 2002 and 2007. According to DS/T/ATA officials, they were either unable to locate these assessments, written reports on the assessment visits were not completed, or the annual reports stating that they had been completed were inaccurate.

[15]We did not include the ATA in-country program in Afghanistan in this analysis because the scope of the program was narrowly focused on presidential protection training.

Country Assistance Plans Were Not Used or Were Not Linked to Needs Assessments

Although the 1991 State policy memorandum states that DS/T/ATA should create annual country assistance plans that specify training objectives and assistance to be provided based upon the needs assessments and program reviews, we found that S/CT and DS/T/ATA did not systematically use the assessments to create annual plans for the five in-country programs. DS/T/ATA officials we interviewed regarding the five in-country programs stated that in lieu of relying on the assessments or country assistance plans, program and resource decisions were primarily made by DS/T/ATA officials in the field based on their knowledge and experience regarding partner nation needs. Some DS/T/ATA officials said they did not find the country assistance plans useful. The program manager for Pakistan stated that he used the country assistance plan as a guide, but found that it did not respond to changing needs in the country. The ATA program manager for Kenya said that he had not seen a country assistance plan for that country.

We requested ATA country assistance plans conducted during fiscal years 2000-2006 for the five in-country programs included in our review, but S/CT and DS/T/ATA only provided three plans completed for three of the five countries. Of these, we found that the plans did not link planned activities to recommendations provided in the needs assessments and program reviews. For example, the plan for the Philippines included a brief reference to a 2005 needs assessment, but the plan did not identify which recommendations from the 2005 assessment were intended to be addressed by current or planned efforts.

S/CT Has Established Various Mechanisms to Coordinate Program Assistance

S/CT has mechanisms to coordinate the ATA program with other U.S. government international counterterrorism training assistance and to help avoid duplication of efforts. S/CT chairs biweekly interagency working group meetings of the Counterterrorism Security Group's Training Assistance Subgroup[16] to provide a forum for high-level information sharing and discussion among U.S. agencies implementing international counterterrorism efforts.[17] S/CT also established the Regional Strategic Initiative in 2006 to coordinate regional counterterrorism efforts and

[16]The Training Assistance Subgroup includes representatives from the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Homeland Security, Treasury, and other agencies.

[17]The Counterterrorism Security Group is chaired by the National Security Council and is intended to serve as a means for U.S. agencies to share information and coordinate the response to terrorist threats against U.S. interests domestically and abroad.

strategy. S/CT described the Regional Strategic Initiative as a series of regionally based, interagency meetings hosted by U.S. embassies to identify key regional counterterrorism issues and develop a strategic approach to addressing them, among other goals.

In the four countries we visited, we did not find any significant duplication or overlap among U.S. agencies' country-specific training programs aimed at combating terrorism. Officials we met with in each of these countries noted that they participated in various embassy working group meetings, such as Counterterrorism Working Group and Law Enforcement Working Group meetings, during which relevant agencies shared information regarding operations and activities at post. DS/T/ATA officials also coordinated ATA with other counterterrorism efforts through daily informal communication among cognizant officials in the countries we visited.

State Had Made Progress in Establishing ATA Goals, but S/CT and DS/T/ATA Did Not Assess Sustainability

In response to concerns that ATA lacked elements of adequate strategic planning and performance measurement, State took action to define goals and measures related to the program's mandated objectives. S/CT and DS/T/ATA, however, did not systematically assess sustainability—that is, the extent to which assistance has enabled partner nations to achieve and maintain advanced counterterrorism capabilities. S/CT and DS/T/ATA lacked clear measures and processes for assessing sustainability, and program managers did not consistently include sustainability in ATA planning.

State Recently Established ATA Goals and Measures, and Emphasizes Sustaining Partner Nations' Counterterrorism Capabilities

State did not have measurable performance goals and outcomes related to the mandated objectives for ATA prior to fiscal year 2003, but has recently made some progress to address the deficiency, which had been noted in reports by State's Office of Inspector General. Similarly, State developed specific goals and measures for each of the program's mandated objectives in response to a 2003 Office of Management and Budget assessment.

Since fiscal year 2006, State planning documents, including department and bureau-level performance plans, have stated that enabling partner nations to achieve advanced and sustainable counterterrorism capabilities is a key outcome. S/CT and DS/T/ATA officials further confirmed that sustainability is the principal intended outcome and focus of program assistance. In support of these efforts, DS/T/ATA appointed a Sustainment Manager in November 2006 to, among other things, coordinate with other

DS/T/ATA divisions to develop recommendations and plans to assist partner nations in developing sustainable counterterrorism capabilities.

S/CT and DS/T/ATA Did Not Assess Sustainability of Capabilities

Despite progress towards establishing goals and intended outcomes, State had not developed clear measures and a process for assessing sustainability and had not integrated the concept into program planning. The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993[18] requires agencies in charge of U.S. government programs and activities to identify goals and report on the degree to which goals are met. S/CT and DS/T/ATA officials noted the difficulty in developing direct quantitative measures of ATA outcomes related to partner nations' counterterrorism capabilities. Our past work also has stressed the importance of establishing program goals, objectives, priorities, milestones, and measures to use in monitoring performance and assessing outcomes as critical elements of program management and effective resource allocation.[19]

We found that the measure for ATA's principal intended program outcome of sustainability is not clear. In its fiscal year 2007 Joint Performance Summary, State reported results and future year targets for the number of countries that had achieved an advanced, sustainable level of counterterrorism capability. According to the document, partner nations that achieve a sustainable level of counterterrorism would graduate from the program and no longer receive program assistance. However, program officials in S/CT and DS/T/ATA directly responsible for overseeing ATA were not aware that the Joint Performance Summary listed numerical targets and past results for the number of partner nations that had achieved sustainability, and could not provide an explanation of how State assessed the results. DS/T/ATA's Sustainment Manager also could not explain how State established and assessed the numerical targets in the reports. The Sustainment Manager further noted that, to his knowledge, S/CT and DS/T/ATA had not yet developed systematic measures of sustainability.

DS/T/ATA's mechanism for evaluating partner nation capabilities did not include guidance or specific measures to assess sustainability. According

[18]Pub. L. No. 103-62, 107 Stat. 285, 287-88 (1993).

[19]GAO, *Combating Terrorism: Law Enforcement Agencies Lack Directives to Assist Foreign Nations to Identify, Disrupt, and Prosecute Terrorists*, GAO-07-697 (Washington, D.C.: June 25, 2007).

to program guidance and DS/T/ATA officials, needs assessments and program reviews are intended to establish a baseline of a partner nation's counterterrorism capabilities and quantify progress through subsequent reviews. DS/T/ATA officials also asserted that the process is intended to measure the results of program assistance. However, the process did not explicitly address sustainability, and provided no specific information or instruction regarding how reviewers are to assess sustainability. Moreover, the process focused on assessing a partner nation's overall counterterrorism capabilities, but did not specifically measure the results of program assistance.

DS/T/ATA had not systematically integrated sustainability into country-specific assistance plans, and we found a lack of consensus among program officials about how to address the issue. In-country program managers, embassy officials, instructors, and partner nation officials we interviewed held disparate views on how to define sustainability across all ATA participant countries, and many were not aware that sustainability was the intended outcome. Several program officials stated that graduating a country and withdrawing or significantly reducing program assistance could result in a rapid decline in the partner nation's counterterrorism capabilities, and could undermine other program objectives, such as improving bilateral relations. Further, although State has listed sustainability in State-level planning documents since 2006, S/CT and DS/T/ATA had not issued guidance on incorporating sustainability into country-specific planning, and none of the country assistance plans we reviewed consistently addressed the outcome. As a result, the plans did not include measurable annual objectives targeted at enabling the partner nation to achieve sustainability. For example, Colombia's assistance plan listed transferring responsibility for the antikidnapping training to the Colombian government and described planned activities to achieve that goal. However, the plan did not include measurable objectives to determine whether activities achieved intended results.

State Reporting on U.S. Counterterrorism Assistance Abroad Has Been Incomplete and Inaccurate

Since 1996, State has not complied with a congressional mandate[20] to report to Congress on U.S. international counterterrorism assistance. Additionally, State's annual reports on ATA contained inaccurate data regarding basic program information, did not provide systematic assessments of program results, and lacked other information necessary to evaluate program effectiveness.

S/CT Has Not Prepared a Mandated Report

In 1985, Congress amended the Foreign Assistance Act requiring the Secretary of State to report on all assistance related to international terrorism provided by the U.S. government during the preceding fiscal year.[21] Since 1996, State has submitted ATA annual reports rather than the broader report required by the statute.

A S/CT official noted confusion within State over what the statute required and he asserted that the ATA annual report, which is prepared by DS/T/ATA, and State's annual "Patterns of Global Terrorism" report[22] were sufficiently responsive to congressional needs. He further noted that, in his view, it would be extremely difficult for State to compile and report on all U.S. government terrorism assistance activities, especially given the significant growth of agencies' programs since 2001. Officials in State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs indicated that, to their knowledge, they had never received an inquiry from congressional staff about the missing reports.

ATA Annual Reports Contain Inaccuracies

Recent ATA annual reports have contained inaccurate data relating to basic program information on numbers of students trained and courses offered. For example,

- *Afghanistan.* According to annual reports for fiscal years 2002 to 2005, 15 Afghan students were trained as part of a single training event over the 4-year period. DS/T/ATA subsequently provided us data for fiscal year

[20] 22 U.S.C. § 2349aa-7.

[21] Pub. L. No. 99-83, Title V, § 502, 99 Stat. 220 (codified at 22 U.S.C. § 2349aa-7).

[22] S/CT prepares this annual report, which is required by a separate statute (22 U.S.C. § 2656f(a)). The report primarily describes international terrorist activity.

2005, which corrected the participation total in that year from 15 participants in 1 training event to 1,516 participants in 12 training events.

- *Pakistan.* According to the fiscal year 2005 ATA annual report, ATA delivered 17 courses to 335 participants in Pakistan. Supporting tables in the same report listed 13 courses provided to 283 participants, and a summary report provided to us by DS/T/ATA reported 13 courses provided to 250 course participants.

DS/T/ATA officials acknowledged the discrepancies and noted that similar inaccuracies could be presumed for prior years and for other partner nations. The officials indicated that inaccuracies and omissions in reports of the training participants and events were due to a lack of internal policies and procedures for recording and reporting program data. In the absence of documented policies and procedures, staff developed various individual processes for collecting the information that resulted in flawed data reporting. Additionally, DS/T/ATA officials told us that its inadequate information management system and a lack of consistent data collection procedures also contributed to inaccurate reporting.

ATA Annual Reports Lack Performance and Other Useful Program Information

We reviewed ATA annual reports for fiscal years 1997 through 2005, and found that the reports varied widely in terms of content, scope, and format. Moreover, the annual reports did not contain systematic assessments of program performance or consistent information on program activity, such as number and type of courses delivered, types of equipment provided, and budget activity associated with program operations. In general, the reports contained varying levels of detail on program activity, and provided only anecdotal examples of program successes, from a variety of sources, including U.S. embassy officials, ATA instructors, and partner nation officials. DS/T/ATA program officials charged with compiling the annual reports for the past 3 fiscal years noted that DS/T/ATA did not have guidance on the scope, content, or format for the reports.

Conclusions

Although ATA plays a central role in State's broader effort to fight international terrorism, deficiencies in how the program is guided, managed, implemented, and assessed could limit the program's effectiveness. Specifically, minimal guidance from S/CT makes it difficult to determine the extent to which program assistance directly supports broader U.S. counterterrorism policy goals. Additionally, deficiencies with DS/T/ATA's needs assessments and program reviews may limit their utility

as a tool for planning assistance and prioritizing among several partner nations' counterterrorism needs. As a result, the assessments and reviews are not systematically linked to resource allocation decisions, which may limit the program's ability to improve partner nation's counterterrorism capabilities.

Although State has made some progress in attempting to evaluate and quantitatively measure program performance, ATA still lacks a clearly defined, systematic assessment and reporting of outcomes, which makes it difficult to determine the overall effectiveness of the program. This deficiency, along with State's noncompliance with mandated reporting requirements, has resulted in Congress having limited and incomplete information on U.S. international counterterrorism assistance and ATA efforts. Such information is necessary to determine the most effective types of assistance the U.S. government can provide to partner nations in support of the U.S. national security goal of countering terrorism abroad.

In our February 2008 report, we suggested that Congress should reconsider the requirement that the Secretary of State provide an annual report on the nature and amount of U.S. government counterterrorism assistance provided abroad, given the broad changes in the scope and nature of U.S. counterterrorism assistance abroad in conjunction with the fact that the report has not been submitted since 1996.

We also recommended that the Secretary of State take the following four actions:

1. Revisit and revise internal guidance (the 1991 State policy memorandum and Foreign Affairs Manual, in particular) to ensure that the roles and responsibilities for S/CT and DS/T/ATA are still relevant and better enable State to determine which countries should receive assistance and what type, and allocate limited ATA resources.

2. Ensure that needs assessments and program reviews are both useful and linked to ATA resource decisions and development of country-specific assistance plans.

3. Establish clearer measures of sustainability, and refocus the process for assessing the sustainability of partner nations' counterterrorism capabilities. The revised evaluation process should include not only an overall assessment of partner nation counterterrorism capabilities, but also provide guidance for assessing the specific outcomes of ATA.

4. Comply with the congressional mandate to report to Congress on U.S. international counterterrorism assistance.

In commenting on our report, State agreed overall with our principal findings and recommendations to improve its ATA program guidance, the needs assessment and program review process, and its assessments of ATA program outcomes. State noted that the report highlighted the difficulties in assessing the benefits of developing and improving long-term antiterrorism and law enforcement relationships with foreign governments. State also outlined a number of ongoing and planned initiatives to address our recommendations. As noted in our report, we will follow up with State to ensure that these initiatives have been completed, as planned.

Although State supported the matter we suggested for congressional consideration, it did not specifically address our recommendation that it comply with the congressional mandate to report on U.S. counterterrorism assistance.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, this concludes my prepared statement. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Contact and Staff Acknowledgements

For questions regarding this testimony, please contact Charles Michael Johnson, Jr. (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov. Albert H. Huntington, III, Assistant Director; Matthew E. Helm; Elisabeth R. Helmer; and Emily Rachman made key contributions in preparing this statement.

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:
I am pleased to be here to discuss the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program.

- First, I will address the adequacy of State's guidance for determining foreign country recipients and types of assistance to provide;
- second, I will describe how State coordinates ATA with other U.S. counterterrorism programs; and
- finally, I will address the extent to which State establishes clear ATA goals, and measures program outcomes.

My statement today is based on our February 2008 report[1], which focused on State's ATA program efforts from FY 2001 to 2007

Before I discuss findings, I would like to note that the ATA program is a key mechanism in State's efforts to help foreign nations deter and counter terrorism. Funding for ATA has increased in recent years—from $38 million in FY 2001 to about $171 million in FY 2007.

[1]GAO, *Combating Terrorism: State Department's Antiterrorism Program Needs Improved Guidance and More Systematic Assessments of Outcomes*, GAO-08-336 (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 29, 2008).

[4]ATA is part of a training directorate within Diplomatic Security comprised of the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance, the Office of Training and Performance Support, and the Office of Mobile Security Training.

Much of the program's assistance is for training provided in foreign countries and for equipment to enhance foreign government efforts to combat terrorism. Within State, the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism (S/CT) and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Office of Antiterrorism Assistance (DS/T/ATA)[4] oversee and manage the program.

With respect to the Adequacy of Guidance, our work revealed that S/CT had provided minimal policy guidance to help DS/T/ATA determine priorities and ensure that assistance provided supports broader U.S. policy goals. Although there have been recent efforts to hold quarterly meetings between the two units, the guidance S/CT provided to DS/T/ATA was primarily a tiered list of priority countries. However this list, at the time of our review, did not provide guidance on country specific program goals, objectives, or counterterrorism-related training priorities that could be used to help ensure consistency with U.S. policy objectives.

In addition, other factors may influence which countries receive program assistance, such as an increase in the U.S. government's diplomatic or political interest in a country. For example, in FY 2007, we found that **10 countries** on the ATA tiered list **did not receive ATA assistance**, while **13 countries not on the list received** $3.2 million in assistance.

According to State guidance, assessments are to guide ATA resource decisions and form the basis of country-specific assistance plans. However, we found that S/CT and DS/T/ATA did not consistently or systematically use country-specific needs assessments and program reviews to plan the types of assistance to provide partner nations.

Concerning Coordination, S/CT had established mechanisms to coordinate ATA with other U.S. international counterterrorism efforts. S/CT held biweekly interagency meetings with the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Treasury, and other agencies as well as ambassador-level regional strategic meetings to help coordinate international counterterrorism training assistance and to

avoid duplication of efforts. In four countries we visited, we did not find any significant duplication or overlap among the various U.S. international counterterrorism efforts.

Concerning Efforts to Assess Outcomes, State had made progress in establishing goals and intended outcomes for ATA, but did not systematically assess the outcomes of program assistance. State planning documents state that "enabling partner nations to achieve advanced and sustainable counterterrorism capabilities" is a key program outcome. However, S/CT and DS/T/ATA had not set clear measures of sustainability, and had not integrated sustainability into program planning. As a result, State could not assess the extent to which ATA is meeting its longer-term objectives.

Another area of concern is related to the accuracy of State's annual ATA reports provided to Congress. We found that the reports contained inaccuracies and lacked comprehensive information on program results that would be useful in evaluating effectiveness. For example, the most recent ATA annual report submitted to Congress

contained inaccurate data on the number of students trained and courses offered. [redacted].

In Conclusion

As I noted earlier, ATA plays a central role in the U.S. efforts to assist foreign partners in deterring and countering terrorism abroad. However,

- minimal guidance for determining recipients and types of assistance to provide,
- inconsistent use of country specific needs assessments and program reviews, and
- the lack of systematic assessments and reporting of outcomes,

have made it more difficult to determine the extent to which ATA is focused on addressing partner nations' greatest counterterrorism needs and broader U.S. counterterrorism policy goals.

Prior GAO Recommendations:

To address these findings, we recommended in our February 2008 report that the Secretary of State:

- revisit and revise its internal guidance to ensure clear roles and responsibilities for S/CT & DS/ATA and that there is clear guidance for determining which countries should receive ATA assistance;
- review how needs assessments are used to determine country-specific assistance plans; and
- establish clearer measures of sustainability and program outcomes.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, this concludes my prepared statement. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Johnson. We appreciate that.
Ms. Abercrombie-Winstanley.

STATEMENT OF GINA ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you. First of all, I return the compliment on the tie.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Chairman Tierney, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the Antiterrorism Assistance Program. My colleague, Ms. Linda Tibbetts, from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security will help me with answering questions, but I will deliver the statement for the record.

I would like to begin by saying that we in the Department of State are proud of what we have achieved with the ATA Program over the past several years. Our assistance program with its concrete successes is one of the U.S. Government's strongest tools on the war on terror. It's a living program and therefore a work in progress, but we have many good news stories to tell.

For example, in Colombia ATA has conducted several years of antiterrorism instruction at a cutting-edge training facility in Sibate. This has helped Colombia's anti-kidnapping units, known as the GAULAs, reduce kidnappings by 83 percent since 2002. Not one of the ATA-trained GAULAs has lost a single hostage during rescue operations since the beginning of the program. Furthermore, Colombia is taking over the entire management of the program. The transition is expected to be completed next year with Colombia funding the entire tactical portion of the training.

In 2007, Colombia signed an agreement with Paraguay to provide anti-kidnapping assistance. Colombia has also provided mentoring to Argentina, Chile and Ecuador. In addition, Mexico has had discussions with Colombia about the increased kidnapping threat in that country. The government of Colombia uses the ATA-developed training facilities to train anti-kidnapping units in other Latin American countries. We in S/CT are confident of the sustainability of this program.

In Afghanistan, ATA programs work to organize, train, equip and mentor protective detail in supporting tactical elements of the now regionally renowned Presidential Protective Service. The PPS is responsible for the safety of President Karzai. Thanks to its high degree of professionalism, the PPS began escorting President Karzai on overseas state visits without American mentor support.

In Indonesia, as some of you have witnessed firsthand, after the first Bali bombing in 2002, the State Department designed, developed and implemented an ATA Program for the Indonesian National Police. The program is predicated on delivering contemporary training courses, equipment, development and the institutionalization of tactical response units. Our commitment to training trainers to ensure sustainability is clear. ATA trainees have been instrumental in the apprehension or elimination of more than 425 terrorists in Sulawesi and Java, including top Jemaah Islamiya leaders.

In Pakistan, the most notable successes of the ATA Program are the development and support of a Pakistan Federal law enforce-

ment counterterrorism unit, the Special Investigative Group [SIG]. The SIG operates under the Ministry of Interior's Federal Investigative Agency. It has been instrumental in providing crucial evidence that has led to the successful prosecution of Pakistani and other foreign terror suspects in U.S. courts.

But every successful operation can be improved. The State Department reviews the recommendations made in the GAO report as an opportunity to further strengthen the ATA Program. In particular, we do agree that there is room for improvement in the areas of oversight and sustainability.

In terms of oversight, we strongly believe that the increasing regionalization of the ATA Program will address many of the GAO's concerns. The Regional Strategic Initiative will further prioritize which countries and regions receive ATA's funding. During meetings with our Ambassadors and interagency representatives in each of the eight RSI groupings, S/CT receives requests for delivery of antiterrorism assistance as part of the effort to pool resources, devise collaborative strategies and policy recommendations. This will help us address a particular terrorism threat in each region. S/CT and DS/T/ATA participate in the subsequent Technical Assistance Sub-Group meetings to ensure proper follow-through.

S/CT recently redesigned the tier list used to prioritize countries. By using our Regional Security Office's responses to 15 questions, we covered three specific categories: in-country threat; U.S. interests; and foreign partner capability—capacity.

While a priority list is necessary, flexibility is crucial to responding to actual needs and opportunities on the ground. We'll ensure that we can redirect funding for antiterrorism assistance to respond to national security and congressional concerns. To help us match priorities with opportunities, we're in the process of filling a new position in S/CT for a strategic planner, one of whose responsibilities will be to participate in the assessment teams.

During the past year, the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance appointed a coordinator for professional capacity development. This officer is developing a methodology to quantify levels of achievement by foreign governments in the area of fighting terrorism. These can be applied internationally and against varying capacities of each country. In order to strengthen the relationship between the initial needs assessment that serves as a basis for starting assistance and the metrics being developed to assess results and sustainability, the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance recently realigned this position, and it is now located in the Assessment, Review and Evaluation Unit.

This coordinator will track the progress of individual countries according to the 25 established critical capabilities of the needs assessment process. You will find examples of these capabilities in the statement provided for the record.

Chairman Tierney and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I thank you for this opportunity to talk to you today about antiterrorism assistance. We welcome your questions and comments.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Abercrombie-Winstanley follows:]

Oversight of the Antiterrorism Assistance Program

Statement for the Record by Gina K. Abercrombie-Winstanley
Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism
U.S. Department of State

Before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform,
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs

June 4, 2008

Chairman Tierney, Congressman Shays, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) Program.

I would like to begin by saying that we in the Department of State are proud of what we have achieved with the ATA program over the past several years. Our assistance program, with its concrete successes, is one of the U.S. Government's strongest tools in the War on Terror. It is a living program and, therefore a work in progress, but we have many good news stories to tell.

In Colombia, ATA has conducted several years of antiterrorism instruction at Sibate. This cutting-edge training facility has helped Columbia's anti-kidnapping units (known by their Spanish acronym GAULA) reduce kidnappings by 83 percent since 2002. Not one of the ATA-trained GAULAs has lost a single hostage during rescue operations since the inception of the program. Furthermore, Colombia is taking over the entire management of the program itself. The transition is expected to be complete by 2009, with Colombia funding the entire tactical portion of the training. In 2007, the Colombian police worked closely and signed an agreement with Paraguay to provide anti-kidnapping assistance. Colombia has also provided mentoring to Argentina, Chile and Ecuador. In addition, Mexico has had several discussions with Colombia about the increasing kidnapping threat in that country. The GOC uses the ATA developed training facilities in Sibate to train anti-kidnapping units from neighboring WHA countries.

In Afghanistan, ATA programs worked to organize, train, equip, and mentor the protective detail and supporting tactical elements of the now regionally renowned Presidential Protective Service, (PPS), responsible for the safety of

President Karzai. Thanks to its high degree of professionalism, the PPS began escorting President Karzai on overseas state visits without American mentor support.

In Indonesia, as some of you who have witnessed firsthand, after the first Bali bombing in August 2002, the State Department designed, developed, and implemented an ATA program for the Indonesian National Police. The program was, and continues to be predicated on delivering contemporary training courses, enabling equipment, development and the institutionalization of tactical response units. Moreover, the commitment to training trainers to ensure sustainability is clear. Since its inception, Detachment 88 has been instrumental in the apprehension or elimination of more than 425 terrorists. Most of those arrested have been successfully adjudicated and incarcerated. In FY-07, they and other police units arrested more than 30 terrorists and killed several others in raids in Sulawesi and Java, including top Jemaah Islamiya leaders Abu Dujana and Zarkasih.

In Pakistan, the most notable success of the ATA program is the development and support (training, equipping, and mentoring) of a Pakistan federal law enforcement CT unit, the Special Investigation Group (SIG). The SIG operates under the Ministry of Interior's Federal Investigative Agency and has been instrumental in providing crucial evidence that has led to the successful prosecution of Pakistani and other foreign terrorism suspects in U.S. courts.

But every successful operation can be improved further. With this in mind, the State Department is embracing the recommendations made in the GAO report, and views the report as an opportunity to further strengthen the ATA program. We agree that there is room for improvement in the areas of oversight and sustainability.

In terms of oversight, we strongly believe that the increasing regionalization of the ATA program will address many of the GAO's concerns. The Regional Strategic Initiative (RSI) will further prioritize which countries and regions receive ATA funding. During meetings with our Ambassadors and interagency representatives in each of the eight RSI groupings, S/CT receives requests for delivery of Antiterrorism Assistance as part of the effort to pool resources and devise collaborative strategies and policy recommendations. This will enable us to address the particular terrorism threat in each region. S/CT and the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance participate in the subsequent Technical Assistance Sub-Group meetings to ensure proper follow-through.

S/CT recently redesigned the tier list used to prioritize countries that should receive ATA support. We developed the list by using our Regional Security Officers' response to fifteen questions in three specific categories: in-country threat, U.S. interests, and foreign partner capacity. While a priority list is necessary, flexibility is crucial to responding to actual needs and opportunities on the ground. We will ensure that we can re-direct funding for Antiterrorism Assistance to respond to Congressional and national security concerns, as well as to address urgent situations in the field. To assist us in matching priorities with opportunities, we are in the process of filling a new position for a Strategic Planner, one of whose responsibilities will be to participate in the assessment teams.

During the past year, the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance appointed a Coordinator for Professional Capacity Development. This officer is developing a methodology to quantify levels of achievement by foreign governments in the area of fighting terrorism that can be applied internationally and against the varying capacities of each country. In order to strengthen the relationship between the initial Needs Assessment that serves as the basis for starting assistance, and the metrics being developed to assess "sustainability", the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance recently realigned this position within the Assessment, Review, and Evaluation Unit. This move will help ensure that the objective capability ratings obtained during an initial country assessment are linked to each successive country report.

This Coordinator will track the progress of individual countries according to the 25 established "Critical Capabilities" parameters of the Needs Assessment process. Examples include:

- Preventive capabilities (land, airspace, and maritime border security, for example);
- Response capabilities (such as National Level Major Incident Command and Control, Police Special Operations (CRT), and Explosives Incident Countermeasures);
- Post-Incident Capabilities (Police Investigative Capability; post-blast investigations, financial investigations, and crime scene and evidence management, for example.);
- Cyber Security Capabilities; and
- Professional Development Capability.

In this manner, the needs assessment process helps establish reasoned, de facto objectives for evaluation and potential assistance. This is preferable to attempting to address all of the partner nation's CT vulnerabilities in a vacuum. Except where the Office of Antiterrorism Assistance is redirected by S/CT and/or Congress due to changing policy priorities, it will use the needs assessments and subsequent program reviews to further tailor training for individual countries and regions. We believe ATA's established procedure of converting the findings of the partner nations' Needs Assessment into a Country Assistance Plan, complete with course curriculum suggested to rectify identified deficiencies, address the GAO's criticism of the ATA program's not having clearly defined objectives.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to discuss our antiterrorism assistance programs with you today. I am happy to answer your questions.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much.

And I understand Ms. Tibbetts is not going to make an opening statement but will be available for questioning, and I appreciate that.

First of all, I want to thank everybody for the tone of this hearing as well. I do see this as a constructive exercise that certain issues have been raised, and from what I hear, a number of them may have been received either previously or in the interim here. So I would like to sort of approach this as a discussion if that's acceptable. I don't see this as banging back and forth on that at all.

But in the GAO report, you start off with the first report about the finding that the S/CT provides minimal guidance to help prioritize program recipients. Does that still pertain, or Ms. Abercrombie-Winstanley, do you think that your Department has addressed that concern?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I believe we have addressed it in large measure. We have increased the number of meetings that we have with ATA. I've certainly been in weekly meetings since I have started this job a few weeks ago, so I know that we have a very close collaborative working relationship. We've also fallen under our new F process, which is our foreign assistance overall, which leads to a series of roundtables to ensure that there is sufficient oversight from S/CT and that the programs are married with foreign assistance writ large from the Department of State.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Johnson, was that what you had in mind, your people when they wrote this report, that type of a solution to this, or was there something broader that you thought might be helpful?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, we were hoping for more clear direction and guidance from the S/CT to the DS/T/ATA, as their own policy memo lays out. In essence, the S/CT is to provide more than just a tier list but also to identify country needs—or help DS/T/ATA identify country needs in terms of making those trips or leading those trips to do some assessments in-country. So just beyond providing a list, we were hoping to see a lot more done from that standpoint.

Mr. TIERNEY. So more than just meetings and having a list, you really wanted them to get out there in the field to do some investigatory work or something?

Mr. JOHNSON. Or at least to work collaboratively with DS/T/ATA in doing that.

There was mention of the F process. There were concerns during our review that the F process actually impacted the ability of the ATA Program to carry out some of its objectives.

Mr. TIERNEY. And how is that?

Mr. JOHNSON. I guess the F process and the State Department can explain more how that works. We have an ongoing review looking at that at GAO, but the F process in essence may not be consistent in terms of what the tier list of priorities call for for the specific ATA countries or for countries that are on that list. I pointed out earlier there are some countries that were not on the list that actually received ATA assistance.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thirteen of them. That struck me when you were talking; 13 were not on the list that got a significant amount of assistance, and 10 that were on the list that got ignored.

So Ms. Abercrombie-Winstanley, how would that happen, and what was the reason behind that?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I cannot speak specifically to all of the 13 countries, and Ms. Tibbetts may be able to answer that specifically. But obviously, flexibility is one of the things that we do have to reserve the right——

Mr. TIERNEY. Could I—you don't mind if I interject with you about that. So you have 13 countries that are not on the list. That's a lot of flexibility. That's not just a little flexibility. I mean, that's really I think a pretty bold move. And then 10 people that are on the list prioritized fall right off.

Ms. Tibbetts, can you help us out why those decisions were made?

Ms. TIBBETTS. Sir, if I may, I have been told that, not all 13, but at least 5 or 6 of those 13 were due to an ILEA, International Law Enforcement Academy, course, which ILEA courses—there's ILEA training academies in Budapest, Bangkok, and there's for 4 or 5 of them worldwide. Those countries were invited to those training courses. Those are multi-national training courses that because they're regionally located involve a number of different countries. And some of those that—ATA provides training at these academies. And some of those countries that were present at these ILEA courses were not on the tier list.

Mr. TIERNEY. So that triggered a finding that they got some assistance from there, but it wasn't an ongoing program; it was a one-off sort of situation?

Ms. TIBBETTS. Right, exactly.

Like I say, that doesn't account for all 13, but I know at least I think half of them were attributed to the ILEA program. That was visa and passport type of training that was given at the academy that the Regional Security Officers believed these different countries would benefit from the training.

Mr. TIERNEY. What about the 10 that didn't get it that were on the list of priority? I mean, did somebody make a conscious decision that we just ran out of resources or we can't come up with enough for them?

Ms. TIBBETTS. I believe that was resource dominated. It was the lack of funding.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Johnson, did you take any look at how much money was spent on the 13 who weren't on the list versus what the needs of the 10 that fell off without anything? How does that line up?

Mr. JOHNSON. As I noted earlier, the amount of resources provided to—for the ATA Program has increased over the years, pretty much going up three times or more than it has been.

Again, we're not sure how the F process has actually impacted the program. But we did learn during the year that the F process may have actually slowed down actual implementation of the ATA Program itself in terms of there were concerns about funding even being available to continue with the program at some point in time during the year during the time of our review.

Mr. TIERNEY. Is that accurate, what happened, Ms. Abercrombie-Winstanley?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Certainly the need to follow the process, because it's recently been implemented, it has taken a while for all of us in the Department of State to make sure that we follow through with everything that needs to be done under it. And it has slowed the dispensation——

Mr. TIERNEY. Tell me what the process is and why we would allow some bureaucratic sort of process to slow down an entire program that generally was doing a good job in a lot of areas? Why we sort of backtracked on that? What is this F process, and what's the importance?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. The F process—and you should probably have someone from F to come up and speak very specifically to it. I, as someone who has to follow it, don't have the overall explanation for how all of it works, just how it impacts us. But the F process is supposed to rationalize our assistance overall so that we don't have duplication, so that we know what other bureaus within the Department are doing. And as you know, in addition to S/CT, there are bureaus like INL that do assistance to do police training for instance. This is helping us to ensure that what we're doing marries up properly. But that does mean that additional information has to be given, additional coordination, and that may delay some of the time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Well, Mr. Johnson's crew found out that you didn't see an awful lot of overlap, you thought that part was fairly well run, right?

Mr. JOHNSON. That's correct, we didn't see much overlap.

Mr. TIERNEY. So now we're putting in a program to solve a problem that may not have existed, and it slowed everything down.

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. But it's not about S/CT alone. Again, the F process is for the entire Department.

Mr. TIERNEY. So the entire Department has messed you up basically?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I wouldn't say that.

Mr. TIERNEY. I'll say it. I mean, somebody put in a level of bureaucracy which apparently has just turned things upside down on your operation, which was running along fairly smoothly without any overlap, and may have caused you to lose some focus on prioritizing countries in need versus countries not necessarily on that list; is that accurate?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I cannot say that's accurate. I have been in place for about 3 weeks. If you ask me 6 months from now, I may have additional information——

Mr. TIERNEY. Ms. Tibbetts, you've been there longer. What do you think?

Ms. TIBBETTS. I believe that—I spoke with a representative of the F Bureau at the last Regional Strategic Initiative Conference which Ambassador Daley hosted in Addis Ababa a couple of weeks ago. I was very happy to have the chance to speak with him one on one. I think they're starting to understand how, from an operational perspective, ATA requires the constant supply of our funding. And F has had issues with giving us all of our money within the last 6 weeks of the fiscal year, and then we have to postpone training. And it has been very disruptive to our schedule. I think we received our money in earlier portions this year, so I think it's

finally started to get through to them that in order for us to continue our training uninterrupted, we require the resources to do so.

Mr. TIERNEY. Why were they holding it up? Were they waiting for you to reach certain benchmarks or write certain reports? What was the delay?

Ms. TIBBETTS. Once again, I'm with Gina. I can't tell you the complete rationale.

Mr. TIERNEY. Well, you can feel the effect, you can tell me the effect. You asked for money, and you wouldn't get it. What reasoning would they give you that you couldn't get it?

Ms. TIBBETTS. We really felt the effects. I believe they didn't want to start picking and choosing offices that were getting it at certain parts of the calendar year. They wanted to do all of their foreign assistance funding at one time. We tried to explain our pain, and we ended up postponing some of our courses because of it. That's why, if you look at our spending in our budget and our number of training courses that we conducted in 2006, it went up and then it went down in 2007 because of having postponements that we were having caused by the F process.

Mr. TIERNEY. What are we going to do about this prioritization issue? It seems to me we ought to know what countries have more particular needs or whatever. I think it's a legitimate point raised by GAO. So what are we going to do, irrespective of the F program, which may interrupt it a little bit here to make sure we're targeting those countries, assessing them properly, identifying their needs and then putting our money where we're going to get the best return on it?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I think the process, certainly for assessments, we've made changes in the last year, as I said in my remarks. I'm having a strategic planner who will be a part of the assessment team so S/CT will have someone hands-on. From time to time, on the larger programs, I may indeed be part of an assessment team myself to see what it is on the ground.

What we do maintain at the Department of State is the flexibility and, when something is truly urgent, the ability to put money and to put a program in place. Again, from my prior experience as director for Lebanon desk, I know that we were able to move money to that country in an expeditious fashion. So I know that, when there are emergencies, when there are real priorities, we can move a little bit faster with the F process in place.

I believe in the last year the F process has done some improvements. Linda mentioned that money is coming out of it faster. As we get used to the changes and are able to pivot and meet what is required, I think things will move in a smoother fashion. But this is something that we're obviously going to be speaking with our colleagues about and pressing that we need money to flow for these programs because of the importance that we attach to them.

Ms. TIBBETTS. Sir, if I may add one more thing, as long as we're talking about F. For instance, we received $15 million to assist the country of Jordan, and it was 2007–2008, essentially 2-year money, but received it at the end of the fiscal year 2007, so essentially it's 1-year money. And we're hoping that we have the mechanisms in place to be able to spend all of it. We may have to come back and ask for an extension on it just because we can't get it appropriated

through the system; because really, even though they said it was 2-year money, we didn't get it until it was 1. So it's issues like that cause us to operationally and logistically have difficulties sometimes implementing our program.

Mr. TIERNEY. Let me get Mr. Johnson's view on that as well, but I've had my 10 minutes. Mr. Shays.

Mr. SHAYS. I pass.

Mr. TIERNEY. All right. Mr. Duncan, you're recognized for 10 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I noticed over the years that there's competition within government, just like there's competition within business. But I have to tell you that I've never, I don't think I've seen any other department or agency or program in the entire Federal Government get the kind of increase that this program has. We have a memo saying that there's been a 600 percent increase in funding since 2000 up to fiscal year 2007. And inflation since that time has been about 30 percent, so it's pretty amazing.

Just a few weeks after 9/11, the Wall Street Journal had an editorial, and they noticed that year that the word "security" had been attached to the Farm Bill. They changed the name to the Farm Security Act. And they noticed that every department and agency was submitting increased requests using the words "security" and "terrorism." And they said in that editorial that they would suggest that, from now on, any bill that has the words "security" or "terrorism" in it should get twice the weight and four times the scrutiny or four times the weight and twice the scrutiny, I don't remember which, lest all sorts of bad legislation be enacted in the name of fighting terrorism.

And just 2 weeks ago in the Hill newspaper, a professor from the University of Pennsylvania had an editorial saying that the words "security" and "terrorism" have become funding bonanzas for all sorts of departments and agencies. I'm wondering, the appropriation for fiscal year 2007, it says in our memo, was $175 million.

What is the request, Mr. Johnson, for this year, this fiscal year? Are they requesting another increase?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, I think the request that we have on record for fiscal year 2008 is $128 million.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, then our memo is incorrect when it says there was an appropriation for $175 million?

Mr. JOHNSON. For fiscal year 2009, I believe the request is about $141 million.

Mr. DUNCAN. All right.

So instead of a 600 percent increase, then, you're talking about a 500 percent increase, I guess.

How much of that is done through private contractors?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, the bulk of the delivery of the services are done in the foreign countries through the use of contractors.

Mr. DUNCAN. Can you tell me who are the top five private contractors? Who have the largest—what contractors receive the largest contracts?

Mr. JOHNSON. I defer to the State Department on that.

Ms. TIBBETTS. As far as personnel, sir, we use two separate contracting services to staff our personnel. Caseman and Alutiiq small business corporation provide our personnel to provide the services.

Mr. DUNCAN. Those are two contracting services?

Ms. TIBBETTS. Two contracting companies which employ our personnel, correct.

Mr. DUNCAN. So you've given contracts to those companies to hire—with the job of hiring other contractors?

Ms. TIBBETTS. Our contract employees go through OPM, and they use scheduled government GSA approved contractors who provide these services through OPM.

Mr. DUNCAN. All right. Thank you very much.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Platts, you're recognized for 10 minutes.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Tibbetts, a followup on Mr. Duncan's question. If I understand correctly, the request funding for this year is about $128 million, I think was the number stated, a drop of about $50 million. Can you explain the rationale, the basis of that decrease?

Ms. TIBBETTS. In 2007, sir, our base budget I believe was about $122 million. Subsequent to that, we received $50 million in supplemental funding, which was targeted for specific countries: Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Liberia. And that made up the bulk of the extra $50 million.

Mr. PLATTS. So you're anticipating not having the need to continue the programs that were funded through the supplemental, or is there an expectation that we're going to have another supplemental in order to fill what will now be a significant gap?

Ms. TIBBETTS. That's a good question. And as far as the budgetary aspects of my program, I defer to my colleagues in S/CT. However, the programs are ongoing. And I know that, for instance, Afghanistan, Liberia, some of our larger programs, we do end up with supplemental funding, which I don't want to say we plan on it, but it certainly helps us continue our operations.

Mr. PLATTS. Because I would assume that those programs that are going on, Jordan, Liberia, there's not a belief that that 1 year bump is going to——

Ms. TIBBETTS. Absolutely not sir. And that's kind of what I was alluding to before. For instance, for our Jordan, which is one of our largest what we call in-country programs, where we have staff on the ground trying to build the capacity of the Jordanian security services, and we have $15 million, for instance, and the priority of the Jordanians is to build this huge command and control center so that they can coordinate all the efforts of their security services. We have the $15 million. We got it late, and now we're trying to appropriate it in time before the money kind of runs out. So that's one of our operational challenges that we face on that. We assume we're getting, I'm not sure of the numbers for more funding for Jordan for 2009, but obviously it doesn't run out.

Gina, probably maybe you know.

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. We have a supplemental request for 2008 of $5 million, so it's smaller than the $50 million for the previous year. Specifically for Jordan—yeah, some of it is for Jordan.

Mr. PLATTS. Let me turn to a different issue, and it kind of relates to what you're doing in Jordan, but it's the broader issue of coordination.

And, Mr. Johnson, if you want to comment on the oversight that was done by GAO, as well as our other panelists, on the issue of coordination. And I apologize if this was asked earlier in coming in late. As far as coordination between State, Treasury, the various departments and agencies that are involved in counterterrorism, and specifically on the issue of counterterrorism efforts relating to the funding, to the movement of funds. I know, in Jordan, they're standing up now the unit to try to prevent money being laundered through Jordanian banks or the Jordanian Central Bank as in other countries. What kind of coordination is going on specifically between State and how you're targeting the funds you have; and Treasury, that has taken the lead on trying to stop the flow of money which allows terrorism to be underwritten?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. For counterterrorism financing, we have a working group, the CTFWG, the Counter-Terrorist Financing Working Group. And it meets every other week, along with the State Department, S/CT and INL co-chair it, so I'm one of the chairs. And about 15 to 20 different agencies participate in this meeting every other week.

Mr. PLATTS. Could you speak more into the mic? I'm having trouble hearing, I'm sorry.

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Sorry. This is a meeting that I chair every other week on counterterrorism financing. And about 15 to 20 different agencies attend this meeting every other week.

I have to say, in my 23 years of government service, it's one of the best meetings I've ever attended or chaired. Insofar as, between Treasury and FBI and DHS, State Department, the ability and the willingness to exchange information and coordinate what we're doing, what training efforts we've got under way, is extraordinary. This is a wonderful coordination mechanism and it works very well.

Mr. PLATTS. As a result of that coordination, and that's certainly I think the assessment I've come to believe that we have kind of learned our lessons of the stovepipe mentality and are now doing better coordinating, as a result of that coordination, does it translate back to State say in how to allocate the Antiterrorism Assistance Programs in setting the priorities for where the money goes, so that if through that coordination, you identify, hey, this is really a priority in the counterterrorism financing, does that then translate to State in how in a specific country, hey, they're standing up their counterterrorism finance unit, so this would be a good recipient to get the funds, the ATA funds?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I believe it does. I believe it does. Again, I've chaired two of the meetings thus far. And discussion of what training programs are out there, who needs money. We've talked to them about our F process to help talk them through the need for getting requests for funding that may come from the State Department early. And I believe it does, yeah.

Mr. PLATTS. I'm not sure if Congressman Lynch was here earlier, but he's been great as one of the co-chairs on the counterterrorism financing efforts, and that coordination, because, as we know, if we

can stop the flow of the funds, we're going to have great success in stopping the activity.

So thank each of you for your work, your service to our citizens. And Mr. Chairman thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you Mr. Platts.

Mr. Shays, you're recognized for 10 minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

I thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for conducting this hearing.

I thank GAO for writing its report.

And I want to acknowledge to Ms. Abercrombie-Winstanley, I note that you received a recognition for acts of courage during an attack on the U.S. Consulate General, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and I thank you for whatever your efforts were in that regard.

I'm going to ask you to bring the mic closer to you. You have a rather soft voice, and I'm a little sleepy.

I think you have a great job. I mean a great opportunity. And I think both of you do.

And but I am fascinated—fascinated is a strong word—I am curious as to why the GAO is telling us that the ATA Program is required to submit to Congress each year a report on the antiterrorism efforts of the entire Federal Government but have not done so since 1996. That goes back to another administration. And it hasn't been done since.

So I want to know why that's the case? Was it something you didn't realize you needed to do, or is it something you just decided, they didn't do it, so we won't do it?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. It might have been a combination of the two of those things. Obviously, I've been asking about that since I came on board.

Mr. SHAYS. And when did you come on board?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I think a month ago today, a month ago today. But having come from NEA, I've dealt with many of the issues personally and professionally that we cover in S/CT, so this is a job that is very personal to me.

On the report, I believe we did not realize we needed to do it and/or people thought we hadn't done it and weren't going to do it. It is in the clearance process now, so we will be submitting it very shortly.

Mr. SHAYS. Is it a doable effort?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. It is a challenging effort, but I believe we've got a new tool to help. And again, since I've been in place, I've been in contact with NCTC. And one of the things that they are doing is a budget call, I think is the phrase that they use.

But what they're asking is, from every U.S. Government agency, the budget for all of their counterterrorism programs. And by getting the budget, which is good to know what people are spending on it, we will also have available to us what everyone is doing across the board. I believe this is the first time it has been done. NCTC is doing it. And we will be able to submit a better, clearer report based on that information.

Mr. SHAYS. Well, you don't mean a better report. There's been no report.

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I beg your pardon?

Mr. SHAYS. You say "a better report?"

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. A better, yes. What we are going to submit this year will certainly be as comprehensive as we've been able to find out.

Mr. SHAYS. Basically what you all have been doing is reporting on what ATA has done?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Exactly.

Mr. SHAYS. But this is—I don't want to—I want to pursue this a little bit better because you have the advantage fortunately of being able to start fresh and not to have to make any excuses for the past.

But I, one, need to know if this is an important effort; two, if you have the capability to do it, because clearly you're going to have to assign a number of people to it. Otherwise it's going to be a meaningless report. So, one, is it your recommendation that you should be required to do this; and, two, do you have the resources to do it? And will it be done, not better than before, because it wasn't done—I don't want to link the ATA report with this. This is a separate report.

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Fair enough, fair enough, yes.

Mr. SHAYS. So tell me how you respond to my questions.

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. A twofold response.

I believe in our written response, we supported you giving consideration to GAO's recommendation that we not have to do the report. So that's our written response, and obviously, I stand by it.

That said, since it hasn't been done yet——

Mr. SHAYS. You mean, since it's still on the books, you had to do it?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Yes, since it's still on the books, we are required to do it. We have pulled together as best we can among other agencies what it is they're doing, and we will be submitting a report.

That said, I believe with the information that NCTC believes they will have in hand in the fall, which is, as I said, the budget call from everybody what they're doing, we may be able to provide a report that has some use. At least you'll be able to look and see what, across the board, everyone is doing.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me get to GAO.

Help me out here. Why did you make the recommendation they shouldn't do it? Is someone else doing it.

Mr. JOHNSON. I want to clarify for the record we did not recommend that it not be done. We actually recommended that the State Department comply with the congressional mandate to report to Congress. We did pose a matter for congressional consideration for Congress——

Mr. SHAYS. You did what?

Mr. JOHNSON. We posed the matter for Congress to revisit, meaning revisit whether or not they want the State Department to comply with these.

Mr. SHAYS. So you're kind of neutral on it?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, it's not our position given that there is a law. There's a mandate that requires the State Department to comply.

Mr. SHAYS. So let me put it in my words and tell me. You are reporting that they haven't done it?

Mr. JOHNSON. Correct.

Mr. SHAYS. You are not passing judgment whether they should do it or not do it?

Mr. JOHNSON. Correct.

Mr. SHAYS. But I don't understand why that wouldn't be part of what you can do. You make recommendations.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, our recommendation as it stands is that the State Department comply with the congressional mandate but also that the Congress revisit this to make a determination as to what——

Mr. SHAYS. Then why do you want Congress to revisit it?

Mr. JOHNSON. Because in the past 10 years, when we did our review, there has been not any compliance with respect to that mandate.

Mr. SHAYS. So that's an indication to you that either ATA doesn't have the capability or Congress doesn't have the interest to have it done?

Mr. JOHNSON. Correct.

Mr. SHAYS. OK, that's interesting.

Is GAO aware of any report like this done by another government agency.

Mr. JOHNSON. Not with respect to the U.S. efforts to combat terrorism broader——

Mr. SHAYS. When you think about it, wouldn't it have been good in 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 that we did this to be able to have some sense of where we were?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, also let me note that, prior to 1996, I believe the State Department was submitting annual reports to the Congress on the U.S. efforts to combat terrorism, meaning bringing all the information from all the agencies together prior to when it was not done in 1996.

Mr. SHAYS. Is there any question that our committee should have asked you, Ms. Tibbetts, or to you as the coordinator, or to you as the GAO, any question that like stares us in the face that we should have asked?

My staff is giving me one, but let me test you all. Is there? Is there a question that we should be addressing that we haven't brought up?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, I think you've covered most of what we have in our report.

Mr. SHAYS. OK. There's nothing that you would be asking if you were up here?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, what I would ask is, what has——

Mr. SHAYS. It's kind of hard to get an answer——

Mr. JOHNSON. What is the status of the State Department's compliance or followup on GAO's recommendations that were made.

Mr. SHAYS. OK.

That's a great question, so I ask that question. What's the answer?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. The answer is we have begun to followup on the recommendations, again by adding positions within S/CT and DS, and I'll let Linda speak to that, Ms. Tibbetts, to get involved in the needs assessments, to relook at how we put them together in Washington and working with DS to make sure that

the understanding of what is success is understood in the field as well as in Washington. And again, I'll let Linda talk about the details.

Mr. SHAYS. If we had a hearing 4 months from now, would we have the answers to this, would you be there, or what kind of time line are you working on?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Four months from now, I believe we would have answers, clear answers, but we may indeed have them now. I'll let Ms. Tibbetts speak.

Ms. TIBBETTS. Sir, as a result of the GAO audit, there are a couple operational followups that ATA has performed. And I think we've made great progress, and I think Mr. Johnson would be pleased.

He focused basically on our sustainment efforts and our efforts to institutionalize our training. And we've devoted a lot more resources and reorganized as a result of that. So if I may just briefly bring you up to speed as far as the establishment of some metrics that ATA has done to be able to measure our results with our partner nations.

Basically, we've written a standard of operating procedures. We've established a new position, the professional capacity development coordinator, and that's his whole job. We may actually, if we get the funding, have a couple more hired to conduct this, because as was pointed out to us, we're really not doing the full benefits to our program unless we can institutionalize this capacity for these countries to absorb it and to start training on their own. So as a result of these recommendations, an example of training capacity includes the numbers of antiterrorism courses offered by our partner nations.

We will go back now, and on a program review, we will see how they have absorbed the training and how they've set up and institutionalized the training. And we're also looking at comprehensiveness of their curriculum, their level of expertise of their instructors, the extent and depth of their in-service training. And we've piloted this program in one of our larger in-country programs in Colombia, as Gina referred to, that we're turning over to the Colombians at the end of the fiscal year. They're going to run the program, the training itself, and they're going to budget for it. So we are working toward that goal.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

Well, I do have a followup if you don't mind.

Just in terms of sustainability, when you hear that answer, what, Mr. Johnson, would you be asking?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, I think that's a step in the right direction. Sustainability was a key issue that we discovered was sort of a deficiency when we went out and visited some of the countries we were including in our review. Let me give you an example.

In Kenya, in particular, we were made aware that was going to become sort of a regional training hub. However, when we spoke to the Kenyan government officials and the official program manager for ATA in that particular country, sustainability wasn't even on their radar. They felt as if they didn't have all the antiterrorism assistance that they needed before you wanted to make that leap and make them sort of a regional hub.

So that's why we highlighted that along with the other information we collected on the other countries, the need for focusing on and including sustainability as a part of your efforts when you are providing the millions of dollars in assistance. As a part of that, you need to include a focus on sustainability and building capacity. So to hear Ms. Tibbetts note that, it's a step in the right direction.

Mr. SHAYS. Well, then I just conclude by saying we need to have some sustainability on this committee in terms of following up. So I will make it part of my effort to have staff check in to see how you all are doing.

And the beauty of being there only a month and a half is you don't have to apologize for the past; you got a clean slate. And you obviously have an extraordinary record in an area that is very important to our country.

So I thank both of you.

And I thank GAO.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

So the way I wrap this up here and look at it, we just discussed the idea of looking at outcomes, the effectiveness, the sustainability, and that's in gear. You're moving in that direction, and we're going to check.

The priorities end of it, you think you've got something in place on that, and you're going to start working in the field a little bit more and getting involved yourself in trying to identify where these priorities are and making sure the money gets to where it ought to go.

And we're going to get a fuller explanation. I hope you might be able to submit to us in writing about how the 13 got on the list and the 10 got off. If we can get more specifics on that, I would greatly appreciate that. I'm very curious as to how that happens if we really do have a system of prioritization in place on that.

The other issue I think that there was a question about whether or not we were looking at the countries, particular countries we were trying to help, their goals, their objectives, their training priorities and then using a needs assessment on that program to effectively plan our own efforts on that.

Do you feel you're doing that now Ms. Abercrombie-Winstanley?

Ms. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I do.

Mr. TIERNEY. You do.

Ms. TIBBETTS. I certainly believe we are.

Mr. TIERNEY. So if you reported back to Mr. Johnson, you would say, we took that advice and here is what we have done in response to that?

Ms. TIBBETTS. Absolutely.

Mr. TIERNEY. Is it something that you've done in response to the GAO report, or do you think you've been doing it all along and he just missed it?

Ms. TIBBETTS. Actually, and this is—Mr. Johnson and I, I think, had a conversation about this. We had been doing this in spotty areas in certain countries. Obviously, Mr. Johnson looked at the in-country programs where it's not as prevalent.

But since that time though—and it was good that he pointed that out, because we have gone back to our program managers to make sure that we're doing it in all of our countries.

Mr. TIERNEY. I think the wording that Mr. Johnson used was, "it wasn't consistently done." So I think he did——

Mr. JOHNSON. Correct.

Mr. TIERNEY. So you're going to make sure that happens all the way across on that, and that would do it.

Ms. TIBBETTS. Absolutely.

Mr. TIERNEY. I hope this has been helpful for the Department. I want to thank GAO and all the people associated with the report. Again, this is the type of effort that we think can be constructive if everybody works on it.

It's a program, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, that I think is critical, when, particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as I mentioned, we're going to make sure it doesn't overlap with other programs. And there have been some problems with a number of our departments that are stepping all over each other on efforts like that.

But there's no way we can get to the bottom of the corruption in those countries and get to the other larger issues if they don't think they have reliability in their police forces, in their judges, in their prosecutors and things of that nature, and it's just a mess. They have a capacity issue, which is first and foremost. They don't have the judges. They don't have the prosecutors. They don't have the system to train them.

Ms. TIBBETTS. Sir, in that respect, too, we have been reaching out to other agencies. The Department of Justice, we take them along on our needs assessments now, too, so they can work on the judicial reform type aspects as well, too. So interagency that Gina pointed out, we're really reaching out to other law enforcement agencies to try to get their take on—security for the airports, TSA comes with us. The Coast Guard does our program in Kenya for the coastal security. So we have recognized that we need other law enforcement areas of expertise on this.

Mr. TIERNEY. It's a huge issue, and it's so mind-boggling on that. But I think it's do-able. I think some of this advice was good. It sort of helps you frame it and then tying into what you're going to do and knock them off in little pieces so you don't feel overwhelmed by it. And I hope you found it helpful in that regard.

I also note, Mr. Turk, our staff director, indicated that you have some issues or some success stories that are probably classified. I think it would be good for this committee to hear them or see them. So if you make a decision, whether you would like to put them in writing to us or have a briefing with our staff from both sides or whatever, whichever way is easier for you to communicate that conversation, if you want to loop it into Mr. Johnson's group, we'll be happy to do that. And we want to get that information because we want the full picture, and we appreciate it.

Mr. Shays, if you have no other comments, I want to thank all of you. It has been a brief hearing but one of the more effective ones in terms of getting a program in the right direction.

Ms. Abercrombie-Winstanley, good luck in the future months on that.

Ms. Tibbetts, thank you for continuing to do a good job.

Mr. Johnson, again, thank you and your team for doing a terrific job all the time for us.

Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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