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THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S COUNTERTERRORISM OFFICE: BUDGET, REORGANIZATION, POLICIES

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S COUNTERTERRORISM OFFICE: BUDGET, REORGANIZATION, POLICIES

THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2011

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM,
NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:05 p.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Edward R. Royce (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. ROYCE. The hearing of the subcommittee will come to order.

Today we are pleased to have with us Ambassador Daniel Benjamin, the State Department's top counterterrorism official. Welcome. This is an opportunity to review his office's budget, especially important given our dire financial straits.

As part of a State Department reorganization, the administration would elevate the Ambassador's Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism to bureau status. Certainly, the counterterrorism portfolio is vital. Nevertheless, a certain skepticism is warranted in any reorganization in this town. What would the elevation have the office do better than it does today—or worse? Would the change portend a staffing and budget increase? Should an existing bureau be downgraded as an offset to this change? The administration requires congressional authorization for this. So we look to the Ambassador for answers on these questions.

The State Department's request for counterterrorism activity is roughly $260 million. Its programs fund many small projects. For example, the administration is requesting $800,000 in antiterrorism assistance for Malaysia. The Obama administration stresses that counterterrorism must be strategic, attacking the political, social, economic and other ills abroad that the administration believes drive militant recruitment. But it is fair to ask whether these relatively small efforts can make a dent against these daunting challenges, and how do we measure their effectiveness?

There are policy issues involved here, too. The Bush administration ill-advisedly removed North Korea from the state sponsors of terrorism list as part of a fruitless nuclear negotiation. Since its delisting, North Korea has proliferated to state sponsors of terrorism. And I have concerns about Sudan's likely delisting. We need to make sure its hands are clean.

Subcommittee Member Poe has introduced legislation urging the Secretary of State to remove the People's Mujahadin Organization of Iran from the Foreign Terrorist Organization List, and we will be looking at that. This Iranian exile group lives in a precarious security situation, being harassed and assaulted by Iraqi troops.

The Obama administration entered office committed to addressing terrorism differently. This was exemplified by its efforts to shutter Guantanamo Bay and bring 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to New York for civilian trial. After bipartisan congressional action to prevent GITMO detainees from being brought to U.S. soil, most agree that GITMO will not be closed any time soon. And in a major reversal, Attorney General Eric Holder announced that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed would not be prosecuted in civilian courts but by a military commission at Guantanamo Bay. Good.

The administration stressed that its predecessor's foreign policy drove anti-American militancy. But a 2009 USAID report notes the following. They say,

> "We need to recognize that many violent extremists are moved primarily by an unshakeable belief in the superiority of certain values, by a perceived obligation to carry out God's command, or by an abiding commitment to destroy a system they view as evil or oppressive. In other words, variables located in the realm of identity, of faith, and spirituality matter a great deal."

Those were the words of that USAID reported in 2009. So extremism is about much more than U.S. foreign policy.

Finally, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano recently claimed that security along our southern border is better now than it has ever been. Frankly, that is laughable, given its rampant violence. One of my constituents was just kidnapped. I do want to thank the Ambassador for his help on this because we were in consultation yesterday with his office on this. But at the same time, the State Department rescinded a travel warning that U.S. citizens could be targeted by drug cartels in three Mexican states. Well, he was abducted, it looks like from the information we received, by members of a drug cartel. So I wonder about this judgment.

And there is growing concern over illegal southern border crossings by individuals from Somalia, from Pakistan, from Yemen, and other countries home to active terrorist organizations. We had better start treating border security as national security.

I will now turn to the ranking member for his comments, Mr. Brad Sherman from Los Angeles, California.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Royce follows:]

Statement of Representative Ed Royce
Chairman
Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade
The State Department's Counterterrorism Office: Budget, Reorganization, Policies
April 14, 2011

This hearing of the Subcommittee will come to order.

Today we are pleased to have with us Ambassador Daniel Benjamin, the State Department's top counterterrorism official. This is an opportunity to review his Office's budget, especially important given our dire fiscal straits.

As part of a State Department reorganization, the Administration would elevate the Ambassador's *Office* of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism to *bureau* status. Certainly the counterterrorism portfolio is vital. Nevertheless, a certain skepticism is warranted in *any* Washington reorganization. What would the elevation have the Office do better? Or worse? Would the change portend a staffing and budget increase? Should an existing bureau be downgraded as an off-set? The Administration requires congressional authorization for this, so we look to the Ambassador for answers.

The State Department's request for counterterrorism activities is roughly $260 million. Its programs fund many small projects. For example, the Administration is requesting $800,000 in Antiterrorism Assistance for Malaysia. The Obama Administration stresses that counterterrorism must be "strategic," attacking the political, social, economic and other ills abroad that it believes drive militant recruitment. But it's fair to ask whether these relatively small efforts can make a dent against these daunting challenges? And how do we measure their effectiveness?

There are policy issues too.

The Bush Administration ill-advisedly removed North Korea from the state sponsors of terrorism list as part of fruitless nuclear negotiations. Since its delisting, North Korea has proliferated to state sponsors of terrorism. And I have concerns about Sudan's likely *delisting*. We need to make *sure* its hands are clean. Subcommittee Member Poe has introduced legislation urging the Secretary of State to remove the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran from the Foreign Terrorist Organizations list we'll be looking at. This Iranian exile group lives in a precarious security situation, being harassed and assaulted by Iraqi troops.

The Obama Administration entered office committed to addressing terrorism differently. This was exemplified by its efforts to shutter Guantanamo Bay and bring 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to New York for *civilian* trial. After *bipartisan* congressional action to prevent GITMO detainees from being brought to U.S. soil, most agree that GITMO will *not* be closed anytime soon. And in a major reversal, Attorney General Eric Holder announced that KSM would *not* be prosecuted in civilian courts, but by a military commission at Guantanamo Bay. Good.

The Administration stressed that its predecessor's foreign policies drove anti-American militancy. But a 2009 USAID report notes, "We need to recognize that many [violent extremists] are moved primarily by an unshakable belief in the superiority of certain values; by a perceived obligation to carry out God's command; or by an abiding commitment to destroy a system they view as evil and/or oppressive. In other words, variables located in the realm of identity, faith and spirituality matter a great deal." Extremism is about much more than U.S. foreign policy.

Finally, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano recently claimed that security along our southern border is "better now than it ever has been." Frankly, that's laughable given its rampant violence. One of my constituent was just kidnapped in Mexico, yet the State Department yesterday rescinded a travel warning that U.S. citizens could be targeted by drug cartels in three Mexican states. I wonder.

And there's growing concern over illegal southern border crossings by individuals from Somalia, Pakistan, Yemen and other countries home to active terrorist organizations. We'd better start treating border security as national security.

I'll now turn to the Ranking Member for his comments.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding these important hearings. The Obama administration's first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review presented a plan for elevating the Office of Coordinator for Counterterrorism to a new Bureau of Counterterrorism, which would give our witness a major promotion. My hope is that if we were to take such step, that new bureau could combat the pernicious effect of what I call the Bureau of Kumbaya at the State Department. This bureau inspired us to take North Korea off the list on the theory that that would make them be nice. And the bureau also inspired us to put the MeK on the list on the theory that Iran would then ameliorate its proliferation and terrorism activities. One of the questions for our witness is: How is the that working out?

This reorganization could give new heft to our efforts against terrorism, or it could be like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic; moving things around but not really accomplishing anything or, even worse, giving the appearance that we have done something when in fact we would continue to have the same policies that have been, I think, manifestly inappropriate over the last several years.

There are increasing media reports that our efforts in Afghanistan include giving money to the Taliban; either to contractors who are actually a Taliban front or to contractors who find it convenient to pay off the Taliban and then brag about how successfully they carried out their development program. I look forward to seeing what the Ambassador's office can do to make sure that our antiterrorism efforts in Afghanistan are not undermined by those who just want to move the trucks as easily as possible, not looking at the real impact.

In the early hours of Friday, last week, Iraqi forces entered Camp Ashraf, which houses members of the Iranian opposition

group known as the MeK. Some 34 residents were killed, 300 wounded. In private discussions, the Iraqi Ambassador's office has said the blood is not on the hands of the Iraqi Government but is at least partially on the hands of the State Department because the MeK is listed as a terrorist group and accordingly Iraq doesn't feel that it has to respect the human rights of those in the camp.

At a Foreign Affairs hearing on March 1, I pressed the Secretary of State to personally review the decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, which ordered the State Department to review its decision with regard to keeping the MeK on the list. A similar list is maintained by Europe, and they have removed the MeK. This court decision is unprecedented. Courts loathe to involve themselves in our foreign policy. And so I believe that the office represented here is the only office to have its processes and decisions questioned by the second most important court in the United States.

I would point out for the record the MEK's usefulness in reporting what was going on in Natanz back in 2002, and what is going on in TABA today.

The State Department's job is not just putting people on the list, and I think the MeK was put on the list not on the merits but rather to placate Tehran, but also to decide who stays on the list.

On the other hand, we have got to put the right entities on the list. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula wasn't put on the list until days before their 2009 attempted attack. The Pakistani Taliban was not designated until months after the Times Square attack. The Afghan Taliban is still not on the list notwithstanding their brutal murders not only of American soldiers but American aid workers as well.

Finally, with regard to Libya, when Deputy Secretary Steinberg was here I brought to his attention the fact that the forces in eastern Libya include those who have fought and killed Americans by fighting alongside al-Qaeda. I particularly brought to his attention Abdel-Hakim al-Hasidi, who brags of fighting us in both Pakistan and dispatching forces against us in Iraq. Yet there has been no serious attempt by the State Department to demand that the opposition council in Benghazi either turn these terrorists over to the United States or even disassociate themselves from these al-Qaeda-affiliated fighters.

So I look forward to hearing our witness. I think one key question before our committee is whether we need a new bureau. And I hope very much if there is an opportunity to create a new bureau, that it will fight inside the State Department for a much stronger antiterrorism policy rather than simply being assigned by the State Department to come over to Congress and sing us lullabies and try to put us to sleep. I am sure that is not what the witness has in mind here today.

Thank you very much.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Poe of Texas.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a few days ago, the Iraqi army charged into Camp Ashraf. Here we have on the top left-hand corner an Iraqi soldier coming in with an M–16, supported by an American-made Humvee. On the far top right-hand corner we have a member of Camp Ashraf being run over by one

of those Humvees. And contrary to what the Iraqi Government says, that only three were killed, here are the victims of the assault and attack on Camp Ashraf. Thirty-three men and women. For some reason, the State Department sings the tune of the Iraqi Government and only says three were killed. Well, there are 30 more than three in these photographs. Real people, real victims of crime.

I am very concerned, as my friend from California, Mr. Sherman is, about the people in Camp Ashraf. Every time we have a hearing on this issue, I ask the State Department Ambassador or whoever is present what is going to be done when America leaves. And we get the same song and dance: It will be fine. Well, it is not fine. The Iraqi Government wants these people removed. I think they are being supported by the Iranian Government. And we have an obligation in the United States to make sure these people are protected.

One way to do that is to remove the MeK off of the list. Some of these people were members of the MeK. And I have been to every classified briefing I know of about the MeK and I am not convinced that they should stay on the Foreign Terrorist Organization List. I am waiting for the State Department to make its case or remove them. The State Department can't make their case and they won't remove them, in spite of a court order. I think that is appalling. And we have an obligation to make sure that something occurs to protect these people.

The second note, I live in Texas. We have got a concern about the Los Zetas that come storming across the Texas border selling drugs. They are very violent, and I think that maybe we should continue putting them on the Foreign Terrorist Organization List.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will yield back.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Judge. Mr. Higgins of New York, I don't think you have an opening statement, do you?

We will go to Ambassador Benjamin. Ambassador Daniel Benjamin is currently the Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the Department of State with the rank of Ambassador-at-Large. Prior to this, Ambassador Benjamin spent time at both the Brookings Institute as well as the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He served on the National Security Council during the Clinton administration, where he was the Director for Counterterrorism in the Office of Transnational Threats. Before entering government, Ambassador Benjamin worked as a foreign correspondent for Time Magazine and for the Wall Street Journal. He is an author of two books on terrorism. One is "The Age of Sacred Terror" and the other is "The Next Attack: The Failure of the War on Terror and a Strategy for Getting It Right," which was a Washington Post Best Book of 2005.

So, Ambassador, welcome. Thank you again for the assistance with my constituent yesterday. I appreciate it.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DANIEL BENJAMIN, AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE, COORDINATOR FOR COUNTERTERRORISM, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. BENJAMIN. Thank you very much, Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Sherman, distinguished members of the committee. I want

to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I have submitted testimony for the record that provides additional detail about the State Department's concept of strategic counterterrorism and our plans to work with Congress to transform my office, SCT, into a full-fledged bureau.

Over the past 10 years, the United States has made great strides in tactical counterterrorism—taking individual terrorists off the streets, disrupting cells, and thwarting conspiracies. Yet if we look at the strategic level, we continue to see a strong flow of new recruits into many of the most dangerous terrorist organizations. A Bureau of Counterterrorism would continue to work aggressively with our interagency counterparts to stop imminent and developing threats, but it would also carry forward and expand the work underway to undermine the appeal of extremist ideologies and help many of our partners develop the tools to deal with the terrorist threats they face.

Mr. Chairman, the wave of democratic demonstrations that began to sweep the Arab world at the end of 2010 hold both promise and peril. Because great numbers of citizens carried out their public demands for change without resort to violence or reference to al-Qaeda's incendiary world view, these events upended that group's longstanding claims that change would only come to the region through violence. At the same time, the political turmoil distracted security officials and led to the possibility that terrorist groups would exploit the new openness and find it easier to carry out conspiracies, a possibility with significant worrisome implications for states undergoing democratic transitions. But should the revolts result in democratically elected non-autocratic governments, al-Qaeda's single-minded focus on terrorism as an instrument of change could be severely delegitimized.

I would like to review some key aspects of the current landscape, starting in South Asia, home to the group behind the September 11 attacks. Pakistan, particularly the Federally Administered Tribal Area region and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, continues to be used as a base for terrorist organizations operating in Pakistan and Afghanistan. While Pakistan has made progress on the counterterrorism front, specifically against Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, the challenge remains to make these gains durable and sustainable. To this end, Pakistan must sustain its efforts to deny al-Qaeda safe haven in the tribal areas of western Pakistan. We continue to press Pakistan for increased action against Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and other terrorist groups.

Though the al-Qaeda core has become weaker, it retains the capability to conduct regional and transnational attacks. In addition, the affiliates have grown stronger. Over the last 2 years, we have seen the AQ threat become more distributed and geographically diversified in Yemen, East Africa, and the Sahel, for example. Terrorist violence from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has been directed inside and outside of Yemen, threatening the security and the well-being of the Yemeni people, the broader Arabian Peninsula, and the United States.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq in recent months has adapted to changing conditions, diminished capacity, and dismantled leadership to continue

to carry out large-scale and coordinated attacks against government officials, security forces, and even civilians inside Iraq.

In Somalia, al-Shabaab has conducted frequent attacks on government, military, and civilian targets inside Somalia, and the group's leadership remains actively interested in attacking regional, U.S., and Western interests. Last July, we saw al-Shabaab demonstrate its ability and intent to carry out attacks outside of Somalia when it claimed responsibility for twin suicide bombings that killed 76 people in Kampala, Uganda during the World Cup.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb is another threat. No group has made a bigger name for itself in the kidnapping for ransom business than AQIM, which relies on ransom payments to sustain and develop itself in the harsh Saharan environment. AQIM also conducts small-scale ambushes and attacks on security forces throughout the region.

Let me now turn to the three pillars of our comprehensive strategic counterterrorism work that will address these challenges, and particularly those that arise in the new political circumstances we find ourselves in: Reducing recruitment, building partner capacity, and multilateral engagement.

Our countering violent extremism work focuses on three main lines of effort that will reduce terrorist recruitment: Delegitimizing the violent extremist narrative in order to diminish its "pull"; developing positive alternatives for youth vulnerable to radicalization to diminish the "push" effect of grievances and unmet expectations; and building partner capacity to carry out these activities.

To counter AQ propaganda, we helped stand up the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communication, the CSCC, under the Bureau of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. The CSCC, working with the interagency, focuses not only on the violent actions and human costs of terrorism but also on positive narratives that can help dissuade those who may be susceptible to radicalization and recruitment by terrorism organizations.

Successful CVE involves more than messaging, however, and we are developing programs that address the upstream factors of radicalization in communities susceptible to terrorist recruitment. To be effective, CVE work needs to be driven by local needs, informed by local knowledge, and responsive to the immediate concerns of the community.

Micro strategies customized for specific communities and even neighborhoods owned and implemented by local civil society or government partners have a better chance at succeeding and enduring.

Another central part of the Bureau's CVE effort is strengthening our partners' capacity and engagement in CVE work, propagating best practices and building an international consensus behind the efforts to delegitimize extremists and their ideologies. Ultimately, host governments are best positioned to execute truly sustainable CVE efforts.

For several years now, we have supported local law enforcement efforts to engage youth through police-led sports programs and have worked with Morocco and Indonesia to counter the spread of violence and extremist ideology in prisons.

The second pillar is building the capacity of our partners. Weak states serve as breeding grounds for terrorism and instability.

When those states have the political will, we can help with specific capacity-building programs to build effective law enforcement capacity, fair and impartial justice, and the rule of good law and governance. One of our most effective capacity-building programs is the ATA, Antiterrorism Assistance Program, which in 2010 was supported by $215 million in NADR funds and which provided 350 courses, workshops, and technical consultations that trained almost 7,000 participants from 64 countries.

The third pillar is multilateral engagement. Building new and strengthening existing partnerships is a cornerstone of our CT policy. The U.N. And other multilateral bodies have resources and expertise that we are working to leverage to reduce the capacity-building burden on the United States. We have been working on a new multilateral initiative, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, that we believe is not only an important step forward but would provide a reliable intergovernmental platform for policymakers and practitioners from different regions to engage on a sustained basis. I would be happy to brief you further in private on this important initiative, which has strong support from the White House and Secretary Clinton.

Mr. Chairman, I think my time is out. There are a number of other things I could say. We will talk about designations and about the Homeland Security counterterrorism nexus. But at this point I think it is probably best to open for your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Benjamin follows:]

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

AMBASSADOR DANIEL BENJAMIN
COORDINATOR FOR COUNTERTERRORISM

THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S COUNTERTERRORISM OFFICE: BUDGET, REORGANIZATION, POLICIES

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

APRIL 14, 2011
2:00 pm

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

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee today. I thought this would be a good opportunity to discuss the State Department's concept of strategic counterterrorism and the plans outlined in the QDDR for the State Department to work with Congress to transform the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism (S/CT) into a full-fledged Bureau. We certainly feel that the change will strengthen our work within the interagency and with partners around the world. S/CT and the State Department have assumed a growing role in counterterrorism over the past several years and have moved beyond coordination into an essential policymaking and programming role for the U.S. government.

When S/CT was established more than 30 years ago, its primary mission was to help coordinate the U.S. government's counterterrorism-related activities. Since counterterrorism was not the priority for the U.S. government in the early 1980s that it is today, it was envisioned that S/CT could carry out these responsibilities with a fairly small staff. In the wake of 9/11, the resources and attention devoted grew across a wide spectrum, and while coordination remains important, we do much more.

Within the U.S. government, a Bureau of Counterterrorism, of course, would continue to be the State Department lead on U.S. counterterrorism strategy and operations, and would continue its formulation and implementation of relevant policy and programs. The Bureau would work to both thwart imminent terrorist

acts while also reducing recruitment and radicalization and promoting the relevant capabilities of partner states. Furthermore, it would advance the Department's views on the management of counterterrorism and homeland security issues within the broader context of our bilateral, regional, and multilateral relationships. It would thus work to safeguard American security interests while promoting our values, including our support for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. It would also coordinate the Department and interagency response to complex counterterrorism crises through a variety of mechanisms including leading the Foreign Emergency Support Team. Finally, it would manage a wide range of programs, within the department, that build partner capacity in the areas of law enforcement, countering violent extremism, counterterrorism finance, and terrorist travel.

Over the past ten years, the United States has made great strides in tactical counterterrorism – taking individual terrorists off the street, disrupting cells, and thwarting conspiracies. Yet if we look at the strategic level, we continue to see a strong flow of new recruits into many of the most dangerous terrorist organizations. A Bureau of Counterterrorism would continue to work aggressively with our interagency counterparts to stop imminent and developing threats. But it would also carry forward and expand the work underway to undermine the appeal of extremist ideologies and help many partners develop the tools to deal with the terrorist threats they face.

We are in the midst of a season of transformative change in the Middle East, the full implications of which are still taking shape. The wave of democratic demonstrations that began to sweep the Arab world at the end of 2010 holds promise but also some peril. Because great numbers of citizens carried out their public demands for change without reference to al-Qaida's (AQ's) incendiary world view, these events upended the group's longstanding claims that change would only come to the region through violence. At the same time, the political turmoil distracted security officials and led to the possibility that terrorist groups would exploit the new openness and find it easier to carry out conspiracies – a possibility with significant, worrisome implications for states undergoing democratic transitions. But should the revolts result in democratically-elected, non-autocratic governments, AQ's single-minded focus on terrorism as an instrument of political change could be severely delegitimized. This is a moment of great possibility for American policy.

That is the long-term hope, and we will work hard to realize it. Before we discuss that effort, let me just review some key aspects of the current threat landscape. I will start in South Asia, home to the group behind the September 11 attacks.

Pakistan, particularly the Federally Administered Tribal Areas region and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, continues to be used as a base for terrorist organizations operating in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and Pakistani security forces have undertaken efforts to counter these threats. While Pakistan has made progress on the counterterrorism front, specifically against Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the challenge remains to make these gains durable and sustainable. To this end, Pakistan must sustain its efforts to deny AQ safe haven in the tribal areas of western Pakistan. We continue to press Pakistan for increased action against Lashkar-e Tayyiba and terrorist groups that undermine the security of Pakistan, the region, and beyond.

Though the AQ core has become weaker, it retains the capability to conduct regional and transnational attacks. In addition, the affiliates have grown stronger. Indeed, over the last two years we've seen the AQ threat become more distributed and geographically diversified -- in Yemen, East Africa, and the Sahel, for example.

Terrorist violence from al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has been directed inside and outside of Yemen, threatening the security and well-being of the Yemeni people, the broader Arabian Peninsula, and the United States. Yemen also faces an array of other challenges, including a fractured political system that many Yemenis no longer trust, as shown by the increasing number of protests calling for change from the entire political establishment.

In recent months al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) has adapted to changing conditions, diminished capacity, and dismantled leadership to continue to carry out large-scale and coordinated attacks against government officials, security forces, and even civilians inside Iraq. AQI is believed to be responsible for the late March attack on the Salah Ad-Din Provincial Council (PC) Headquarters in central Iraq that resulted in the killing of 15 hostages execution style and up to 30 additional fatalities, including the three PC members and a local journalist. Iraqi CT efforts have improved since September and Iraqi security forces are leading successful operations and targeting AQI, which will prove critical as US military forces draw down over the next few months.

The situation in Somalia also remains deeply concerning. Al-Shabaab has conducted frequent attacks on government, military, and civilian targets inside Somalia, and the group's leadership remains actively interested in attacking regional U.S. and Western interests. Last July we saw al-Shabaab demonstrate its ability and intent to carry out attacks outside of Somalia when it claimed responsibility for twin suicide bombings that killed 76 people in Kampala, Uganda, during the World Cup.

Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is another threat. No group has made a bigger name for itself in the kidnapping-for-ransom business than AQIM, which relies on ransom payments to sustain and develop itself in the harsh Saharan environment. AQIM also conducts small scale ambushes and attacks on security forces in Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Regional efforts to contain and marginalize AQIM continue, as do our military and law enforcement capacity building efforts.

We could discuss any number of other trouble spots, in Southeast Asia, Western Europe, the Levant, and elsewhere. However, for the purposes of discussing policy developments that will help us with all of these, I would like to turn to the three pillars of our effort to take counterterrorism to a strategic level and to be genuinely comprehensive in our approach. These pillars are reducing recruitment, building partner capacity, and multilateral engagement.

Reducing Recruitment/Countering Violent Extremism

The Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) work of S/CT focuses on three main lines of effort that will reduce terrorist recruitment: delegitimizing the violent extremist narrative in order to diminish its "pull"; developing positive alternatives for youth vulnerable to radicalization to diminish the "push" effect of grievances and unmet expectations; and building partner capacity to carry out these activities. Key intents of CVE programming are to diminish the drivers of radicalization and demonstrably reduce the effectiveness of terrorist propaganda, thus leading to lowered numbers in recruitment.

To counter AQ propaganda, we helped stand up the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communication (CSCC), under the Bureau of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, to push back against AQ's online and media activities. The CSCC, working with the interagency, focuses not only on the violent actions and human costs of terrorism, but also on positive narratives that can help dissuade those who may be susceptible to radicalization and recruitment by terrorist

organizations. One emphasis of the CSCC's work has been re-orienting the Digital Outreach Team to place greater emphasis on challenging the purveyors of extremist messages online, in Arabic and Urdu. This has included producing original video content.

Successful CVE involves more than messaging, however, and we are working with the interagency to develop programs that address the upstream factors of radicalization in communities particularly susceptible to terrorist recruitment overseas. Efforts include providing alternatives for at-risk youth, encouraging the use of social media to generate local initiatives, and enhancing the resilience of communities to counter extremism.

Research has shown that radicalization is often driven by factors at the local level. To be effective, CVE work needs to be driven by local needs, informed by local knowledge, and responsive to the immediate concerns of the community. CVE interventions will be highly focused and short-term and will be developed in cooperation with USAID and others in the interagency as well as with international partners. CVE programs will address the drivers of radicalism through stabilization and remediation projects along with efforts to supplant radicalizing institutions and voices. Micro-strategies customized for specific communities – and even neighborhoods – owned and implemented by local civil society or government partners have a better chance of succeeding and enduring.

Another central part of the bureau's CVE effort is strengthening our partners' capacity and engagement in CVE work, propagating best practices, and building an international consensus behind the effort to delegitimize extremists and their ideologies. Ultimately, host governments are best positioned to execute truly sustainable CVE efforts. For several years now we have supported host government local law enforcement efforts overseas to engage youth through police-led sports programs and have worked with Morocco and Indonesia to counter the spread of violent extremist ideologies in prisons.

S/CT's own programmatic resources are modest. To date, our CVE programming has been limited to the Ambassador's Fund for Counterterrorism, a mechanism that delivers small grant funding to embassies that present solid proposals to counter violent extremism at the local level. A summary of activities funded since inception in FY-2008, as well as FY-2010 approved-but-not-funded intentions, can be provided.

Capacity Building

One of the central challenges to our security is that weak states serve as breeding grounds for terrorism and instability. When those states recognize that these gaps exist, we can help with specific capacity building programs. We need to build effective law enforcement capacity, fair and impartial justice and the rule of law, good governance in many places that have never known this. Multiple U.S. government agencies are mobilized in this effort: Justice, FBI, Treasury, USAID, and the Department of Homeland Security.

Let me provide a couple of examples. We believe that the current protracted political standoff is having an adverse impact on the security situation in Yemen which is likely to deteriorate even more rapidly until President Saleh is able to resolve the current political impasse by announcing how and when he will follow through on his commitments. But our shared interest with the Yemeni government in fighting terrorism, particularly defeating AQAP, does not rely solely on one individual. Given the interlinked nature of Yemen's challenges, and the implications for U.S. interests, we adopted a comprehensive and sustained approach taking into account political, cultural, socio-economic, and security factors. Our strategy has two main prongs – helping the government confront the immediate security threat from AQAP, and mitigating the serious political, economic, and governance issues that the country faces over the long term. To help meet immediate security concerns, we have provided training and equipment to particular units of the Yemeni security forces with counterterrorist and border control responsibilities. Our counterterrorism efforts have been affected by the political unrest as the Yemeni government is focused on maintaining internal security.

In the Sahel region, where al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb has shown a troubling resilience and an ability to raise substantial resources by kidnapping for ransom, we have an extensive multinational capacity building-program, the Trans- Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, which will run until at least 2013. The overall goals are to enhance the indigenous capacities of governments in the pan-Sahel (Mauritania, Mali, Chad, and Niger, as well as Nigeria, Senegal, and Burkina Faso); to confront the challenges posed by terrorist organizations in the trans-Sahara; and to facilitate cooperation between those countries and U.S. partners in the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia).

The Antiterrorism Assistance Program

One of our most effective capacity building programs is the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) Program, the primary provider of U.S. government antiterrorism training and equipment to law enforcement agencies of partner nations. Last year, in Fiscal Year 2010, $215 million in Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related programs (NADR) funds supported approximately 350 ATA courses, workshops, and technical consultations that trained almost 7000 participants from 64 countries. In FY 2010, the ATA Program also completed 23 capabilities assessments and program review visits. These on-site assessments looked at critical counterterrorism capabilities and served as a basis for Country Assistance Plans and the evaluation of subsequent progress.

In FY 2011 and FY 2012, the number of active partner countries is decreasing to about 55 in an effort to ensure we are strategically focusing our resources on building partner CT capacity in the right places. While one of the goals of the program is certainly to build relationships with partner nation law enforcement, my role is to ensure that the right countries are in the program, and that the ATA program is most active where there is a nexus of CT threats, U.S. interests, and partners' political will to address shared CT concerns with CT training. The ATA program is most effective where countries have a combination of political will and basic law enforcement skills to be most receptive to the advanced training ATA provides. This relatively successful formula has been especially evident in Indonesia, Colombia, Turkey, and parts of North Africa. Through an emphasis on train-the-trainer courses, we are working with partner nations toward the goal of institutionalization and self-sustainment of capacities. We also are moving toward giving advising and mentoring an importance similar to training and equipping. Finally, we ensure that our programs are based on long-term strategic country and regional plans, integrated with other providers of security sector assistance at the State Department and in the interagency.

Multilateral Engagement

Building new and strengthening existing partnerships is a cornerstone of this Administration's counterterrorism policy. The United States cannot address the threat alone and the UN and other multilateral bodies have resources and expertise that we need to do a better job of leveraging.

With our funding support and guidance, we are getting the UN and regional bodies to focus on practical projects that target critical issues and countries. For example, the UN is bringing together national practitioners from key countries to share experiences and identify best practices in the prosecution and rehabilitation of terrorists. It is also about to embark on a two-year project that will provide much needed counterterrorism training to judges, prosecutors, and parliamentarians in Yemen.

S/CT has been working to develop a new multilateral counterterrorism initiative, which we believe would not only be an important step forward but would address a significant gap in the international counterterrorism architecture: the lack of a central, reliable inter-governmental platform that allows policymakers and practitioners from different regions to engage on a sustained basis on various counterterrorism issues. I would be happy to brief you further, in private, on this important initiative which has strong support from both the White House and Secretary Clinton.

All of this work goes on in the context of vigorous diplomatic engagement. We have formal bilateral counterterrorism consultations with numerous countries. Among them are Australia, Canada, China, Israel, Egypt, Japan, Pakistan, Algeria, Russia, and India; these consultations have strengthened our counterterrorism partnerships so we can complement one another's efforts in pursuit of a comprehensive approach to our common challenges. And, for example, within the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, I co-chair a working group on law enforcement and counterterrorism efforts that is working on issues ranging from prosecutorial training to border security. In addition, we regularly consult with a broader range of countries to help build their political will and capacity to take effective action against terrorists.

While AQ and its affiliates are our highest priority in our diplomatic engagement on terrorism-related issues, Hamas and Hizballah remain a major focus as well. Both are capable and dangerous terrorist organizations that continue to play destabilizing roles in the Middle East. Both are aggressively building their stockpile of weapons and these organizations are increasing their lethal capabilities, which pose a serious threat to broader regional stability. In our bilateral engagement, we regularly press countries to take action on any Hamas and Hizballah presence and activities taking place in their country. Given that Hamas and Hizballah operate well beyond Gaza and Lebanon, respectively, we have many opportunities to raise these issues. In some cases, we have publicly called out countries for the support they are providing, as we did last year with Syria when

we discovered that they were facilitating the transfer of SCUD missiles to Hizballah. More often we do so quietly through bilateral channels, as we have over the past year with our European allies, whom we have been pressing to crack down on Hamas fundraising, since Europe remains an important source of funds for the group. We've asked the Europeans to take action, particularly against Hamas fundraising fronts, at both the EU and member state level. We plan to remain focused on this issue, and will continue to encourage the Europeans to take action.

Before I conclude, I'd like to briefly touch on two other important aspects of S/CT's work:

Designations and Terrorist Financing

A Bureau on Counterterrorism would strengthen both the Department's formulation of USG policy on terrorist financing and its efforts to build foreign governments' counterterrorism finance capacity. Among the instruments the U.S. government wields for increasing the pressure on terrorist groups and individuals are the designations of Foreign Terrorist Organizations and the designation of entities and individuals as Specially Designated global terrorists under E.O. 13224. We have the lead role within the Department in both initiating these actions and working with the UN Security Council to add relevant domestic designations to the 1267 Committee's Consolidated List. The Bureau would continue to certify countries as not fully cooperating with U.S. antiterrorism efforts and also facilitate the listing of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

Coordinating with the Department of Homeland Security

As the effort to secure the homeland from external terrorist threats has become a central part of U.S. foreign policy, the need for coordination between relevant agencies has become a critical challenge to maintaining a unitary foreign policy. The new Counterterrorism Bureau would serve as the counterterrorism/homeland security nexus within the State Department and would lead homeland security policy coordination on cross-cutting issues for State. For example, the Bureau would continue to lead the State Department's close partnership with DHS to develop new screening practices for international air cargo and mail, which involves extensive consultations with the Universal Postal Union, the International Civil Aviation Organization, and our allies overseas. In addition, the Bureau would continue to play a key role within the U.S. government on air passenger security screening procedures. This supports USG efforts to ensure that the public can travel in safety while also promoting the free flow of international commerce and mail. The new Bureau would continue the State Department's lead in

negotiating agreements with foreign governments on the exchange of terrorist screening information to enhance the ability to interdict terrorists.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the threat is formidable but we are making some progress. I firmly believe that countering violent extremism, multilateral engagement, and building local capacity – through our various programs and with our Department and interagency partners – provide us with the tools to make lasting progress in our fight against terrorism. We are requesting your support to make sure that these tools are fully funded at the level requested, especially for building capacity and countering violent extremism. Al-Qa'ida has proven itself a nimble adversary, and in the race to protect the United States and to stay "one step ahead" we should ensure that the tools of civilian power continue to serve National Security interests. This is an enduring challenge. Staying sharp, improving our offense, strengthening our defense and maintaining our intellectual edge – these are all essential. I believe that we are on the right track.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you. Thank you very much, Ambassador. Let me ask you a couple of questions, if I could, and then we will go to Mr. Sherman for his questioning.

Your congressional budget justification mentions that your antiterrorism assistance programs underwent 23 assessments last year. Is the Department willing to share those evaluations with Congress? Could we take a look at those reports? We would like a better sense of the effectiveness of the programs, and this will give us an opportunity to go through the 23 assessments that were done.

Mr. BENJAMIN. Quite frankly, Chairman, I am not sure about the legal status of those documents or their classification and the like, but we will take that back and get you an answer.

Mr. ROYCE. You have got about 100 personnel right now. Would you anticipate that changing in terms of the upgrading of the status of the bureau?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Mr. Chairman, the important thing about the change to a bureau is that it will, I think, ratify and rationalize what we are doing already. And while we would expect perhaps marginal changes in personnel, we do not expect any major changes; any significant ones.

Mr. ROYCE. I see. Thank you. Let me ask another question. The Christmas Day bomber, as he is called, was in a situation where his father warned us about his thoughts. I believe that a State Department official had in fact classified him as a P3B, which is possibly inadmissible on terrorism grounds. Despite that classification, he got a visa.

Even though we obviously dodged a bullet on his attempt that day, I assume the administration did a thorough post-mortem on this. I was going to ask if your office was involved in that and what changes have been made should a situation like this arise again where a family member says that this individual is designated as possibly inadmissible on terrorism grounds, will he get that visa?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Mr. Chairman, it is an excellent question. We are now in an era where our enemies are looking for people who have very limited derogatory information on them so that they can more effectively target us. This was obviously a very potent wake-up call and my office was integrally involved in the work in the interagency to ensure that we are protected against this tactic by the terrorists.

We have issued new instructions to consular officers worldwide to use much more technically sophisticated search tools, advanced algorithms when researching watch-list nominations. We have now a much better system for informing the interagency about visa revocation processes. And we are working closely with the Terrorist Screening Center.

We have done a lot to reevaluate the criteria upon which individuals are watch-listed and to ensure, for example, that the kind of information that you mentioned is mainstreamed into the pool of information that relates to potential watch listing much more efficiently and in a reliable manner.

So we have taken a lot of different steps to do this. There have been a number of after-action reports that we would be happy to supply you with.

Mr. ROYCE. I appreciate that.

Mr. BENJAMIN. It has been a comprehensive effort.

Mr. ROYCE. I think we can follow up. I appreciate that opportunity.

Let me ask you another question. It has to do with al-Shabaab, which has been really moving and evolving its capabilities. The group has attracted, oddly enough, a number of Somali-Americans who have lived in communities in this country and have gone to the Horn of Africa. Now there are reports about al-Shabaab exploiting our own southern border. Last year, Texas law enforcement was ordered to be on the lookout for a member of al-Shabaab. Recently, Ahmed Muhammed Dhakane appeared in Federal court, where he has been accused of attempting to smuggle several East Africans with terror links into this country.

I mentioned my concern about Mexico in my opening statement about the nature of the situation on the border today. How are groups like al-Shabaab exploiting the controls the cartels have along that border to their advantage?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Mr. Chairman, of course, border security is a primary national security concern. The State Department, together with the Department of Homeland Security, law enforcement and the like, are looking very closely to ensure that we have the best possible border security. I am aware of the reports that you are discussing regarding attempted Somali infiltration, or I should say al-Shabaab infiltration. I would say we are much more alert on the Southern border than we have hitherto been. I think if you want to know about the very specific things that are being done on the border, the questions are appropriately handled by DHS, which is responsible for that. But we are, certainly in the counterterrorism community, very much aware of the danger there.

I would point out that we have seen a lot of violence in Mexico, and the law enforcement situation is a matter of concern. We, of course, are very supportive of what President Calderon has been doing to try to diminish the support. To this point we have not seen a significant linkup between the drug cartels and terrorist groups themselves. But, of course, there are human smuggling groups that make this a worrisome situation.

Mr. ROYCE. I am aware of individuals, one in particular in a Federal penitentiary, who was in fact part of a terrorist group and made a payoff and got into the U.S. over the border after illegally obtaining a visa to travel to Mexico. He then payed to have himself smuggled in and then managed to find his confederates or his cell group in the United States. He is now serving time along with the other members of that cell group. In fact, the border has been breached. And this latest reporting on al-Shabaab members, especially the fact that our law enforcement on the border has been told to be on the lookout for these individuals who have already made the trek is disconcerting.

I am going to go to Mr. Sherman for his questioning.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have all seen the gruesome pictures of what the Afghan Taliban has done to Afghan girls, to aid workers. Why is the Afghan Taliban not on the terrorist list?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Ranking Member Sherman, the Afghan Taliban is in fact listed under Executive Order 13–224.

Mr. SHERMAN. I mean the terrorist list that you maintain.

Mr. BENJAMIN. At the moment, there is a desire in the administration not to up-end President Karzai's reconciliation efforts by making it more difficult through a designation of the Taliban.

Mr. SHERMAN. So when we find the terrorists not too objectionable—I mean, is this a principled list? The Afghan Taliban is certainly responsible for lots of terrorism. And yet you don't put them on the list that you maintain, not because they don't have lots of blood on their hands but because you hope to kiss and make up in the future.

By that standard, since every terrorist group we hope redeems itself and renounces terrorism and does business with us, you would think that you would cancel all listings. You are not going to claim here that the Afghan Taliban doesn't have a lot more blood on its hands than some of the other groups that are listed. And when I say blood, I mean innocent blood through terrorist actions.

Now, let's move on to the MeK. Your predecessor, Ambassador Dell Dailey, recommended that the MeK be removed from the list. Of course, he is not aware of information that has come out since 2008. But I arranged for this subcommittee to have a classified briefing. Your office was represented there but didn't speak. And none of the information presented at that classified briefing indicates that your decision to keep the MeK on the list is justified by information revealed to Congress but not available to Ambassador Dell Dailey.

Is there secret information that neither Ambassador Dailey nor the members of this subcommittee are apprised of that justify keeping the MeK on the list?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Well, first of all, listings have a certain amount of judgment involved in them. Secretary Rice, who was Ambassador Dailey's boss, disagreed with him, and that was why she agreed to the listing.

Mr. SHERMAN. We already know that these are inherently political listings. North Korea is not on the list. The Afghan Taliban isn't on the list. It is whoever. But let me move on.

The State Department has so far not completed the expedited review ordered by the court last summer. When will this committee be informed of your findings?

Mr. BENJAMIN. You will be informed as soon as a decision is made.

Mr. SHERMAN. When are you going to get the work done that the court directed you to get done quickly?

Mr. BENJAMIN. In fact, we have just received new information from the MeK last week, and we are declassifying information to provide it to MeK counsel. So we are working as expeditiously as we can.

Mr. SHERMAN. So it can take additional years?

Mr. BENJAMIN. I don't have a timeline, sir.

Mr. SHERMAN. Since you are the only State Department official ordered by the court to get your work done, I would hope that you could do that.

I mentioned Mr. al-Hasidi, al-Qaeda terrorist and commander within the Libyan rebel forces. What steps has the State Department taken to demand that this gentleman be turned over to the United States or at least that best efforts be used to accomplish that goal or to take action against any of the other terrorists who are amongst the rebel forces?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Mr. Sherman, the TNC has on a number of occasions, including in a public statement on March 30, announced its revulsion for terrorism and that it would not accept terrorists in its rank.

Mr. SHERMAN. They are in the ranks. You can wave a press release in the air and say, look, the folks that are working with terrorists say that they are not working with terrorists. Next you will be telling me that you would like a press release from the Afghan Taliban. Other than self-serving press releases, again, what actions have we taken with regard to al-Hasidi and the other al-Qaeda terrorists amongst the rebels, other than read with joy these self-serving press releases?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Sir, I suggest that self-serving press releases may not be any less reliable than self-serving news stories. We don't in fact know that much about Mr. al-Hasidi's involvement based on our own information. As a former journalist, I can tell you that there are many differing kinds of information that make their way into print.

Mr. SHERMAN. So it is your belief that there just aren't any terrorists operating in eastern Libya or at least no reliable information, and even the people who claim to be terrorists shouldn't be classified as terrorists.

Let's talk about the IHH out of Turkey. This is a group that has supported Hamas, in violation of U.S. law. Has the United States expressed to the Turkish Government our opposition to any future flotilla, given the reality that Israel and Egypt have both established channels through which humanitarian assistance can be delivered to Gaza. Given the IHH's support for a U.S.-designated terrorist group, why has the IHH not been sanctioned by the United States and designated a foreign terrorist organization?

Mr. BENJAMIN. On the first question, I can assure you that those messages have been sent loud and clear, including by me personally but by many other interlocutors. On the second issue, we do not comment on prospective designations. We are looking at the IHH very closely.

Mr. SHERMAN. You don't comment in public or you don't comment to Congress, private or public?

Mr. BENJAMIN. We do not comment at all.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you for involving this subcommittee in your work. But I think that the Constitution calls for consultation. I realize that I haven't given you as long to answer each question as you would have liked. I invite you to provide longer answers for the record, and regret that the amount of time allocated is not as great as my interest in the subject. And I yield back.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Sherman. Why don't we go to Congresswoman Jackson Lee. I am pleased to welcome the Congresswoman today and would like to ask unanimous consent to allow her to ask a question. She is a nonmember of this subcommittee,

but we are always pleased with her attendance. Your questions, please.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank the chairman and the ranking member of this very, very important committee, and let me welcome the witness. We are near voting so let me try to be quick and acknowledge a number of individuals in the audience. They can acknowledge themselves. I know that the chairman has already established a protocol.

I am appalled at what happened at Camp Ashraf with the allegations of murder and attack. My first question is: The U.S. military has completed an assessment of the carnage inflicted on the residents of Camp Ashraf. We understand that it is being either shared with the Iraqi Government but not shared with the public. When will it be shared? And if not, why? I am making a public request for that report to be made public.

And let me, just before you answer a question, there are a number of women on this poster. But it is a shame this young lady that is only 28 was killed. This young lady that is only 19 was killed. I am just really disturbed with what seems to be our Government's complacency with what is going on.

If you could just answer that very quickly because my time is short, and I agree with the ranking member, we wish we could give you longer time.

Mr. BENJAMIN. Of course, we all deplore the bloodshed, and there is nothing the United States has done that in any way condones or to my mind opens the way toward this bloodshed. The report that you are referring to, I think that we need to be clear. The U.S. military went in on a humanitarian mission. It has not filed any kind of evaluation or any report. U.N. Authorities have gone in. They have compiled a report. They have returned to Baghdad. We have not seen the report yet.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Can I make an official request that if our Government does any report, that they will make that public. Secondarily, I think it is important for our Government to ask that the United Nation's report be made public. Would you convey that message or would you make that request?

Mr. BENJAMIN. We will make that request.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. The human rights violations, I think, is most glaring, particularly with Iran in the backdrop. Can I find out why the Iraqi Government—I know the history; I am not trying to suggest there is not history—but why the continued human rights violation. People have died of various diseases. They couldn't get to hospitals. I want to make sure that I ask that question.

And then the fact that we lost 34 individuals living in Camp Ashraf who fled because of persecution; 34 in essence were murdered by individuals that we now fund and seek a peaceful democracy in Iraq. Why are we continuing to support those who would intrude into that camp and generate this loss of life?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Ma'am, I fully understand your concern and we in the U.S. Government are also eager to get to the bottom of what happened. But I have to tell you that we simply do not know the facts of what happened. And that is what we are waiting to hear from the U.N. And from other investigators. The government in

Baghdad has committed itself to a full and fair investigation, and we are pushing them to do so.

Mr. SHERMAN. Will the gentlelady yield?

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Yes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Yes. I think the Iraqi Government has been clear; they killed people at Camp Ashraf to make Tehran happy. And they knew they could get away with it because the MeK is still on the U.S. list. And the U.S. would not interfere. And our keeping them on the list gives the political cover. That is why there are 34 people dead in Camp Ashraf.

I yield back.

Mr. ROYCE. I remind the members we have 3 minutes left until the hammer comes down on the vote.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me just finish on this. The chairman is right on the vote. The ranking member is right. My plea is to take them off of the list, but to stand up and be heard on the violence and the killing, and the Iraqi Government cannot get one more dime from me and this government if they don't stop this kind of violence.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you.

Mr. Ambassador, thank you. We have got votes. We have got several issues to follow up with your office on. We will be giving close consideration to your office's status. We thank you for your testimony here today.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:50 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade
Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman

April 5, 2011

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building:

DATE: Thursday, April 14, 2011

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

SUBJECT: The State Department's Counterterrorism Office: Budget, Reorganization, Policies

WITNESSES: **Panel I**

The Honorable Daniel Benjamin
Ambassador-at-Large
Coordinator for Counterterrorism
U.S. Department of State

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade HEARING

Day Thursday Date April 14, 2011 Room 2172

Starting Time 2:05 pm Ending Time 2:55 pm

Recesses [ ] (____to____) (____to____) (____to____) (____to____) (____to____) (____to____)

Presiding Member(s)

Rep. Royce

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]

Electronically Recorded (taped) [ ]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

The State Department's Counterterrorism Office: Budget, Reorganization, Policies

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Royce, Sherman, Poe, Higgins, Burton, Cicilline

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

* Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] No [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Rep. Gerry Connolly

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED _____

Subcommittee Staff Director

Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade Subcommittee

Member Attendance

Republicans

☑ Rep. Edward Royce (Chair)

☑ Rep. Ted Poe

☐ Rep. Jeff Duncan

☐ Rep. Bill Johnson

☐ Rep. Tim Griffin

☑ Rep. Ann Marie Buerkle

☐ Rep. Renee Ellmers

Democrats

☑ Rep. Brad Sherman (Ranking Member)

☑ Rep. David Cicilline

☐ Rep. Gerry Connolly

☑ Rep. Brian Higgins

☐ Rep. Allyson Schwartz

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11)

TNT Subcommittee Hearing—The State Department's Counterterrorism Office: Budget, Reorganization, Policies
Thursday, April 14, 2011
2:00 pm

Ambassador Benjamin, thank you for appearing before this Committee today to discuss the FY 2012 budget request for the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism—the office charged with leading the U.S. Government Counterterrorism Team. The office aims "to develop and lead a worldwide effort to combat terrorism using all the instruments of statecraft." A thorough assessment of the CT office's mission and its programs bolsters the case that the CT office is a vital part of our national security.

With the myriad national agencies and teams dedicated to fighting terrorism, it makes sense for a team within the State Department to coordinate all these efforts. Some of the teams involved in the U.S. Government Counterterrorism Team include representatives from: The White House, the State Department, the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and USAID. With all the offices that work with in concert with the counterterrorism office, it would be imprudent to slash funding when unrest continues to reverberate throughout the world.

There are several initiatives outlined in the office's FY 2012 budget request that deserve mention. For example, the TIP/PISCES[1] initiative is a biometric tracking system that will use FY 2012 funds "to provide significant biometric software and hardware enhancements that will assist 17 partner nations" in tracking individuals entering and exiting their borders by air, land, and sea. In FY 2009 one nation reported that over eight months the system resulted in the detention of 145 persons with outstanding arrest warrants, and 101 travelers using counterfeit travel documents.

Another notable program is the Counterterrorism Financing (CTF) program, which targets terrorists' financial networks. Currently, the program focuses on more than 30 countries; in FY 2012, CT aims to fund additional positions for Regional Legal Advisors (RLAs)—U.S. attorneys who specialize in terrorist financing—to provide legal support to countries which target terrorists' finances.

When evaluating U.S. national security, observers often lament that information is compartmentalized and there is not enough coordination among various government entities. Sitting before the subcommittee today is a gentleman who is the head of an office that aims to resolve the lack of coordination. Given the mission of the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, I don't see how one could justify slashing the budget for such a key office.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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[1] Stands for: Terrorist Interdiction Program/ Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System.

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