

# Combating Terrorism: Department of State Programs to Combat Terrorism Abroad

## Introduction

*Eds. Note: This material originally appeared as an introductory letter to the report directed to the heads of the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on International Relations and Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs, and International Relations.*

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, efforts to combat terrorism have become an increasingly important part of U.S. government activities. Such efforts have also become more important in U.S. relations with other countries and with international organizations, such as the United Nations (U.N.). The U.S. Department of State is charged with coordinating these international efforts and protecting Americans abroad; its objective is to reduce the number of terrorist attacks, especially those on U.S. citizens and interests. While countering terrorism has always been a part of State's role, it took on heightened significance in the aftermath of the 1998 al Qaeda terrorist attacks on the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. Since the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., State has helped direct the U.S. efforts to combat terrorism abroad by building the global coalition against terrorism, including providing diplomatic support for military operations in Afghanistan and other countries. State has also supported international law enforcement efforts to identify, arrest, and bring terrorists to justice, as well as performing other activities intended to reduce the number of terrorist attacks.

This report is intended to assist your committees in overseeing the State Department's leadership of U.S. programs to combat terrorism abroad. Specifically, this report identifies the State Department's programs and activities intended to (1) prevent terrorist attacks, (2) disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations, (3) respond to terrorist incidents, and (4) coordinate efforts to combat terrorism. Footnotes to this report identify programs and activities managed by the U.S. Agency for International Development that complement the State Department's efforts to combat terrorism abroad. This report is part of a larger effort that you jointly requested to review governmentwide programs to combat terrorism overseas. Regarding some of these programs, it is important to recognize that the State Department works in conjunction with a number of

other federal agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Justice, and the Treasury, as well as the Central Intelligence Agency. As agreed with your staff, we plan to report later this year on governmentwide efforts to combat terrorism overseas.

We identified the State Department's programs and activities for combating terrorism by reviewing State documents, such as *Congressional Presentation Document, FY 2003* and *Patterns of Global Terrorism*,<sup>1</sup> and by conducting interviews with State officials. To identify programs and activities provided by other departments and coordinated through State, we reviewed documents and interviewed officials from the Departments of Defense, Justice, and the Treasury; the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other law enforcement agencies; and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In addition, we conducted fieldwork at the U.S. Embassy in Athens, Greece, to observe programs and activities to combat terrorism overseas. At selected regional and functional military commands, we met with State Department Political Advisors at the U.S. Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida; the U.S. Southern Command in Miami, Florida; and the U.S. European Command in Stuttgart-Vaihingen, Germany. In addition, we conducted fieldwork at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Budapest, Hungary, to review programs to combat terrorism that the State Department manages or funds or both. We did not evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. We conducted our review from February 2002 through July 2002 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

## Results in Brief

The State Department conducts multifaceted activities in its effort to prevent terrorist attacks on Americans abroad. For example, to protect U.S. officials, property, and information abroad, State operates programs that include local guards for U.S. missions, armored vehicles for embassy personnel, U.S. Marine security guards to protect sensitive information, and plans to evacuate Americans in emergencies. For Americans traveling and living abroad, State issues public travel warnings and operates warning systems to convey terrorism-

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Presentation Document, FY 2003* (Washington, D.C.: May 2002).

**Table 1** State Department Funding to Combat Terrorism Abroad (*dollars in millions*)

	Fiscal year 2001 (actual)	Fiscal year 2002 (enacted)	Emergency Relief Fund	Fiscal year 2003 President's budget
Bureau of Administration	\$ 50	\$ 37	\$ 0	\$ 123
Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations	1,035	1,159	105	1,286
Bureau of Consular Affairs	409	465	0	643
Bureau of Diplomatic Security	105	115	48	228.
Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism	35	41	50	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,634</b>	<b>\$1,817</b>	<b>\$203</b>	<b>\$2,349</b>

Sources: Office of Management and Budget and the Department of State (Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism).

related information. For U.S. businesses and universities operating overseas, State uses the Overseas Security Advisory Councils—voluntary partnerships between the State Department and the U.S. private sector—to exchange threat information. To improve the ability of foreign governments to combat terrorism, State funds several training programs that operate both in the United States and overseas.

To disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations abroad, State has numerous programs and activities that rely on military, multilateral, economic, law enforcement, intelligence, and other capabilities. For example, State's program to enhance military cooperation has resulted in 136 countries' offering a range of military assistance for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> State has supported efforts, through international organizations like the United Nations, for the global implementation of resolutions and treaties aimed at reducing terrorism. In addition, State uses extradition treaties to bring terrorists to trial in the United States and cooperates with foreign intelligence, security, and law enforcement entities to track and capture terrorists in foreign countries. If the United States has no extradition agreements with a country, then State, with the Department of Justice, can work to obtain the arrest of suspected terrorists overseas through renditions. It also provides rewards for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of designated terrorists or the thwarting of terrorist attacks.

The State Department leads the U.S. response to terrorist incidents abroad. This includes diplomatic measures to protect Americans, minimize damage, terminate terrorist attacks, and bring terrorists to justice. Once an attack has occurred, State's activities include measures to alleviate damage, protect public health, and provide emergency assistance. State also coordinates interagency exercises for combating terrorism abroad. In addition, State helps foreign governments prepare to respond to an attack by conducting multinational training exercises.

To coordinate the U.S. effort to combat terrorism interna-

tionally, State uses a variety of mechanisms to work with the Departments of Defense, Justice, and the Treasury; the intelligence agencies; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and others. These mechanisms include interagency working groups at the headquarters level in Washington, D.C.; emergency action committees at U.S. missions overseas; and liaison exchanges with other government agencies.

## Background

According to the State Department's 2002 *Annual Performance Plan*, the department's counterterrorism goals are to reduce the number of terrorist attacks, bring terrorists to justice, reduce or eliminate state-sponsored terrorist acts, delegitimize the use of terror as a political tool, enhance the U.S. response to terrorism overseas, and strengthen international cooperation and operational capabilities to combat terrorism.

The Secretary of State is responsible for coordinating all U.S. civilian departments and agencies that provide counterterrorism assistance overseas. The Secretary also is responsible for managing all U.S. bilateral and multilateral relationships intended to combat terrorism abroad.

State requested over \$2.3 billion to combat terrorism in fiscal year 2003. This includes more than \$1 billion for overseas embassy security and construction, as well as for counterterrorism assistance and training to countries cooperating with the global coalition against terrorism. Table 1 provides a breakdown of State's funding to combat terrorism.

By contrast, State spent about \$1.6 billion in fiscal year 2001 and received about \$1.8 billion to combat terrorism in fiscal year 2002. State received an additional \$203 million through the Emergency Response Fund as part of the \$40 billion appropriated by the Congress in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against the United States.

The Office of Management and Budget reported that determining precise funding levels associated with activities to combat terrorism is difficult because departments may not isolate those activities from other program activities. Some activities serve multiple purposes—for example, upgrades to embassy security help protect against terrorism as well as other crimes.

<sup>2</sup> Operation Enduring Freedom is the military campaign that began on October 7, 2001, against al Qaeda and Taliban forces in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

## Programs and Activities to Prevent Terrorism Abroad

The State Department conducts multifaceted activities in an effort to prevent terrorist attacks on Americans abroad. For example, to protect U.S. officials, property, and information abroad, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security provides local guards for embassies and armored vehicles for embassy personnel. In addition, it provides undercover teams to detect terrorist surveillance activities. Following the 1998 embassy bombings in Africa, State upgraded security for all missions, which included strengthening building exteriors, lobby entrances, and the walls and fences at embassy perimeters.<sup>3</sup>

State has several programs to help warn Americans living and traveling abroad against potential threats, including those posed by terrorists. For example, to warn Americans about travel-related dangers, in fiscal year 2001 the Bureau of Consular Affairs issued 64 travel warnings, 134 public announcements, and 189 consular information sheets. In addition, missions employ a “warden system” to warn Americans registered with an embassy of threats against their security. The system varies by mission but uses telephone, E-mail, fax, and other technologies as appropriate. Finally, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security manages the Overseas Security Advisory Councils program. The councils are a voluntary, joint effort between State and the private sector to exchange threat-and security-related information. Councils currently operate in 47 countries.

In addition, State manages and funds programs to train foreign government and law enforcement officials to combat terrorism abroad. These programs include the following:

- the Antiterrorism Assistance Program, implemented by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, to enhance the antiterrorism skills of law enforcement and security personnel in foreign countries;
- the International Law Enforcement Academies, managed by the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, to provide law enforcement training in four locations around the world.<sup>4</sup> The Departments of State, the Treasury, and Justice—including the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and

other U.S. law enforcement agencies—provide the on-site training;

- the Department of Justice’s Overseas Prosecutorial Development and Assistance Training and the International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program. The State Department provides policy oversight and funds this training, which is intended to build rule-of-law institutions, and includes general law enforcement and anticrime training for foreign nationals.<sup>5</sup>

## Programs and Activities to Disrupt and Destroy Terrorist Organizations Abroad

State conducts numerous programs and activities intended to disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations. These programs and activities rely on military, multilateral, economic, law enforcement, and other capacities, as the following examples illustrate:

- The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs coordinates with Department of Defense on military cooperation with other countries. It has been State’s liaison with the coalition supporting Operation Enduring Freedom, processing 72 requests for military assistance from coalition partners since September 11, 2001.
- The Bureau of International Organization Affairs helped craft and adopt United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373, obligating all member nations to fight terrorism and report on their implementation of the resolution. It also assisted with resolutions extending U.N. sanctions on al Qaeda and the Taliban and on certain African regimes, including those whose activities benefit terrorists.
- The Department of State’s Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, and the Economic Bureau work with the Department of the Treasury and other agencies to stem the flow of money and other material support to terrorists. According to the State Department, since September 11, the United States has blocked \$34.3 million in terrorist related assets.
- The Office of the Legal Advisor pursues extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties with foreign governments. The Office of the Legal Advisor also works with the U.N. and with other nations in drafting multilateral agreements, treaties, and conventions on counterterrorism.
- The Bureau of Diplomatic Security, working with the Department of Justice, cooperates with foreign intelligence,

<sup>3</sup> The upgrades also included closed-circuit television monitors, explosive detection devices, walk-through metal detectors, and reinforced walls and security doors to provide protection inside the embassy. In addition, State plans to replace some existing embassies with buildings that meet current security standards, such as having a 100-foot setback from streets surrounding embassies. State also has programs to protect national security information discussed at meetings or stored on computers. These programs include U.S. Marine security guards controlling access to embassies, efforts to prevent foreign intelligence agencies from detecting emanations from computer equipment, and computer security programs.

<sup>4</sup> The academies are located in Budapest, Hungary; Bangkok, Thailand; Gaborone, Botswana; and Roswell, New Mexico.

<sup>5</sup> USAID also supports programs to train foreign law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges and to assist in rewriting legislation and criminal sentencing guidelines. USAID missions and the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance have rule-of-law and governance programs in about 60 of the 85 countries where USAID has a presence.

security, and law enforcement entities to track and capture terrorists in foreign countries, assist in their extradition to the United States, and block attempted terrorist attacks on U.S. citizens and assets abroad.

- The Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, in conjunction with the Department of Justice and other agencies, coordinates State's role in facilitating the arrest of suspected terrorists through an overseas arrest, known as a rendition, when the United States lacks an extradition treaty.
- The Bureau of Diplomatic Security manages the Rewards for Justice Program. This program offers payment for information leading to the prevention of a terrorist attack or the arrest and prosecution of designated individuals involved in international terrorism. These rewards reach up to \$25 million for those involved in the September 11 attacks.
- The Bureau of Intelligence and Research prepares intelligence and threat reports for the Secretary of State, high-level department officials, and ambassadors at U.S. missions. It also monitors governmentwide intelligence activities to ensure their compatibility with U.S. foreign policy objectives related to terrorism, and it seeks to expand the sharing of interagency data on known terrorist suspects.

## Programs and Activities to Respond to Terrorist Incidents Abroad

The State Department is responsible for leading the U.S. response to terrorist incidents abroad. This includes measures to protect Americans, minimize incident damage, terminate terrorist attacks, and bring terrorists to trial. Once an attack has occurred, State's activities include measures to alleviate damage, protect public health, and provide emergency assistance. The Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism facilitates the planning and implementation of the U.S. government response to a terrorist incident overseas. In a given country, the ambassador would act as the on-scene coordinator for the response effort.

In addition, several other bureaus respond to the aftermath of a terrorist attack and help friendly governments prepare to respond to an attack by conducting joint training exercises.

- The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs is tasked with helping to prepare U.S. forces, foreign governments, and international organizations to respond to the consequences of a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear incident overseas. For example, the bureau is developing a database of international assets that could be used to respond to the consequences of a terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction. It also participates in major interagency international exercises, which are led by DOD. In addition, the bureau assisted in the first opera-

tional deployment of a U.S. consequence management task force, working with the DOD regional command responsible for conducting the war in Afghanistan.

- Several bureaus and offices deploy emergency response teams to respond to terrorist attacks. For example, the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism deploys multi-agency specialists in the Foreign Emergency Support Team (FEST) to assist missions in responding to ongoing terrorist attacks. For example, at the request of the Ambassador, the FEST can be dispatched rapidly to the mission. As one component of this team, the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs can deploy a Consequence Management Support Team to assist missions in managing the aftermath of terrorist attacks. In addition, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Emergency Response Team helps secure embassy grounds and restore communications following a crisis.<sup>6</sup>

## Activities to Coordinate U.S. Efforts to Combat Terrorism Abroad

The State Department is responsible for coordinating all federal agencies' efforts to combat terrorism abroad. These include the Departments of Defense, Justice, and the Treasury; the various intelligence agencies; the FBI and other law enforcement agencies; and USAID. In addition, State coordinates U.S. efforts to combat terrorism multilaterally through international organizations and bilaterally with foreign nations. State uses a variety of methods to coordinate its efforts to combat terrorism abroad, including the following:

- In Washington, D.C., State participates in National Security Council interagency working groups, issue-specific working groups, and ad hoc working groups. For example, the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism maintains policy oversight and provides leadership for the interagency Technical Support Working Group—a forum that identifies, prioritizes, and coordinates interagency and international applied research and development needs and requirements to combat terrorism.
- At U.S. embassies, State implements mission performance plans that coordinate embassy activities to combat terrorism, country team subgroups on terrorism, emergency

<sup>6</sup> USAID assists in the aftermath of a terrorist incident through its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). OFDA participates with other U.S. teams, deploying immediately with the Foreign Emergency Support Team. OFDA serves as an Advisor to the U.S. Chief of Mission, helping to coordinate the initial response efforts. Because of its relationships and formal agreements with both U.S. government agencies and nongovernmental organizations, OFDA can provide information on their capacities to assist a host nation in managing the consequences of a terrorist incident. OFDA is currently providing humanitarian assistance in Kabul, Afghanistan, and the United States has reestablished its mission there.

action committees to organize embassy response to terrorist threats and incidents, and ad hoc working groups. For example, selected embassies have country team subgroups dedicated to law enforcement matters, chaired by the Deputy Chief of Mission. Working with related bureaus and agencies such as the Regional Security Office, FBI Legal Attaché, and Treasury Department Financial Attaché, these subgroups coordinate efforts to combat terrorism among the various agencies overseas.

- In Washington, D.C., and elsewhere, State exchanges personnel with other agencies for liaison purposes. In

Washington, D.C., for example, State personnel serve as liaisons at the CIA's Counter-Terrorism Center. The department also provides each U.S. regional military command with a Political Advisor, who helps the respective commanders coordinate with State Department Headquarters and with U.S. embassies on regional and bilateral matters, including efforts to combat terrorism.

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