

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE COUNTERTERRORISM  
BUREAU: FY 2017 BUDGET**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM,  
NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
COUNTERTERRORISM BUREAU:  
FY 2017 BUDGET**

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**TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2016**

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

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:03 p.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ted Poe (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. POE. The subcommittee will come to order.

Without objection, all members may have 5 days to submit statements, questions, and extraneous materials for the record, subject to the length limitation in the rules.

The purpose of this hearing is to examine the budget for the Department of State Counterterrorism Bureau, Fiscal Year 2017. I have a lengthy opening statement, but without objection, I will make it a part of the record and make some brief comments.

The purpose of this is to determine the Counterterrorism Bureau's budget. Terrorism is on the rise throughout the world in different places, especially with ISIS. In any event, the administration has asked for a reduction in the Counterterrorism Bureau budget even though that to me is counterproductive in the sense that terrorism is on the rise.

On the other hand, my concern is about evaluations that have or have not been made by the success of what the Counterterrorism Bureau is doing or not doing. Personally, I am not satisfied that the evaluation of how the money is being spent and what we are doing is working. So the purpose of this hearing is to examine both of those, whether the budget should be cut or raised and whether the evaluations are being produced and what are the results of those evaluations.

Without objection, I will allow now the former ranking member of the committee, Mr. Sherman, to make an opening statement from California. You are recognized.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you. I will use my opening statement to renew the plea I have been making for the State Department for at least 5 years and that is that you employ a few individuals who are hired solely for their knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic history, and Islamic law. To think that we can combat Islamic extremist terrorism without a single person at the State De-

partment who has memorized the Quran means that we don't understand the mental world, the theological world that our potential adversaries live in.

We have a State Department with people who think that you can show the evil of al-Baghdadi if you can show him personally executing a defenseless Yazidi. The fact is they will put that up on their Web page as a recruitment tool. We need people who understand that if you could just get a picture of him eating a ham sandwich, that would undermine ISIS and its recruiting ability.

I remember the conflict between the United States and Indonesia over whether Indonesia would give us samples of avian flu and called an Islamic scholar who said, well, we would turn to the hadith about what the prophet said about rabies, which is, after all, just another virus that infects an animal. That is not the kind of knowledge that you can get at Princeton. Woodrow Wilson did a great job. He did not memorize the Quran.

So we need State Department people to be able to have access onsite to that kind of scholarship and to an understanding of Islamic jurisprudence that is every bit as sophisticated as the knowledge we have on the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and why the Habsburgs took this or that position in the negotiations in 18 whatever when that—we have a Eurocentric body of knowledge in a very smart State Department, and we are going to have to hire just a few people who would never pass the test because it is written by the Woodrow Wilson school and instead could pass the test to demonstrate a real knowledge of Islam.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. POE. I thank the gentleman.

The chair recognizes the ranking member and gentleman from Massachusetts for his opening statement.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for conducting this hearing. I would also like to thank our witness, Mr. Siberell, for being here to discuss the State Department's Counterterrorism Bureau.

In our country's fight against terrorism, one indelible truth has been stated over and over, and it is in order to truly degrade and ultimately defeat foreign terrorists, organizations like ISIS and al-Qaeda, we need a whole government-effort approach. The capacity-building programs funded and coordinated by the State Department's Counterterrorism Bureau are the types of activities in which our Government must continue to engage if we are to be successful in achieving the Bureau's mission of forging partnerships with our partners at home and abroad in counterterrorism law enforcement, counter-threat financing, counter-radicalization efforts, border security, and restricted terrorist travel.

Undoubtedly, the Bureau has worked to accomplish these critical objectives while the State Department has revamped its efforts to tackle one of the hardest aspects of counterterrorism, and that is combating violent extremism.

The new Center for Global Engagement is attempting to effectively coordinate, integrate, and synchronize messaging to foreign audiences that undermines the disinformation espoused by violent extremist groups. To be sure, this is not an easy task, and we will

hear in detail from Mr. Siberell on the challenges facing the Bureau.

I am particularly interested in hearing how leadership has addressed a Government Accountability Office report released last year on resources, performance, and coordination within the Bureau.

Finally, it is vital that we ensure that funds appropriated, the Counterterrorism Bureau for these capacity-building programs are being used wisely, and the United States is getting a good return on its investment.

As I stated at the beginning, the Counterterrorism Bureau plays a critical role in our fight against terrorism, particularly with regards to interagency and regional collaboration. I look forward to hearing from our witness today and to discuss the issues that will ensure.

I yield back.

Mr. POE. I thank the gentleman.

Without objection, the witness' prepared statement will be made part of the record. I ask that the witness keep the presentation to no more than 5 minutes.

I will introduce the witness that we have. Mr. Justin Siberell is the acting coordinator for the Bureau of Counterterrorism at the State Department. He is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and before joining the CT Bureau, he served as a principal officer in Dubai, and he has also worked in Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, and Panama.

So thank you for being here, and you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF MR. JUSTIN SIBERELL, ACTING COORDINATOR FOR COUNTERTERRORISM, BUREAU OF COUNTERTERRORISM, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Mr. SIBERELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Poe, Ranking Member Keating, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

This afternoon, I would like to briefly highlight the Bureau of Counterterrorism's work to advance the foremost counterterrorism priorities of the United States.

As you noted, Mr. Chairman, I have submitted a longer statement for the record.

As you know, the United States faces a fluid and fast-changing terrorism threat environment. The international community has made progress in degrading terrorism safe havens, but terrorist groups, especially ISIL and al-Qaeda, remain resilient.

Recent attacks in Bamako, Beirut, Brussels, Jakarta, and Paris have demonstrated the reach and continued determination of these groups to commit violence against civilians. These and other attacks have raised the urgency and political will of our partners to act against the evolving threat posed by ISIL, al-Qaeda, and their affiliates.

President Obama has called for the United States to develop more effective partnerships around the world to confront, disrupt, and defeat the global threat from terrorism. The Bureau of Counterterrorism is playing a critical role in developing those partnerships.

Success of U.S. counterterrorism efforts increasingly depends upon capable civilian partners, police, prosecutors, border and aviation security personnel, prison officials, and community leaders. As with our own domestic experience, these actors are on the frontlines in preventing and responding to terrorism in their communities.

The Bureau is leading efforts to build capacity and cooperation among these various civilian actors. We appreciate the Congress' appropriation of \$175 million for the Counterterrorism Partnership's Fund in Fiscal Year 2016. We ask for your continued support in Fiscal Year 2017. With these resources we will strengthen the ability of key law enforcement and criminal justice actors from the Sahel to Southeast Asia. We are focusing on supporting countries that can help prevent ISIL's global expansion while not losing sight of al-Qaeda and its affiliates.

We are expanding our engagement with European partners to ensure they enhance capabilities to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, improve information-sharing, and disrupt local terrorist recruitment networks. We believe these efforts are yielding results. Since 2014, 45 countries with which we have engaged have passed new laws or updated existing laws to address foreign terrorist fighters.

Through the Bureau's diplomatic efforts, we now have enhanced information-sharing arrangements with 55 countries to assist efforts to identify, track, and deter the travel of known and suspected terrorists. We have also supported INTERPOL to enhance its ability to share critical foreign terrorist fighter identity data with countries around the world. Fifty-eight countries plus the United Nations now contribute foreign terrorist fighter profiles to INTERPOL.

As part of our Fiscal Year 2017 request, we have also asked for additional funding for our Terrorist Interdiction Program. This program provides a highly valuable capability for countries to strengthen border controls through enhanced technology and training.

Mr. Chairman, as part of our overall strategy, we believe that we must increase our focus on preventing the spread of violent extremism to stop the radicalization, recruitment, and mobilization of people, especially young people, to engage in terrorist activities.

Secretary Kerry has directed the Bureau of Counterterrorism to play the lead role in a more strategic, integrated, and ultimately accountable approach to countering violent extremism. As notified to the Congress, the Department is increasing personnel resources in the Bureau to support this mission and renaming the Bureau as the Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism. We will be working very closely with the newly established interagency Global Engagement Center and USAID in this effort.

The Department has also requested additional resources for CVE programming in Fiscal Year 2017, including as part of the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund to expand programs to help counter violent extremist recruitment and messaging.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, as documented in our statement for the record, we have made changes within the Bureau over the past year to foster a culture of strategic planning, learning, innovation,

and collaboration. We have enhanced the monitoring and evaluation of our foreign assistance programming, especially our largest programs. Since I last testified before this committee, we have launched a comprehensive third-party evaluation of our Antiterrorism Assistance Program. That evaluation will be completed later this month. We have also awarded a new third-party evaluation of our CVE programs. We look forward to briefing you and your staff on the results of these evaluations.

Mr. Chairman, there is much more work to do. The terrorism landscape is dynamic, and we must continue to enhance and adapt our efforts. I am proud of what we are accomplishing at the Bureau of Counterterrorism. We have a talented team of people who are committed to the work of countering terrorism and keeping the country safe.

We greatly appreciate the interest of Congress and your committee in support of these efforts. I look forward to your questions and our discussion. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Siberell follows:]

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**Written Testimony of  
Acting Coordinator for Counterterrorism Justin Siberell  
U.S. Department of State**

**House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee: Terrorism, Nonproliferation & Trade  
Hearing: "Bureau of Counterterrorism's FY 2017 Request"  
May 17, 2016**

Chairman Poe, Ranking Member Keating, and Members of the Subcommittee: thank you for this opportunity to address the Subcommittee on the work of the Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, our ongoing diplomatic efforts to advance the United States' foremost counterterrorism priorities, and the funding we believe is required to advance these goals and keep America safe in the years to come. The work that the Bureau is doing to build the capacity of civilian actors – governmental and non-governmental alike – is increasingly central to defeating the terrorist threats we face.

The United States confronts a fluid and fast-changing terrorist threat environment. The international community has made some progress in degrading terrorist safe havens. In particular, the US.-led coalition to counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, or Da'esh) has made significant strides in reducing ISIL's control of territory in Iraq and Syria, as well as the finances and foreign fighters available to it. At the same time, continued instability in key regions of the world, along with weak or non-existent governance, sectarian conflict and porous borders provide terrorist groups like ISIL the opportunity to extend their reach, terrorize innocent civilians, attract and mobilize new recruits, and threaten partner countries.

In the face of increased military pressure, ISIL, al-Qa'ida, and both groups' branches and adherents have pursued mass-casualty attacks against symbolic targets and public spaces. Attacks in Bamako, Beirut, Brussels, Jakarta, Paris, and elsewhere have heightened political attention around the world and raised both the urgency and political will of our partners to act against the evolving threat posed by these groups. In the case of ISIL, these attacks may also have been staged in an effort to assert a narrative of victory in the face of steady losses of territory in Iraq and Syria.

The United States and our partners around the world face significant new challenges as we seek to contend with the return of foreign terrorist fighters from Iraq and Syria, the risk of terrorist groups exploiting migratory movements, and

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new evolutions in technology that enable terrorist groups to recruit adherents and inspire attacks using publicly-accessible platforms and applications. We will release the annual *Country Reports on Terrorism* later this month, which will describe these and other trends in greater detail.

President Obama has called for the United States to develop more effective partnerships around the world to confront, disrupt, and defeat the global threat from terrorism. As the Bureau charged with leading the Department of State's bilateral and multilateral counterterrorism diplomacy and capacity-building, the Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism is playing a critical role in developing those partnerships. Through our diplomatic engagement, we are working to strengthen and expand counterterrorism cooperation and information-sharing with key countries around the world. We are engaging not just with national government officials, but also increasingly with sub-national government officials and civil society leaders.

The success of U.S. counterterrorism efforts increasingly depends upon capable civilian partners. Police, investigators, and prosecutors are on frontlines of preventing and responding to asymmetric attacks by terrorist groups, especially attacks on so-called soft targets. Border and aviation security officials are working to stop foreign terrorist travelers, transfer of materiel, and terrorist threats. Moreover, local law enforcement, prison officials, and community leaders are on the frontlines in preventing and countering radicalization and recruitment to violence in their communities. The Bureau is leading efforts in these areas to build capacity and cooperation among these civilian actors.

We appreciate Congress' appropriation of \$175 million for the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF) in Fiscal Year 2016. With these and other Bureau resources, we will strengthen the ability of key law enforcement and criminal justice sector actors from the Sahel to Southeast Asia to more effectively disrupt terrorist threats in their countries and address factors that make communities susceptible to violent extremism. Such efforts are critical in supporting existing whole-of-government approaches against ISIL, al-Qa'ida and other groups that threaten American lives and interests. We are also expanding our engagement with European partners to ensure they enhance capabilities to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, improve information sharing, and disrupt local terrorist recruitment networks. We look forward to briefing the Subcommittee regularly as we develop and implement the capacity building initiatives enabled by this increased CTPF funding, and hope for Congress' continued support for CTPF in Fiscal Year 2017, which will enable us to build on the efforts we are

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undertaking this year. For FY 2017, we have also requested additional funding for our Terrorist Interdiction Program (TIP), which provides a highly valuable capability for countries to strengthen border controls, through enhanced technology and training. When terrorists attempt to cross an international border, they open themselves up to risk of apprehension. There is no excuse for governments not enforcing effective border controls – many of our partners are attuned to this challenge and are eager for U.S. advice and engagement to improve their own systems.

As part of our overall strategy, we also believe that we must increase our focus on preventing the spread of violent extremism in the first place – to stop the radicalization, recruitment, and mobilization of people, especially young people, to engage in terrorist activities. Secretary Kerry has directed the Bureau to play the lead role in enhancing and coordinating the Department’s work on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). The Department has renamed the Bureau and increased personnel resources to support this mission. We appreciate the support of Congress for this effort. In this role, we will be working very closely with USAID and the newly-established interagency Global Engagement Center (GEC) to promote a more strategic, integrated, and ultimately accountable approach to CVE. In collaboration with the GEC, the Department has requested additional resources for CVE programming in Fiscal Year 2017 – including as part of CTPF – to expand partnerships with government, non-governmental, local communities, and civil society actors who can help counter violent extremist messaging and narratives and the recruitment and mobilization that they drive.

Mr. Chairman, we are seeking to leverage the Bureau’s tools and programs to advance the U.S. government’s foremost counterterrorism priorities and objectives: countering ISIL’s global expansion, maintaining pressure on al-Qa’ida and its affiliates, and constraining Iran’s terrorist networks, including Lebanese Hizballah. We are also focusing on building priority capabilities across key regions: countering radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism, reducing terrorist mobility and ease of travel, and preventing and mitigating terrorist attacks on soft targets.

**Countering ISIL’s Global Expansion**

The Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism has led U.S. efforts to address and mitigate the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). Since 2012, FTFs from more than 120 countries have traveled to Iraq and Syria. While some have died on the battlefield, others have returned home. We

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are now seeing a reduction in flows of foreign terrorist fighters to the conflict zone. Over the last year, we assess that we continue to make progress in addressing the flow of foreign terrorist fighters.

Led by our Senior Advisor on Foreign Terrorist Fighters, the Bureau has been actively engaged in promoting global cooperation and information sharing to address FTF threats. Senior Bureau officials engage regularly with foreign counterparts from the key FTF source and transit countries to increase coordination against the threat posed by FTFs. We are working with partners to put in place the fundamental reforms necessary to address this threat, including by increasing information sharing, strengthening border security and strengthening legal regimes. For example, we have led efforts to deploy interagency Foreign Fighter Surge Teams to several European countries, including Belgium and Greece, to strengthen information-sharing on known and suspected terrorists, and use of this information in traveler screening and financial investigations. In addition, we obligated more than \$20 million in Fiscal Year 2014 funding for programs to help partner nations address FTF threats.

These efforts have yielded results. Since the passage of landmark UN Security Council Resolution 2178 in 2014, approximately 45 partner countries passed new laws or updated existing laws to address FTFs. Through the Bureau's diplomatic efforts, we now have information-sharing arrangements with 55 international partners to assist efforts to identify, track, and deter the travel of suspected terrorists. We also supported INTERPOL to expand its Foreign Fighter Fusion Cell. 58 countries, plus the United Nations, now contribute foreign terrorist fighter profiles to INTERPOL. At least thirty-five countries have reported arresting FTFs, and 12 have successfully prosecuted at least one foreign terrorist fighter. During the past year, we also increased U.S. and UN terrorism designations of known FTF recruiters. Turkey – a critical geographic chokepoint in the flow of FTFs – has also increased detentions, arrests, and prosecution of suspected FTFs, and taken important steps to improve the security of its border. While criminal justice tools are a key component of the approach to FTFs, we are also helping train countries on how to rehabilitate and reintegrate returning FTFs where appropriate – a scenario that is playing out frequently in countries across the world.

Beyond FTFs, the Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism is also actively engaged in supporting partner nations to counter the spread of ISIL's affiliates and networks. We have increased engagement with our North African partners to address the ISIL branch and other terrorist groups in

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Libya. We plan to significantly expand support for Tunisia as it copes with threats emanating from Libya. We are also providing significant support to countries in the Lake Chad Basin region as they contend with the threat posed by Boko Haram, which has declared its allegiance to ISIL. For example, we are training law enforcement from Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria on skills for conducting border security operations and preventing and responding to terrorist attacks, especially attacks involving improvised explosive devices. We are increasingly devoting resources to prevention-focused CVE initiatives in communities that are likely to be targeted for recruitment by ISIL, including in partnership with USAID. And, together with the Global Engagement Center, we are expanding programs to help countries to counter ISIL's messaging and narratives, which the group relies upon to recruit new fighters.

#### **Maintaining Pressure on al-Qa'ida and its Affiliates**

While al-Qa'ida's senior leadership has been significantly weakened, the organization and especially several of its affiliates continue to pose a threat to the United States and our allies. The Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism provides significant assistance to build law enforcement capacity in Afghanistan and Pakistan to effectively respond to, investigate, and prosecute acts of terrorism. This past year, we launched a new training and exercise program to promote cooperation between Afghan and Pakistan law enforcement forces in patrolling their shared border and disrupting terrorist transit. In both countries we are supporting programs to counter recruitment by terrorist groups in prisons – an issue of growing concern around the world.

We are also actively supporting regional efforts to counter al-Qa'ida affiliates, especially al-Shabaab, al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb, and al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). In Somalia, for example, we have helped to establish and train four Joint Investigative Teams to respond to terrorist incidents. These teams have been the first to respond to some of the recent attacks in Mogadishu, including the attempted bombing of an airliner in March 2016. In Somalia, we are also providing support for efforts by the Federal Government of Somalia and civil society partners to promote defections from al-Shabaab and to establish a process for registering, rehabilitating, and when appropriate, reintegrating disengaged fighters. Over the past year, hundreds of fighters have left al-Shabaab and gone through this program.

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### **Constraining Iran's Terrorist Networks**

As we work to implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, the United States has also continued its work to stop Iran's sponsorship of terrorism. As will be described in the forthcoming *Country Reports on Terrorism*, Iran continues to support terrorism through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force and Lebanese Hizballah. Iran continues to be deeply involved in the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, including through the support of terrorist groups.

The Bureau of Counterterrorism is leading efforts to mobilize international awareness and cooperation to counter illicit, destabilizing activities by Iranian-sponsored terrorist groups, including Hizballah. In close partnership with our colleagues at the Department of Justice, we have convened investigators, prosecutors, and sanctions experts across Eastern Europe, South America, West Africa, the Middle East, and soon Southeast Asia to identify strategies and to increase cooperation in countering Hizballah's illicit activities. With the European Police Service, we have established an International Law Enforcement Task Force focusing on Hizballah's terrorist and illicit activities. We have also been actively engaged with the Gulf Cooperation Council and increased our information-sharing on Iranian proxies.

### **Countering Radicalization and Recruitment to Violent Extremism**

As we have learned over the past decade, it is not enough to just degrade and disrupt terrorist groups through security measures. To be effective over the long run, we must also address the ways in which these groups draw local support and attract new recruits, while intervening in the life cycle of violent extremism. While there will never be justification for acts of terrorism, we must seek to understand and address the factors that drive people to such evil. The nature and range of possible drivers can vary greatly – from individual psychological factors to community-based grievances, sectarian divisions, and religious intolerance. However, there are certain common factors that could potentially increase the levels of support for violent extremism in communities, including exposure to terrorist messaging and locally-influential recruiters, experiences with state-sanctioned violence and abuse, heavy-handed tactics by security services, the presence of inter-state or intra-state conflict, and the systematic denial of opportunity.

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In February 2015, President Obama brought together over 60 countries, 12 multilateral bodies, and representatives from civil society, business, and the religious community to discuss this challenge. That Summit and the subsequent process have sparked a broad-based effort to better understand and address the factors that drive radicalization and recruitment to violence within specific communities. Earlier this year, the UN Secretary General released a Plan of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism, which calls for the UN system to enhance its efforts to address violent extremism. It also outlines a range of recommendations for member states, including the development and implementation of national CVE action plans.

The Bureau of Counterterrorism is playing a leading role in carrying forth this work, in coordination with other Department and interagency partners. We have led the development of the first-ever State and USAID Joint CVE Strategy, which we will release later this month. Through the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), we are developing a toolkit for governments to effectively address the life cycle of radicalization to violence – outlining good practices for prevention to intervention to rehabilitation and reintegration. We are supporting the Strong Cities Network, an effort to connect mayors and municipal officials around the world to share their experiences and, importantly, their best practices. We are also developing new tools for governments to prevent radicalization to violence in prisons and help them ensure that former fighters are rehabilitated and reintegrated back into society whenever possible and appropriate. Further, the Department is working in conjunction and in coordination with the newly-formed domestic CVE Task Force, led by the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice. The CVE Task Force is coordinating the U.S. Government's overall approach, strategy, and execution of the CVE mission in the United States. The Department of State is a member of the Task Force, and we are elevating our engagement with key international partners on CVE, including the European Union, the United Nations, and the World Bank.

With our assistance, several countries in the Western Balkans have developed and begun to implement new national CVE strategies targeting the radicalization and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters. In East Africa, the Department of State's CVE programs have helped mobilize initiatives by civil society – especially women and youth – to push back against violent extremist messaging and recruitment. With our engagement, several countries in Southeast Asia have adopted and begun to implement new policies for handling terrorist inmates and countering prison radicalization. We believe we can have much greater impact with additional funding for CVE, and that is why we are asking for

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an additional \$59 million in Economic Support Fund (ESF) resources as part of our FY 2017 CTPF request in support of our joint strategy with USAID. ESF funds are crucial to enable us to support programs involving civilian government, civil society, and community partners.

**Reducing Terrorist Mobility and Ease of Travel**

Another critical ongoing focus for our work is addressing the ability of terrorists and their facilitators to move easily across borders – especially airports and land borders. We are providing significant assistance to help partner countries enhance their capacity to patrol these borders and conduct effective screening of travelers. We are working closely with the Department of Homeland Security to implement reforms to the Visa Waiver Program and strengthen compliance among European countries. We have funded advisors from the Transportation Security Administration to assist airport officials with implementing effective passenger and cargo screening procedures. We are also training law enforcement across East Africa, the Sahel-Maghreb, and South Asia on effective land border patrol operations.

The Terrorist Interdiction Program (TIP) provides critical funding and technical expertise to help countries to screen passengers at airports, seaports, and major land border ports of entry. Through this program, we provide and train countries with Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation Systems (PISCES), a proven technology. As we seek to address the transit of foreign terrorist fighters, it is critical that countries have the capacity to collect travelers' data and check it against terrorist databases. We have implemented PISCES in more than 20 countries around the world, and hope to grow that number over the coming year. That is why we have asked Congress for increased funding – \$30 million – to support this critical program.

Through the GCTF, we are also working to develop new globally-focused good practices for governments on effective border security and management. We have teamed up with the Kingdom of Morocco and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) in this Border Security Initiative. The Initiative has convened a series of workshops among border practitioners and experts in key regions such as the Sahel and Horn of Africa to define actionable, practical and replicable good practices that partners and nations can undertake. In the Sahel, we are also piloting a new program to strengthen partnerships between border law enforcement units and border communities.

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**Preventing and Mitigating Terrorist Attacks on Soft Targets**

The Bureau of Counterterrorism is also focusing on building law enforcement capacity across countries to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks, especially against soft targets and critical infrastructure. Through the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program, we are training and equipping dedicated crisis response teams throughout Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia to respond to attacks. Where appropriate, this is done in coordination with efforts by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response (SPEAR) program to enhance U.S. embassy security. In East Africa, we have established a new annual exercise that brings together law enforcement from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda to respond to real-life terrorism scenarios, especially drawing lessons learned from the Westgate Mall attack in 2014. We hope to replicate such exercises in other regions over the coming years.

These efforts have delivered results. In Jakarta, U.S.-trained Indonesian law enforcement units were the first to respond to and disrupt the attack on a shopping mall in January 2016. In Kenya, U.S.-trained law enforcement and border security units have been successful in disrupting and mitigating attacks by al-Shabaab, including in northeastern Kenya. In Nigeria, U.S.-trained bomb disposal units have detected and detonated improvised explosive devices, saving lives. With our engagement, countries are developing policies and plans for increasing the security and resilience of critical infrastructure, including through increased partnerships with the private sector. Through advisors and legal support, we are also helping countries to conduct investigations and prosecute those responsible for attacks.

**Fostering a Culture of Collaboration, Planning, Learning, and Innovation**

Mr. Chairman, we have made a number of changes within the Bureau of Counterterrorism over the past year to foster a culture of strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, learning, innovation, and collaboration. We have established an Office of Strategy, Plans, and Initiatives charged with articulating clearly defined goals for the bureau's work across priority areas and then reviewing, on an ongoing basis, how the Bureau's various programs and activities are advancing those goals. This involves close coordination with the Intelligence Community, the Department's regional and functional bureaus, and interagency partners. We have also expanded collaboration with these actors to enhance our analysis and planning for the CTPF. In addition, the Bureau has established a Strategic Monitoring Team to develop and implement a framework for tracking progress against the Bureau's policy priorities and identifying strategic,

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organizational, and resource changes to better advance these policy priorities. These efforts have enabled us to move toward a more analytical and evidence-based decision-making process.

We have also retooled our Office of Programs to strengthen the design, management, oversight, and monitoring and evaluation of our increased foreign assistance resources. Our Programs officers work closely with other State Department program and desk officers and embassy staff and conduct regular field visits to monitor ongoing programmatic efforts. We have launched a comprehensive, third-party evaluation of our ATA program, which is set to be completed later this month. This is in addition to the regular assessments that are conducted every two to three years in ATA partner countries. In addition, we have just awarded a new contract for a third-party evaluation of our CVE program. While many of our past CVE programmatic efforts have been experimental and smaller-scale to date, we believe this evaluation will provide us with important insights for future program design and targeting. We are also partnering with the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations to develop a guide for monitoring and evaluation of CVE programs. We are committed to undertaking additional evaluations of our larger-scale programs.

Mr. Chairman, surely there is more work to do. We know there are areas where we can and must improve, especially as the terrorism landscape evolves. Nevertheless, I am proud of what we are accomplishing in the Bureau of Counterterrorism. We have a talented team of people who are committed to the work of countering terrorism and keeping their country safe. We greatly appreciate Congress' interest and support for our efforts. I look forward to your questions and our discussion.

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Mr. POE. I thank the gentleman.

The House is in the midst of a series of votes, so the subcommittee will recess until 5 minutes after the last vote has ended. So the subcommittee is in recess. We will reconvene 5 minutes after the last vote has ended.

[Recess.]

Mr. POE. The subcommittee will come to order.

I will recognize myself for 5 minutes for a few questions.

I have three questions, and we have 5 minutes to get the questions and the answers. So my first question is the administration maintains that counterterrorism is a top priority, but why is the administration wanting a budget cut?

Mr. SIBERELL. Mr. Chairman, I think if you look at the annual requests that go from Fiscal Year 2015, 2016, 2017, you will find a significant increase in the '17 request from our '15 budget. And the reason is that we received a significant increase in '16 out of the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund, an additional \$175 million that we are working now to develop a sound process for stewardship of those additional funds. And we very much appreciate the Congress' support for that program.

For '17 when we put together our request, we looked at what we believed would be required to sustain those efforts, those increased efforts in '16, and we determined that an \$80 million request was adequate for that purpose, and bearing in mind that we want to ensure effective stewardship of those funds. So either 175 in '16 addition, and then we have asked for 80 additional in '17. So it may appear to be a decrease from the '16 request because we are asking for less under CTPF from '17 than we received in '16, but overall, it is a significant increase. I mean, we are talking about a comparison of our request in '17 from what our budget was in '15 is a more than \$50 million increase in our counterterrorism capacity-building foreign assistance budget.

Mr. POE. Okay. We are not reading the same statistics, or at least I am not reading them the same way you are. The Counterterrorism Bureau wants 31 percent less money than last year, is that correct or not?

Mr. SIBERELL. Well, I would characterize it as our effort to sustain this significant increase we received in '16, and I will put it that way.

Mr. POE. I mean is it—no, put it this way. Is it 31 percent less than last year or not? I don't want to be argumentative, but I need or yes or no?

Mr. SIBERELL. Yes. The \$80 million we requested is less than the \$175 we received in '16 under the CTPF, yes.

Mr. POE. The administration promised in 2011 that they would have a strategy to combat terrorists' use of social media, 2011. When is that strategy going to be produced because it hasn't been produced? Do you know?

Mr. SIBERELL. The administration is working very closely internally in the United States Government with the domestic agencies, the FBI, Department of Justice, others—

Mr. POE. Excuse me again.

Mr. SIBERELL. Yes.

Mr. POE. Do you know when that is going to be done?

Mr. SIBERELL. Is this the strategy you are referring to from the State Department? I missed the beginning of your question.

Mr. POE. Yes, online radicalization by the terrorists' use of social media, and we were going to have a strategy to combat that, and the President—the administration promised this in 2011. We don't have it.

Mr. SIBERELL. Okay.

Mr. POE. When is it going to happen?

Mr. SIBERELL. Right. So we have a strategy on countering violent extremism that we are just preparing to release with the State Department and USAID that does, as one of its objectives, address the need for effective counter-messaging and counter-narratives, and that is one of the five objectives in that strategy that is to be released within the coming week.

Mr. POE. Within a week?

Mr. SIBERELL. That is the State Department, USAID countering violent extremism strategy, joint strategy.

Mr. POE. All right. And the last question is GAO reported that the CT Bureau has not evaluated its Countering Violent Extremism program despite the Bureau saying since 2012 it would evaluate the program. When is that going to happen?

Mr. SIBERELL. Mr. Chairman, thank you for that question. In our hearing last year we discussed the importance of evaluation of CTE Bureau-funded Foreign Assistance Programs, and you emphasized the importance of this, and we have taken that very seriously. We have undertaken a number of evaluations, including we have put out a notice of funding for a comprehensive third-party evaluation of our Countering Violent Extremism programs in three countries: Indonesia, Kenya, and Bangladesh. That has been out for funding. It is being awarded now, and we expect that that evaluation will be completed by the end of this year.

Mr. POE. So the GAO, their answer would—I mean, it hasn't happened yet, and your answer is that it will be done by the end of the year, there will be an evaluation?

Mr. SIBERELL. Yes.

Mr. POE. Combating terrorism, I think we can all agree to the fact that it is important because terrorism is on the rise. Tell me why we should justify the CT Bureau? Why should Congress justify its existence? Try to keep it simple if you would.

Mr. SIBERELL. Sure. I think it is a very good question, and I appreciate the opportunity to answer.

People often think of counterterrorism as a mission for law enforcement agencies in the domestic realm or for the military or intelligence agencies in the international realm. In fact, diplomacy plays a key role in bringing together partnerships and nations to address our primary counterterrorism objectives. We see that in the coalitions that we build to defeat terrorist groups on a regional, sub-regional basis, or even a global basis. So the global coalition to fight ISIL is an example. The coalition of African partners we have developed to fight Boko Haram in West Africa, the coalition of nations we have helped to develop to fight Al-Shabaab in East Africa.

Those are just examples of where diplomacy plays a key role, and the Bureau of Counterterrorism leads in a number of those efforts

to build international will, political will and partnership and cooperation against these common threats.

The other piece of what we do—and we appreciate, again, the funding we receive from Congress for this purpose—is to help build capacity in our primary counterterrorism partners. In line with the President’s policy of developing strong partnerships, I know the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund we are helping to build capacity among our partners across the civilian agencies so not just in—and our DOD colleagues handle that on the military side, but we helped to build improved CT legislation, improved judicial capability to prosecute terrorist suspects, improved border security measures, improved civilian security agencies.

All of those programs are funded through the support you provide to our bureau, and that is what we execute in our foreign assistance. So on the one level we are working diplomatically to build coalitions to address our terrorism challenges, and then we are trying to build capacity in our partners to address those in the regions from which these threats emanate.

Mr. POE. Thank you. The chair recognizes the ranking member, the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Keating.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Last week, I was in Tunisia, and the situation there was described in terms of dealing with terrorist issues there by the President himself as fragile, a term he used in our conversation at least 10 times by my count. And you are looking at a country like that that is struggling to do so many things, and he kept impressing on us, too, and I have seen it in other countries, particularly in that region, where they are getting stressed, leaders are, particularly leaders that are trying to move forward in a way that improves democracy.

The economic issue is just squeezing them on one end in terms of support. Some of the other changes that languish, too, are a problem.

How is the Bureau working, you know, to coordinate not only counterterrorism but also rule-of-law issues? How do they factor that in, economic issues? Because I don’t think there will be a lasting effort with this without a strong collaboration on all of those issues.

Mr. SIBERELL. Thank you for the question, Congressman.

With Tunisia, I agree entirely that that is a country that is passing through a very important political transition but that has caused significant fragility within the government system. And you can absolutely correlate the rise of terrorist groups to failures in governance in certain parts of the world and certainly in North Africa and the Middle East. And we see that in Libya, obviously, and Yemen and other places where the government has collapsed and the terrorist groups rise.

So it is absolutely important that we help the Tunisian Government through this transition, and that absolutely includes economic support to assist the government to ensure that their economy produces the jobs and hopes and opportunities for young people that have high expectations from this political transition.

Our counterterrorism assistance is also robust with the Tunisian Government and has grown. They face a significant threat from re-

gional groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic Maghreb who have come out of Algeria and have brought threats into Tunisia. Of course, we have seen the attacks on the museum and the tourist site in Sousse. Those were planned by individuals——

Mr. KEATING. I was there.

Mr. SIBERELL. Yes. So this is a country under assault effectively from these terrorist groups, and it does require a comprehensive response from us——

Mr. KEATING. Yes. I think they deserve great credit for what they are trying to do, but they are definitely in a very tenuous situation doing it.

Let me just shift quickly. Twitter requested last week as well, one of its partners Dataminr, a service that offers advanced social media analytics and early detection of major events like terrorist attacks, to stop providing intelligence agencies with their tools and their content. Does this affect the relationship with the CT or with the Bureau of Global Engagement at all, these kind of actions?

Mr. SIBERELL. I am sorry, sir. The action is to restrict the sharing of information with——

Mr. KEATING. Yes, with law enforcement——

Mr. SIBERELL [continuing]. Law enforcement——

Mr. KEATING [continuing]. Agencies.

Mr. SIBERELL. Well, I think we rely upon a cooperative relationship with the social media companies, and that is primarily the work domestically of the FBI, Department of Justice. A cooperative relationship is important because those companies, through their terms of service, are in the best position to identify content which can be helpful to those groups in radicalization and——

Mr. KEATING. In terms of content, do you ever use testimonials from foreign fighters who have come back disillusioned?

Mr. SIBERELL. Yes, indeed, indeed. The Global Engagement Center to which you just referred has launched several thematic campaigns to amplify messaging, including they ran a campaign of former or defectors. Those who had gone off to Iraq and Syria had a disillusioning experience and then were putting their testimonials on social media as a way to push back and counter the narrative that ISIL has put out about its caliphates.

Mr. KEATING. And again on messaging, and it is too bad I can't—we are limited with time, but on messaging, are you using women and community-based projects? Well, Denmark just advanced a program where it is concentrating on a network of mothers to identify early signs. Are you engaged in that, and how successful has that been?

Mr. SIBERELL. Well, there are two things I can point to. One is another one of the thematic campaigns that the GEC ran, which was centered around families and the impact upon families of those who have gone off to fight for these terrorist groups. And that was a very effective campaign, and it did focus in large part on mothers and the role in the family.

The second is we have undertaken in a number of our Countering Violent Extremism programs to focus on women because, as you noted, women are in a unique position in most communities to identify the signs of radicalization or the infiltration of ideas and

ideology of the terrorist groups. So they are a primary recipient of our Countering Violent Extremism programming effort.

I will also say, however, that they are difficult to reach because this is at the community level, and we have to get our programming down to that level. And that is why we work with partners like USAID who have the connections in many cases through their development work to reach women and build networks of women, which they have a history also of doing in many parts of the world successfully.

Mr. KEATING. Just lastly, I will give you a chance—the GAO reported recently that there were staffing positions that weren't filled and recommended that they be filled. What is the status of that right now?

Mr. SIBERELL. Well, we have 102 authorized full-time employment positions in the Bureau of Counterterrorism, 93 of which are filled. That leaves nine vacancies, and of those nine vacancies, eight are in the process of being filled or being advertised. So I think we are doing a pretty good job in addressing what the GAO had found in the last several years.

The Bureau was established as a result of the 2011 QDDR. It really became a bureau in 2012. We were allotted a surge of new positions, and it did take some time for the Bureau to process through those, but we have done that and now we are in fairly good shape and are hiring.

Mr. KEATING. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SIBERELL. Thank you, sir.

Mr. POE. I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts.

The chair will recognize the gentleman from California, Colonel Cook, for his questioning.

Mr. COOK. Thank you very much, sir.

I wanted to ask you about Libya and the decisions that are going to be made about our arming certain individuals. And of course the fear is here we go again. Are we giving this to ISIS, ISIL, Daesh, whatever acronym you want to use or whatever you call them? And my fear with the State Department or any is that the right hand does not talk to the left hand in terms of coordinating this information so we make an informed choice and then we regret it afterwards. Can you briefly comment on that?

Mr. SIBERELL. Thank you, Congressman. In Libya it is a very difficult, fluid situation, as you have noted, basically chaotic, and you have militias that are squaring off against Daesh principally in the area around Sirte in the center of the country. Those militias are not yet integrated into a Libyan national force, so sharing arms or assisting those groups on the ground would be a complicated and difficult endeavor. In some cases, however, there are those sub-state actors who are in the best position to confront ISIL, so navigating that landscape while ensuring that those arms would not transfer over to ISIL would be a significant task and a very difficult one.

Mr. COOK. I want to shift gears a little bit. Maybe this is out of the realm a little bit, but I am from San Bernardino County. And obviously, we had a very difficult and horrific situation involving a terrorist there. And the coordination of Federal agencies with—

and by the way, I was very, very happy with the way the FBI and the sheriff and the police chief, they all worked together.

But in terms of—and then we had some problems with getting the data from the cell phone of one of the individuals, you know, Apple and you have heard all that drama. Now, if you have information of something that would actually affect us in the country here, how is that coordinated?

And I know that is a very difficult question, but I get the feeling that we don't always have the best of coordination with Federal agencies because everybody works in their own functional area or functional silo and the word is not disseminated, and what happens is boom, something like this happens even though we might have had advanced warning. But if you could comment on that, I would appreciate it.

Mr. SIBERELL. Well, sir, if you are speaking about coordination of the domestic level among the national security agencies or the law enforcement agencies, I may not be the best place to—

Mr. COOK. Well, I meant somebody that had ties to a terrorist country that—

Mr. SIBERELL. Yes.

Mr. COOK [continuing]. But eventually, the terrorist incident actually happens. You know, we had this a few years ago when we were talking about the bombings in Boston and Chechnya and we had talked about this previously. But—

Mr. SIBERELL. I would say that in my own experience, the counterterrorism community and the U.S. Government is extremely well coordinated and integrated in so far as when there is an incident like the Boston Marathon bombers and the need to understand the linkages that might exist in a different country.

Same thing with the San Bernardino attack. There is very close cooperation between the FBI, the principal investigative arm of the U.S. Government, and FBI agents who might be posted at our Embassies abroad or representatives of the intelligence agencies who can help to pull back the threads on any connections. And that is always one of the very first questions, of course, that arises in a domestic terrorism incident: Is there a connection to an international organization or is this directed by a group outside the United States?

And particularly for these attacks like the one in San Bernardino, we see ISIL trying to inspire attacks, and those questions are always asked and then referred to the host country where we work with the intelligence agencies, the law enforcement agencies in those countries to develop those threats.

Mr. COOK. Thank you. And I am jumping around a little bit, but I always go back to Turkey. And it is not even Thanksgiving. Anyway, bad joke. Really concerned about

The PKK, the Erdogan, and it is like who is the terrorist and whether somebody is being falsely accused of being a terrorist. And obviously, this affects the politics of that particular country where you can use the counterterrorist threat to carry out a political agenda. Would you want to comment on that or is that too politically sensitive? Or is that something that would fall under counterterrorism?

Mr. SIBERELL. Well, I can say, sir, in general terms on a global basis we are quite concerned about how governments undertake their own counterterrorism efforts domestically. And those governments that might use counterterrorism as a justification for acts that transgressed human rights or that are heavy-handed, let's say, in their security approach might actually drive the grievances that are leading to the terrorism in the first place. So that is a conversation we have globally with many, many partners around the world, and it is something that we watch very closely.

Mr. POE. I thank the gentleman.

The committee may ask you to appear before the committee in a classified setting. Colonel Cook and the ranking member and others have raised some questions that we may want to get to the bottom of it to understand the situation in the classified setting where some of these questions can be answered so we get to the bottom line of what is taking place. So thank you for being here today. You have got a lot of work to do. You have a got a mess on your hands as far as all these bad guys all over the world, you know, causing mischief and taking the lives of innocents. So it is a tough assignment.

So, anyway, there may be some other questions that we have for you that we will put in writing and we will send to you, in addition to the possible classified setting.

So without objection, all the witnesses' prepared statements will be part of the record. Members will have 5 days to submit statements, questions, and extraneous materials for the record subject to the length limitation and the rules.

And the subcommittee is adjourned.

Mr. SIBERELL. Thank you. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:18 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

# APPENDIX

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MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

**SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128**

**Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade  
Ted Poe (R-TX), Chairman**

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held by the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov>):

**DATE:** Tuesday, May 17, 2016  
**TIME:** 2:00 p.m.  
**SUBJECT:** U.S. Department of State Counterterrorism Bureau: FY 2017 Budget  
**WITNESS:** Mr. Justin Siberell  
Acting Coordinator for Counterterrorism  
Bureau of 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 Tuesday Date May 17, 2016 Room 2172

Starting Time 2:03 p.m. Ending Time 3:18 p.m.

Recesses  (2:16pm to 2:57pm) ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to )

Presiding Member(s)

*Chairman Ted Poe*

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session

Electronically Recorded (taped)

Executive (closed) Session

Stenographic Record

Televised

TITLE OF HEARING:

*"U.S. Department of State Counterterrorism Bureau: FY 2017 Budget"*

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*Reps. Poe, Cook, Zeldin, Keating, Sherman*

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

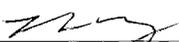
HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes  No

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

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

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_

or  
TIME ADJOURNED 3:18 p.m.

  
Subcommittee Staff Director