

## Oversight of the Antiterrorism Assistance Program

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

