

Europe and Eurasia Overview

“It is important . . . that those engaged in terrorism realize that our determination to defend our values and our way of life is greater than their determination to cause death and destruction to innocent people in a desire to impose extremism on the world. It is our determination that they will never succeed in destroying what we hold dear in this country and in other civilized nations throughout the world.”

Tony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
BBC News
July 8, 2005

Two terrorist attacks in London on July 7 and July 21 further focused European countries on the terrorist threat and prompted increased cooperation and efforts to strengthen counterterrorism capabilities. The year was also marked by successes as terrorist networks were broken up by arrests in countries ranging from Denmark to Italy. European nations continued to work in close partnership with the United States in the global counterterrorism campaign and continued to enhance their abilities, both individually and collectively, to deal with a terrorist threat increasingly seen as an internal one. The contributions of European countries in sharing intelligence, arresting members of terrorist cells, and interdicting terrorist financing and logistics were vital elements in the war on terrorism.

European Union (EU) member states remained strong and reliable partners. International judicial cooperation advanced as EU members continued to enact and implement legislation for U.S.-EU Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties. The United

States and EU states developed more comprehensive, efficient border security processes to ensure close cooperation among law enforcement agencies and to improve information-sharing capabilities. Progress has been slower as the United States and European Union worked through regular counterterrorism and terrorist financing engagements to develop mechanisms to implement the 2004 U.S.-EU Summit Declaration on Combating Terrorism. A contributing factor has been member states' reluctance to grant more than token responsibilities to the EU counterterrorism coordinator's office or other Community institutions. Following months of analyzing member states' national counterterrorism systems, member state leaders agreed in December to revise the EU counterterrorism action plan, which is designed to disrupt terrorist networks and address conditions terrorists exploit to recruit new members, but does not have effective coordinating mechanisms at the EU level.

European nations are active participants in a variety of multilateral organizations that contributed to counterterrorist efforts, including the G8, NATO, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The United States and its partners worked through all of these organizations to establish and implement best practices, build the counterterrorism capabilities of "weak but willing" states, and institutionalize the war against terrorism globally. OSCE members committed themselves to becoming parties to the 13 UN terrorism conventions and protocols, to work together to modernize travel documents and shipping container security, and to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist organizations. The OSCE held two workshops in 2005 on ICAO's minimum security standards for handling and issuance of passports, sponsored visits by ICAO and other experts to provide technical advice to requesting countries on new travel document security features, and increased OSCE countries' cooperation with Interpol in reporting lost or stolen passports.

Terrorist activity and the presence of terrorist support networks in Europe remains a source of concern. Efforts to combat the threat in Europe were sometimes hampered by legal protections that made it difficult to take firm judicial action against suspected terrorists, asylum laws that afforded loopholes, inadequate legislation, or standards of evidence that limited the use of classified information in holding terrorist suspects. The new EU arrest warrant encountered legal difficulties in some countries that forbid extradition of their own citizens. Germany found it difficult to convict members of the Hamburg cell of suspected terrorists allegedly linked to the September 11 attacks. Terrorists are also able to take advantage of ease of travel within Schengen visa countries. Some European states have at times not been able to prosecute successfully or hold some of the suspected terrorists brought before their courts. The EU as a whole remains reluctant to take steps to block the assets of charities associated with HAMAS and Hizballah.

On July 7, four suicide bombers -- all British citizens -- detonated themselves on three London subway trains and one bus, killing 56 persons and injuring more than 700. Two weeks later, another group of terrorists tried unsuccessfully to set off bombs in the London Underground. The attacks in London prompted the British Government to seek tougher

counterterrorism legislation that would allow for proscribing groups and individuals glorifying or inciting terrorism.

In July, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) declared an end to its decades-long armed struggle. In September, an independent commission on decommissioning announced that PIRA had put all its weapons "beyond use."

Concerned about the implication of the London attacks for homegrown terrorism in Europe, countries across the continent moved to enact legislation to strengthen their counterterrorism capabilities and to crack down on resident terrorist suspects.

Italy continued to arrest and deport terrorist suspects throughout the year; after the London bombings, it passed legislation to increase the government's ability to expel extremists.

In September, the Spanish High Court sent al-Qaida cell leader Imad Eddin Barakat Yarkas and 17 members of his cell to prison for terms ranging from six to 27 years for membership in a terrorist organization and conspiracy to commit terrorist acts.



Members of Russian special armed forces storm a shop in the southern city of Nalchik on October 14, where gunmen were hiding following a deadly rampage the previous day. (AFP Photo/Maxim Marmur)

In October, 200 to 300 gunmen attacked police and military facilities in the city of Nalchik in the north Caucasus region of Russia, killing dozens before the authorities re-established control.

Cooperation among European law enforcement Agencies was important to counterterrorism successes. In the first use of the EU arrest warrant for terrorism, French authorities in February extradited a senior ETA suspect to Spain. In April, Switzerland extradited to Spain the alleged leader of a 2004 conspiracy to bomb Spain's High Court and other Madrid landmarks.

In November, the United States and the OSCE hosted a conference on combating terrorist finance for counterterrorism officials from the 55 member states. The seventh in a series designed to disseminate best practices and build capacity in Europe and Eurasia, the conference struck a balance between policy (building political commitment and implementing international legal obligations) and technical support (how to build a financial intelligence unit and how to prosecute terrorist financing cases).

Uzbekistan's support for the global war on terror has eroded significantly due to the downturn in U.S.-Uzbek relations. While Uzbek authorities continued to stress the importance of counterterrorism cooperation, the government limited its participation in U.S. Government-sponsored counterterrorism programs, and in July terminated an agreement allowing U.S. access to the Karshi-Khanabad airbase. The Uzbek Government increased security forces to prevent terrorist attacks, but failed to address the conditions terrorists exploit to gain popular support and recruits for their cause.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has played a key role in combating terrorism at the regional level in Europe. First and foremost, NATO continues Operation Active Endeavor (OAE), a naval operation that aims to combat terrorism by monitoring maritime traffic in the Mediterranean. Thus far, NATO forces have monitored more than 75,000 vessels, boarding some 100 suspect ships. In addition, over 480 ships have taken advantage of NATO escorts.

Albania

The Albanian Government continued its efforts to improve its law enforcement and border control security by participating in U.S. Government-sponsored training and technical assistance programs. The Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) continued to implement the Total Information Management System (TIMS). In 2005, TIMS was expanded to cover all ten of Albania's major border crossings with its four neighboring countries (Italy, Greece, Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro) and Kosovo. During the first nine months of 2005, the system helped officials detain 145 wanted persons.

Albania continued to implement provisions of anti-money laundering legislation, with a focus on curtailing the activities of organizations suspected of having links to identified terrorist organizations. Although progress was made in this area, the effectiveness of the government's counterterrorist efforts were hampered by inadequate financial resources, corruption, a lack of fully trained officers responsible for borders and ports, and poor communications and data processing infrastructure.

The International Maritime Organization and U.S. Coast Guard have determined that Albania adequately reported required information and maintained adequate counterterrorism measures for port security and complied with the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS).

The government continued to implement its Terrorism Financing Freeze (TFF) law enacted in 2004. Since December 2004, the Albanian Government has frozen the assets of four organizations (Taibah, International Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, Al Haremein, and Global Relief Foundation) and four individuals (Nabil Abdul Saydi, Patricia Rosa Vinck, Yasin Al-Kadi, and Abdul Latif Saleh), all identified by the United Nations as suspected of supporting or funding extremist groups or organizations.

Albania is committed to maintaining its presence in Iraq as long as required. In Afghanistan, Albania deployed 26 troops to ISAF, including four new members of a joint medical unit.

Armenia

With substantial U.S. assistance, Armenia continues to strengthen its capacity to counter the country's few perceived terrorist threats. While no known terrorist groups operate domestically, Armenia's geographic location, porous borders, and loose visa regime present growing opportunities for traffickers of illicit materials, persons, and finances.

The government's deepening political and economic ties with neighboring Iran have, however, limited Armenian criticism of Iranian extremism and heralded closer diplomatic relations between the two countries. Armenia also has normal diplomatic and economic relations with Syria. Both Iran and Syria have large ethnic Armenian populations.

In February, the government established the Financial Monitoring Center (FMC), a U.S.-supported financial intelligence unit within the Central Bank that is designed to consolidate reporting requirements for large or otherwise suspicious money transfers. The FMC, established by legislation passed in late 2004, complements new laws that impose financial reporting requirements designed to reduce money laundering and limit terrorist access to financing. There were no reported incidents involving the transfer of funds in support of terrorism in Armenia, but the heavy flow of remittances suggests that this would be difficult to detect. The FMC, still in its infancy, is not yet an effective investigatory agency. It spent most of the year testing reporting requirements, developing forms and instructions, and training bank regulators, examiners, and financial analysts.

Armenia continued efforts to increase the security of its vital documents such as birth certificates, introduced additional security features into the production of passports, and began installing passport readers at border posts. The National Security Service and police continued to share information with the U.S. Embassy when they discovered fraudulent U.S. visas or other documents.

On August 17, the government passed legislation establishing the National Control List, a schedule of controlled commodities that either cannot be exported or that require an export license because of the potential for misuse. The Armenian National Control List is adapted from the European Union's dual-use list. It complements legislation the government adopted in late 2004 that required licensing exports and imports of radioactive sources.

Armenia supported U.S. efforts in Iraq with troops on the ground and provided overflight authorization in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Austria

Austria has made efforts to tighten controls on suspected terrorism financing and fulfilled its obligations to asset freeze decisions pursuant to UN Security Council resolutions and EU Clearinghouse designations. However, it failed to initiate any freezing actions independently. Austria's legal and institutional framework include comprehensive money laundering and terrorist financing legislation consistent with the FATF 40+9 Recommendations.

Through November, the Austrian Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and the Federal Agency for State Protection and Counterterrorism (BVT) received 24 reports on suspected terrorism financing transactions. This was a significant increase over 2004, and was largely due to improved banking control mechanisms and better international cooperation.

A legislative package introduced in July earmarked 105 million euros for terrorism prevention measures and related research through the year 2013; five million euros were earmarked for the year 2005.

Austria amended its immigration laws to have more restrictive legal tools against foreign visa holders suspected of terrorist links and extremist preaching and incitement. Austria began an investigation into potential terrorist recruitment in prisons and refugee camps, a concern that followed a 2004 surge of Chechen asylum seekers.

In the wake of the London bombings, the Interior Ministry's intelligence arm, the Federal Agency for State Protection and Counterterrorism (BVT), stepped up surveillance of suspected Islamic extremists. The BVT singled out a handful of suspected extremist mosques in Vienna for increased monitoring. It continued surveillance of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad movement and of suspected Afghan extremists entering Austria as asylum seekers.

Austria maintained four police instructors at the Iraqi Police Academy in Jordan to help train Iraqi police. In Afghanistan, Austria temporarily deployed 93 soldiers to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to help provide security for the September elections. Additionally, Austria committed four liaison officers to the ISAF headquarters in Kabul and two advisors to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

Together with the United States and the EU, Austria operated two counterterrorism-related training programs for countries in Central Asia: the Central Asian Border Initiative (CABSI) and the Vienna Central Asia Initiative (VICA).

Austria pledged a total of US \$1 million for the period between 2002 and 2006 to the UN program to combat terrorism. It is a major donor country to the United Nations' Vienna-based counterterrorism and anti-drug office, the UN Drug Control Program (UNDCP).

Azerbaijan

Since 2001, Azerbaijan has aggressively apprehended and tried members of suspected terrorist groups and closed Islamic organizations operating in Azerbaijan that are suspected of supporting terrorist groups. Azerbaijan has taken steps to combat terrorist financing and identified possible terrorist-related funding by distributing lists of suspected terrorist groups and individuals to local banks. In 2003, the government established an inter-ministerial experts group responsible for drafting anti-money laundering and counterterrorist finance legislation. In December, an experts group, led by the National Bank of Azerbaijan, finalized its proposed anti-money laundering legislation to include establishment of a Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and expansion of the predicate crimes for money laundering beyond narcotics trafficking.

In February, the Azerbaijani Court of Grave Offenses convicted a group of six men that called themselves "al-Qaida Caucasus" for planning terrorist attacks in Baku. The group was found with TNT, hand grenades, other armaments, and propaganda materials; it attempted to recruit female suicide bombers. Members of the group received sentences ranging from three to 14

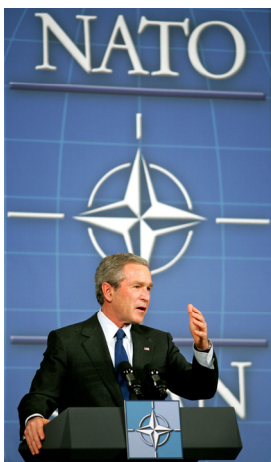
years. In July, the Azerbaijani Ministry of National Security arrested a group of armed Islamic extremists and confiscated a large quantity of explosives, chemicals, and plans for the production of explosive devices. In December, the government extradited two members of the Kongra-Gel/PKK to Turkey.

Azerbaijan served as a conduit for individuals with ties to terrorist organizations seeking to move men, money, and material throughout the region. Accordingly, Azerbaijan stepped up its interdiction efforts and had some success reducing terrorist transit.

Azerbaijan granted blanket overflight clearance, engaged in information sharing and law enforcement cooperation, and approved numerous landings and refueling operations at its civilian airport in support of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.

Since August 2003, Azerbaijan has supported the Coalition effort in Iraq with an infantry company of 151 soldiers stationed at the Haditha dam. Since November 2002, a platoon of Azerbaijani soldiers has worked with the Turkish peacekeeping contingent in Afghanistan.

Belgium



President George W. Bush during a news conference following a NATO Summit in February in Brussels. (AFP Photo/Benoit Doppagne)

Overall awareness of the terrorist threat to Belgium increased this past year, partly in reaction to the London bombings, but also in response to home-grown threats to Belgian security. The London bombings intensified Belgium's continuing effort to improve cooperation with foreign security agencies. Belgian police continue to work directly with such agencies both in neighboring and more distant countries. In addition to long-standing arrangements with police in Germany, France, and the other two Benelux nations, Belgium now has cooperation agreements with Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom. Cooperation with the United States also continued to improve under the efforts of Belgian Interior Minister Dewael. Belgian authorities stressed the need for more information sharing in order to move legally against suspected terrorists.

Consequently, the government was active on a number of fronts, including enforcement, internal coordination, development of legislation, and consequence management. Belgian authorities responded more aggressively to activities inside the country's borders with investigations, raids, arrests, and use of new counterterrorism legislation. Prosecutors are also seeking lengthier sentences in ongoing trials under the counterterrorism law.

Belgium is an active partner in the Department of Homeland Security's Container Security Initiative for the ports of Antwerp and Zeebrugge, and on port security in general.

Belgian authorities remained concerned about potential terrorist activities by groups from Algeria and North Africa. The government targeted investigations against the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM), the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C), and a nebulous Islamic extremist network operating out of several provinces,

including Charleroi, that is suspected of connections with the November 9 suicide attack in Iraq by a Belgian woman. Two leading Kongra-Gel (KGK)-affiliated media production studios, BRD Corporation Media Production Company and Roj-NV, are co-located in Belgium.

On November 9, Belgium began the trial of 13 defendants linked to the GICM, using for the first time its 2003 counterterrorism law criminalizing terrorist acts and membership in terrorist groups. The trial, expected to last several months, is the result of arrests made in 2004 by Belgian counterterrorism police. This series of raids throughout Belgium dismantled a network that is believed to have supported the 2004 bombings in Casablanca and Madrid and that also is suspected of attempting to recruit fighters to support attacks against American interests in Iraq.

Belgian judicial authorities continued prosecution of a case against 11 DHKP/C members charged with belonging to a criminal organization, arms possession, forgery, and use of forged documents. Turkish authorities alleged that one of the suspects, Fehriye Erdal, was involved in the 1996 murder of Ozdemir Sabanci, an influential business executive in Turkey. The chairman and the secretary of the then-DHKP/C headquarters in Belgium were charged under the 2003 counterterrorism legislation with belonging to a terrorist organization.

On November 30, Belgian federal police made 14 additional arrests on terrorism charges in the aftermath of a November 9 suicide attack by a Belgian woman against American forces in Iraq. Police conducted numerous searches in Brussels, Charleroi, Tongeren, and Antwerp, and seized large quantities of documents, computers, and other material. Six of those arrested were held and charged under the 2003 counterterrorism legislation for providing support to a terrorist organization.

Belgian authorities alleged that those arrested in connection with the attack in Iraq were using Belgium as a platform for recruiting and transporting volunteer fighters to Iraq. According to Federal Prosecutor Daniel Bernard, the suicide attack inside Iraq prompted authorities to speed up what had been an investigation lasting more than four months and involving several Belgian and foreign security services. Public awareness of the presence of terrorist-affiliated support networks on Belgian soil has grown. The Belgian Government has moved energetically against these networks, including the investigation and prosecution noted above. It also has disrupted untraced money flows through such alternative remittance systems as phone shops.

Belgium continued to respond fully to EU and UN Security Council actions to freeze suspected terrorist assets. The burden of proof on judges is relatively high, however. In order to constitute a criminal offense, authorities must demonstrate that the support was given with the knowledge that it would contribute to the commission of a crime by the terrorist group. Further, an FATF mutual evaluation found that Belgian law was out of compliance with FATF standards on asset freezing and does not establish a national capacity for designating foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs). Belgian authorities must demonstrate in each case that the group given support actually constitutes a terrorist group.

Belgium's greatest contribution in military terms to the global war on terror was to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, with a troop presence of 300 in 2005. Belgium planned to expand its technical assistance efforts in Iraq, and began implementing Iraqi debt forgiveness within the framework of Paris Club agreements.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) counterterrorism cooperation with the United States on the law enforcement side was good, within the limits of its current institutional capacity. Bosnia remains a weak state, however, with multiple semi-autonomous centers of power. It therefore could present an attractive environment for those seeking a locale to facilitate terrorist activities.

Under new amendments, an interagency Citizenship Review Commission was able to strip BiH citizenship from naturalized citizens who fraudulently obtained their citizenship, have no substantial ties to Bosnia at present, or obtained their citizenship because of government error or misconduct. These changes corrected defects in the 1997 Law on Citizenship that hindered previous efforts to strip the citizenship of such individuals, and now enables Bosnia to deport them. The commission reviews the citizenship status of mujahedin fighters and withdraws citizenship, where appropriate, on a case-by-case basis. The legislation instructs the Citizenship Review Commission to complete its work within two years.

In October, Federation police and law enforcement authorities raided a safe house in a suburb of Sarajevo and arrested two terrorist suspects with links to terrorist networks in Western Europe. The police confiscated weapons and explosive material. Pursuant to the ongoing investigation, police arrested in late November both the person who supplied the explosives and two other individuals who served as the conduit between the supplier and the recipients. The investigation is ongoing, and cooperation with U.S. and other foreign law enforcement agencies remains excellent.

Although there are specific counterterrorism laws in the Criminal Procedure Code, prosecutors found it difficult to link illegal activities to specific terrorism charges. Terrorist-related cases proceeded under conventional criminal statutes, such as illegal arms possession, arms smuggling, and conspiracy, which all carry fairly light penalties by American standards. Prosecutions were conducted under counterterrorism statutes in 2005.

In September, the Sarajevo Cantonal Prosecutor's Office dropped terrorism charges against six former Federation officials suspected of cooperating with Iran to operate a terrorist training camp in Bosnia. Although the statute of limitations on the terrorism charges ran out, the trial is proceeding under charges of conspiracy to commit attempted murder. In October, the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) hard-liner Hasan Cengic, a Bosniak, was acquitted of charges that he facilitated arms trading and arms production during the 1992-95 war. Cengic is known for his hard-line role within the SDA and for his continued business association with foreign extremist groups. In September, in cooperation with the Regional Security Officer at the American Embassy in Sarajevo, police apprehended a man who had phoned in a bomb

threat to the Embassy. In December, the man pleaded guilty to endangering internationally protected persons, which is not a terrorism charge.

Six new state-level institutions with counterterrorism responsibilities have been developed since 2000. Some of these are operational, while others remained nascent, with more authority on paper than actual capacity. The six are:

- The State Border Service (SBS);
- The State Investigative and Protection Agency (SIPA);
- The Ministry of Security (MoS);
- The BiH State Court and State Prosecutor's Office;
- The Foreign Affairs Service (FAS); and
- The Bosnian State Intelligence and Security Agency (OSA).

The State Border Service was the most fully operational. It is responsible for controlling the country's four international airports and 55 international border crossings that are spread across 1,551 kilometers. The SBS is considered one of the better border services in Southeast Europe and is one of the few truly multiethnic institutions in Bosnia. However, a number of illegal crossing points remain that the SBS does not control, including dirt paths and river fords. Many official checkpoints remain understaffed.

In February, Bosnian authorities from the State, the Republika Srpska, the Federation, and the Brcko District agreed to form a single joint registry of all NGOs and associations in Bosnia. All parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create a single registry database at the Ministry of Justice. The government remained vigilant against previously shut NGOs renewing their activities. Authorities continued to investigate other organizations, private companies, and individuals for links to terrorist financing.

Aktivna Islamska Omladina (Active Islamic Youth, or AIO) is a Bosnian-bred non-governmental organization whose stated goal is to establish an Islamic state in Bosnia and Herzegovina based on a fundamentalist interpretation of the Koran. Individuals with ties to the so-called "El Mujahid Brigade," a wartime unit comprised mainly of foreign extremists, founded AIO in the city of Zenica in 1995. The group advocates religious intolerance and openly labels Christianity and Judaism enemies of Islam. Its activists teach young Bosniaks a strict literal form of Islam under the guise of operating youth centers, summer camps, Internet cafes, and other outreach activities. AIO has branch offices throughout Bosnia, and a growing presence of active members in Western Europe and the United States. AIO sponsors SAFF magazine, a weekly print and on-line publication notable for its anti-Semitic and anti-Western rhetoric, interviews, and exposes. Although not circulated widely, SAFF is the AIO's most important instrument in spreading its message to the Bosniak population.

Bosnia and Herzegovina sent a 36-member explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) unit to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom; this unit began its second rotation in Iraq in November.

Bulgaria

Bulgarian responses to terrorism included numerous official public statements, efforts to assist with international terrorism investigations, and participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan. Bulgaria's support consisted of 75 military personnel, including staff officers, a mechanized infantry platoon, and military instructors. In addition, one Bulgarian battalion with 386 personnel served in Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Financial Intelligence Agency (FIA) was charged with inspecting financial institutions and investigating transactions valued at or above 30,000 Bulgarian lev (approximately U.S.\$ 18,750). It remained vigilant against terrorist financing and continued to cooperate with the U.S. Government in identifying terrorist assets. The FIA distributed lists of individuals and organizations linked to terrorism to all banks in Bulgaria, the Ministry of Interior, Customs, and the Border Police. The FIA coordinated information received on searches for persons and entities named in Executive Order 13224 lists. It also provided feedback, including information on the response level of Bulgarian banks, to the U.S. Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FINCEN), as well as to the U.S. Embassy. In addition, the FIA provided statistics to the United States on suspicious transactions that were referred to the Prosecutor General for further action.

In February, Bulgarian security services and their Irish counterparts uncovered a plan by individuals reportedly linked to the Irish Republican Army (IRA) to move money through a Bulgarian bank, allegedly for money laundering purposes.

Croatia

Croatia backed up its stated commitment to the global war on terror with concrete contributions. It deployed to Afghanistan the sixth rotation of a 50-person military contingent, attached to the ISAF, that included 43 Military Police personnel assigned to a multinational MP company. In addition, Croatia deployed a three-person team of one diplomat and two civilian police to the German-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Feyzabad, and a four-person team to a combined medical unit.

Cyprus

Cyprus generally supported international efforts to block and freeze terrorist assets, implemented Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations, and conformed to EU directives on counterterrorism. The Cypriot Government drafted legislation to restructure, modernize, and strengthen Cyprus' Central Intelligence Service (KYP) for the first time since the Republic was founded.

Cyprus' legal framework for investigating and prosecuting terrorist-related activity remained weak. There was some debate about possible amendments to the Cypriot constitution, but no political consensus has yet developed.

Although Cypriot law enforcement and intelligence services were generally cooperative on counterterrorism, legal and constitutional restrictions made it difficult for Cyprus to investigate and prosecute terrorism-related activities effectively. A recent change to evidentiary law allows the introduction of hearsay evidence in court proceedings, but information obtained through wiretaps and direct surveillance is prohibited. Further changes to strengthen the laws of evidence would make a real difference, but this likely would require amending the constitution. Meanwhile, Cyprus is working on a number of laws that could strengthen counterterrorism capabilities. These include new legislation aimed at modernizing and restructuring the Cypriot Central Intelligence Service (KYP) and a new law on arms brokering intended to bring Cypriot practices in line with an EU common position.

In July, the Government of Cyprus and the United States signed a ship boarding agreement under the auspices of the Proliferation Security Initiative. The Cypriot Parliament ratified the agreement in November. This was the United States' first such agreement with an EU member state. With the world's ninth largest commercial fleet, Cyprus is a strong ally in U.S. efforts to regulate international maritime traffic to reduce the risk of both WMD proliferation and terrorism. Cypriot Government officials made significant improvements to Cyprus' offshore industry regulation as a result of efforts to bring Cypriot law and practice into accordance with EU requirements. Cyprus was also an advocate for the completion of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) and followed the EU position on the text.

The United States and Cyprus cooperated closely on issues related to terrorist finance and money laundering. The U.S. Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) and the Cypriot Financial Intelligence Unit (MOKAS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding designed to formalize and enhance their historically excellent relations.

Although Cyprus established an effective legal framework with regard to export controls -- with Cyprus Customs as the lead enforcement entity -- it did not establish a cohesive export control system. Police and customs officers need additional training in areas of basic inspection, equipment utilization, and familiarization.

“Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.”

The United States does not recognize the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus,” nor does any other country except Turkey. That entity cannot sign treaties, international conventions and protocols, or other international agreements. Moreover, the area administered by Turkish Cypriots lacked the legal and institutional framework necessary to combat money laundering and terrorist financing effectively. Within these limitations, authorities in the Turkish Cypriot-controlled north cooperated with the United States in pursuing specific counterterrorism-related objectives.

The “Green Line” between northern and southern Cyprus is relatively porous. Turkish Cypriot authorities recently adopted new "legislation" strengthening controls against illegal immigration and tightening "citizenship" requirements. The large Turkish troop presence in the north acted as a deterrent to open Kongra-Gel/PKK activity.

In the north, Turkish Cypriot authorities lacked the legal and institutional framework to meet minimum international standards on combating money laundering and terrorist finance. Nevertheless, the Turkish Cypriot community took some steps to prevent terrorist financing within its banking institutions. The Turkish Cypriot "Central Bank," for example, regularly asked financial institutions to search for any assets linked to individuals or entities designated as terrorists by the United States and/or the UN 1267 Committee. Turkish Cypriot authorities also committed to prepare and implement new legislation to prevent money laundering and improve oversight of casinos, offshore banks, and currency exchange points.

Czech Republic

Whether providing military assistance in Iraq and Afghanistan or assisting the United States in routine investigations, the Czech Republic proved itself a reliable partner in preventing possible terrorist activity.

In October, the Czech Parliament ratified the UN Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. This action marked the final step in providing the Czech Government the appropriate legal, regulatory, and statutory mechanisms to combat terrorist financiers more effectively.

Pursuant to a U.S. arrest warrant and INTERPOL Red Notice, Czech authorities in December arrested Oussama Kassir, a Lebanese-born Swedish national, while he was in transit from Stockholm to Lebanon. Kassir was wanted in the United States on allegations that he had conspired to provide material support to terrorists in the planned establishment of a terrorist training camp in Bly, Oregon. At the end of 2005, Kassir remained in Czech custody pending extradition to the United States.

Denmark

Acting under provisions of its 2002 counterterrorism law, Danish authorities made several arrests on terrorism-related charges. In the fall, Danish police arrested seven persons on suspicion of planning a suicide attack in Europe. At year's end, Danish prosecutors were still holding and considering whether to press charges against five of the detainees. The Danish Government's actions were related to the Bosnian police's arrests of a Swede and a Danish citizen of Turkish origin. Both were accused of possessing a significant quantity of explosives.

In September, Danish police also arrested Said Mansour, a Danish citizen originally from Morocco, on charges of distributing terrorist recruiting materials. At year's end, police were also reportedly investigating possible links between Mansour and the five persons still detained on suspicion of planning a suicide attack in Europe. He remained in police custody at the end of the year, pending trial. Mansour previously served a 90-day sentence from December 2004 on weapons possession charges.

Danish prosecutors pressed charges against the Danish NGO "Revolt" (Opror) after the group's spokesman, Patrick MacManus, informed local media that the group had raised and transferred funds to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). In December, the Danish Justice Minister announced that Danish prosecutors would press charges against the Danish chapter of al-Aqsa for raising funds for HAMAS.

The Danish Government cooperated with regional and international terrorist fora. Within the European Union, it implemented the designation of terrorist organizations through its obligations under the EU's terrorism finance, UNSCR 1267, and Clearinghouse mechanisms. Denmark continued to deploy more than 500 military personnel in southern Iraq to assist with security and reconstruction efforts, and contributed more than 170 military personnel to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Denmark also chaired the UN Security Council's Counterterrorism Committee in 2005.

Estonia

Numerous Estonian police, security, rescue, and emergency response agencies participated in a large U.S.-funded (International Counterproliferation Program) two-week counterterrorism/non-proliferation exercise from October 27 to November 4. The exercise was showcased to representatives and observers from Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, France, Britain, and Sweden.

Estonia contributed explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) specialists as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan operating in Kabul. In December, Parliament renewed the Afghanistan troop mandate for up to two years and increased the limit on Estonian participation by 150 troops to support a UK-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in southern Afghanistan. In Iraq, the Estonian infantry platoon ESTPLA-11 was stationed in Baghdad under the command of the 1st Armored Division of the U.S. Army. In December, Parliament renewed the mandate of Estonian troops in Iraq for 12 months. Estonia contributed to the NATO training mission in Iraq, donated 50,000 euros to the NATO Iraq Fund, and had two constitutional experts on call to support the drafting of Iraq's constitution.

Finland

Finland remained strongly committed to Afghan reconstruction; the government aimed to provide 10 million euros in development and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan on an annual basis. Approximately 100 Finnish troops were deployed in Afghanistan in support of ongoing ISAF operations, and a number of Finnish civilian crisis management experts were working in Afghanistan as well.

Interior Minister Rajamaki visited Washington in July for discussions with Justice and Homeland Security officials, and other Finnish officials participated in training courses in the United States. Finland actively supported and took part in European Union counterterrorism efforts, and participated in a number of EU and OSCE-sponsored events.

New regulations entered into force on October 1, requiring ships to submit security-related information prior to entry into port. Finland signed a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) with the United States in late 2004. The treaty is awaiting ratification by the Finnish Parliament.

Finnish security police maintained a dedicated counterterrorism unit. Finland has national authority to freeze terrorist assets. The Money Laundering Clearinghouse performed investigations on all individuals suspected of financing terrorist acts, including all individuals and entities on the UN 1267 Sanctions Committee's consolidated list. In the event that such assets are identified, they can be immediately frozen while a criminal investigation occurs either in Finland or abroad.

In cases when another government presented a legal request for action or when an individual or organization was suspected of having committed an offense within Finland's borders, Finland implemented regulations that allowed it to freeze assets without EU or UN approval. Finland amended its criminal code to make it possible to sentence leaders of terrorist groups to 15 years in jail, although the group has to have actually committed an act of terrorism in Finland before investigation or prosecution can begin. If the charge includes murder, the maximum sentence is life imprisonment.

France

France continued to uncover and dismantle terror networks present on its soil, including several that recruited terrorists to Iraq. Following the London bombings, French officials worked closely with their British counterparts. Perceiving a number of deficiencies in their counterterrorism capabilities, France proposed legislation to remedy these deficiencies. Since March, the French Government has been drafting a white book on terrorism.

At the political and diplomatic level, France continued its engagement within the UNSC Counterterrorism Committee and the G8's Counterterrorism Action Group. On the military front, its Special Forces participated in counterterrorist operations in Afghanistan and as a part of Task Force 150, a multinational naval force that patrolled the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf to interdict the movement of suspected terrorists between Afghanistan and the Arabian Peninsula. In Afghanistan, French Mirage-2000 fighters flew with USAF fighters to assist American and Afghan ground troops.

France continued to develop the competencies and capabilities of TRACFIN, the Ministry of Finance's terrorism financing coordination and investigation unit. Within the European Union, France played an active role in the Clearinghouse, the EU process for designating terrorist organizations under UNSCR 1373. France has not designated HAMAS-affiliated charities, such as the French-based Comite de Bienfaisance et de Secours aux Palestiniens, arguing that they have no proven links to terrorism. France also opposed EU designation of Lebanese Hizballah as a terrorist organization, although it supported Hizballah's eventual disarmament, which it maintained would result in Hizballah's gradual integration into Lebanese politics.

France cooperated closely with the United States in pressing for implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1559. This resolution reaffirmed a call for the strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout Lebanon; it also called for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias.

French and Spanish authorities jointly made significant progress in combating Basque separatist groups, including Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA). In the first use of the EU arrest warrant for terrorism, French authorities extradited ETA suspect Unai Berrostequieta Eguiara to Spain on February 18.

The counterterrorism section of the Paris prosecutor's office usually led the French Government's terrorism investigations. Investigative judges, who in the French system combine prosecutorial and judicial powers, concentrated on Islamic/international terrorism, Basque/ETA terrorism, and terrorism linked to Corsican separatist groups. Their mandate was extensive and included terrorist acts on French soil and acts abroad that affected French citizens. In March, then-Justice Minister Dominique Perben announced the hiring of four additional judges to investigate terrorism, along with additional support staff, bringing the number of specialized terrorism investigation judges to nine.

The government continued its policy of expulsion for non-French citizens engaged in activities that promoted hate. Interior Minister Sarkozy announced October 4 that 19 Islamic extremists had been expelled from France since the beginning of the year; 102 have been expelled since 2002. In March, the CSA, France's equivalent of the FCC, ordered the Eutelsat satellite company to cease transmitting Sahar 1, an Iranian television station, because of its anti-Semitic and hate-filled broadcasting. Following the CSA's banning of Hizballah-affiliated al-Manar satellite television, Hizballah deputies lobbied the French Government in 2005 to lift the ban. Separately, the Conseil d'Etat, France's highest administrative court, reviewed an appeal by al-Manar to reinstate its broadcasting license.

French officials were concerned about the role of prisons in converting petty criminals into terrorists. Prisons served as a center of recruitment for the Safe Bourrada terror network that was dismantled in late September. According to statistics provided by the Ministry of Justice in September, 358 people are imprisoned for terrorism; of these, 159 are Basque-related, 94 are Islamic extremists, and 76 are Corsica-related.

Under French law, terrorism suspects may be detained for up to 96 hours before charges are filed. The new bill proposed extending the 96-hour period an additional 48 hours, for a maximum total detention of six days. Suspects can be held for up to three and a half years in pretrial detention while the investigation against them continues. Other measures in the bill included increasing the maximum penalty for association with a terrorist enterprise from ten to 20 years in prison, and increasing the maximum penalty for terrorist enterprise organizers from 20 to 30 years in prison. The National Assembly approved the bill in late November.

On January 26, French police arrested 11 people, three of whom eventually were charged with terrorism conspiracy, in Paris' 19th arrondissement for reportedly recruiting young French

residents to launch terrorist attacks in Iraq. It was the first arrest since the opening in September 2004 of an investigation by the Paris prosecutor's office into "Jihadists to Iraq." French intelligence, security, and judicial authorities consistently identified the conflict in Iraq as an attractive force for French extremists and made a number of arrests in 2005. French officials stated in November that 22 young people had left for Iraq, and at least seven were killed there, including two suicide bombers.

Djamel Beghal, the ringleader of a group arrested in 2001 on suspicion of planning to bomb the U.S. Embassy in Paris, was convicted March 15 for terrorist conspiracy. Beghal received the maximum ten-year sentence; his five accomplices were also found guilty and received sentences ranging from one to nine years in prison.

The last three French nationals detained at Guantanamo were transferred to French custody on March 7, following the transfer of four other nationals in 2004. France released Mustaq Ali Patel in March and Imad Kanouni in July. The other five remain in pretrial detention and could be charged with terrorist conspiracy. The former Guantanamo detainees' detention has withstood multiple appeals by defense lawyers.

On April 24, French police in Paris arrested Said al-Maghrebi, an Afghanistan training camp veteran, on suspicion of organizing potential terrorists to fight in Iraq. Four others reportedly belonging to al-Maghrebi's network were arrested in Paris and Marseilles. Two were later released.

A French court on May 16 declared five people guilty of organizing logistic support for the suicide bombers who assassinated Afghan commander Ahmed Shah Massoud on September 9, 2001. The five were sentenced to between two and nine years' imprisonment.

On May 20, a Paris court condemned Corsican nationalist Charles Pieri to ten years in prison for terrorism finance conspiracy and extortion.

French police arrested nine people in late September on suspicion of belonging to a terrorist group. According to press reports, the group, reportedly led by GSPC sympathizer and convicted terrorist Safe Bourrada, was in the initial phases of planning terrorist attacks against targets in France, including the Paris Metro, Orly Airport, and the headquarters of the DST, France's internal security service. Four more suspected members of the Bourrada network were arrested in early October.

British authorities transferred Rashid Ramda to French custody on December 1. Ramda is the suspected financier of the 1995 GIA attacks in the Saint-Michel RER train station, the Musee d'Orsay RER train station, and the Maison-Blanche Metro station. Ramda had been in British custody for the last ten years; his extradition to France removed a major irritant in French-British relations.

On December 12, French police arrested approximately 25 people on charges of support for terrorism. The alleged ringleader is Ouassini Cherifi, a French-Algerian who spent time in prison for passport fraud.

The judicial investigation into the activities of six suspected members of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) arrested in 2004 continued. The six suspects were held in pretrial detention and are alleged to have provided logistical support to those who committed the March 2004 Madrid bombings.

Judicial investigations continued following the 2003 arrests of German national Christian Ganczarski and Moroccan national Karim Mehdi, who are suspected of ties to al-Qaida. Both remained in pretrial detention in France.

Investigations into the "Chechen network," a loose grouping reported to have links with the Beghal network and the Frankfurt network (which attempted in 2000 to attack cultural sites in Strasbourg, including the cathedral) concluded, although a trial date for those arrested was not set. Several suspected members of the "Chechen network" were arrested in France; members of that network allegedly were interested in using chemical agents to commit terrorist attacks.

Georgia

More than 90 Georgian Government officials participated in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) programs. These graduates provided valuable criminal investigative assistance to a number of high-profile criminal incidents, including a car bomb explosion in Gori, Georgia, and an incident in May in Tbilisi's Freedom Square in which a deranged individual threw a grenade at President George W. Bush during his public address. The United States began a new military training program in Georgia aimed at supporting Georgia's efforts to assist in the stabilization of Iraq, where Georgia currently has 850 troops.

Georgian internal troops continued to carry out operations to rid the Pankisi Gorge of terrorists. The identification and safe removal of hidden weapon caches in the Pankisi area enabled Georgian security forces to better secure it and to protect against terrorist acts or transit. Although border guard and customs reform continued, Georgia was still used to a limited degree as a transit state for weapons and money. Georgia made efforts to close its borders to those who wished to smuggle money, weapons, and supplies, but was hindered in particular by corruption at border checkpoints.

Germany

German cooperation with the United States on the counterterrorism front remained strong, although sometimes limited by German laws and procedures. Throughout the year, German law enforcement authorities conducted numerous actions against individuals, organizations, and mosques suspected of involvement in terrorism. In some cases, German authorities charged individuals with membership in terrorist organizations, specifically al-Qaida, Ansar al-Islam, or the Kongra-Gel/PKK. In other instances, German officials took action against crimes such as document fraud, illegal residency, or weapons law violations.

As of the end of the year, German authorities were investigating 186 cases of terrorism-related crimes nationwide; there were a few high profile cases where German courts did not convict suspects accused of terrorism and related crimes.

German laws and traditional procedures, as well as the courts' long-standing and expansive view of civil liberties, sometimes limited the success of cases prosecutors brought to trial. On August 19, a Hamburg court convicted Moroccan citizen Mounir el Motassadeq in a retrial for his membership in a terrorist organization and sentenced him to seven years in prison. A Hamburg court released another "Hamburg cell" suspect, Moroccan citizen Abdelghani Mzoudi, in February 2004, based on the claim that prosecutors were unable to obtain potentially exculpatory evidence presumably held by the United States. Prosecutors appealed, but on June 9 a federal court upheld the acquittal. German officials had already begun the process to expel Mzoudi when he voluntarily departed Germany for Morocco on June 21, on the eve of his deportation.

On December 15, a German panel of three judges released Mohammed Ali Hamadi, convicted by a German court in 1989 for the 1985 killing of U.S. Navy diver Robert D. Stethem and the hijacking of a TWA flight. Although sentenced to life in prison, according to German law Hamadi was eligible for parole after 15 years' imprisonment. The judicial panel rejected Hamadi's release when they first considered it in late 2001. When he was released, Hamadi had served 19 years in jail. Senior USG officials had strongly urged German authorities not to release Hamadi.

On May 31, a Bavarian court began the trial of Iraqi citizen Lokman Amin Mohammed, accused of logistical, financial, and recruiting support for Ansar al-Islam.

German law enforcement officials arrested three alleged members of Ansar al-Islam in December 2004 on charges of plotting an attack on then-Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi during his visit to Berlin. On November 16, the Federal Prosecutor formally charged them with the planned murder of Allawi, financial crimes, and membership in, financing, and recruiting for a foreign terrorist organization. All three remained in custody with legal proceedings underway.

A Berlin court convicted Tunisian national Ishan Garnaoui on April 6 on charges of tax evasion, illegal possession of weapons, and violation of the immigration law. The court sentenced him to three years and nine months in prison, but acquitted him of the terrorism charges. Prosecutors are appealing the terrorism acquittal. Garnaoui was first arraigned in March 2003 for attempting to form a terrorist organization and planning to attack U.S. and Jewish targets in Germany.

On October 26, a Düsseldorf court convicted four members of the al Tawhid terrorist group on charges of membership in a terrorist organization, forgery, and violations of weapons laws. They were sentenced to prison terms ranging from five to eight years. The court established that the group's leader was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and that the defendants had planned terrorist attacks against Jewish and Israeli targets in Berlin and Düsseldorf.

In October 2004, German authorities arrested Syrian-German dual national Mamoun Darkazanli for extradition to Spain, where a 2003 arrest warrant accused him of membership in al-Qaida and providing it logistical and financial support. German authorities used the new EU arrest warrant, which enables swifter German extradition of its own citizens. On July 18, however, the German Constitutional Court voided the German law implementing the EU arrest warrant, criticized its lack of protections for German nationals, and ordered Darkazanli released. The Justice Minister immediately announced she would act to get the provision reinstated. German authorities have not indicted Darkazanli under German law.

The German Interior Ministry used its authority under the Law on Associations to ban organizations that it believed were connected to terrorist groups. Germany has banned a number of such organizations in recent years. On August 30, the Interior Ministry banned Yatim Children's Aid on the grounds of its being a successor organization to al-Aqsa. The Interior Ministry had banned the al-Aqsa Foundation in 2002 on the grounds that it provided financial support to HAMAS; a German court upheld the ban in 2004. The European Union added al-Aqsa to its list of entities subject to asset freezes in 2005, following a German proposal. On February 25, Germany banned the Yeni Akit publishing house in Moerfelden-Walldorf on the grounds of distributing anti-Semitic, anti-Western, and anti-Israeli propaganda.

German authorities issued several indictments and made a number of arrests related to the Turkish terrorist group Kongra-Gel/PKK. The Federal Prosecutor charged some with positions of leadership in Kongra-Gel fundraising. German officials arrested one prominent suspect, but a German court subsequently released him, finding that there was insufficient evidence from Turkey, which had requested his extradition. On September 5 the Interior Ministry banned E. Xani Press and Publishing Company, publisher of the pro Kongra-Gel newspaper "Ozgur Politika", on the grounds of its being its mouthpiece. E. Xani appealed the ban, and at the end of October the courts suspended the ban.

Germany participated in Department of Homeland Security programs to combat terrorism, including the Container Security Initiative in the ports of Hamburg and Bremerhaven. The Transportation Security Administration's presence in Frankfurt, together with U.S. and German air marshals, formed key parts of bilateral efforts to provide air transport security for the six German airports with flights to the United States.

In a German initiative, Germany and five other EU countries signed an agreement on May 27 that deepened law enforcement cooperation. The agreement enabled faster sharing of information, DNA, and fingerprint data.

Germany proposed several names for designation by the UN Security Council 1267 Committee to enable worldwide asset freezes and travel bans. The United Nations added those names to its list of individuals and entities on December 6.

Greece

With improved counterterrorism infrastructure in place following the August 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece continued its work to fight domestic and international terrorism throughout the year. In October, the Greek Government passed a bill aimed at combating money laundering and terror finance, bringing Greek legislation in line with EU directives. Under the new legislation, the Greek Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) enjoyed broadened investigative authority; financing terrorism is defined as a predicate offense and subject to harsh penalties. Greece signed the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism in November.

Greece sustained its participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan by continuing to provide a unit from the Greek Corps of Engineers and a NATO medical unit in Kabul. In October, Greece took the lead for security at Kabul International Airport.

Appellate courts released Christos Tsigaridas, a convicted terrorist and founding member of the domestic terrorist group People's Revolutionary Struggle (ELA), for a variety of medical conditions. The courts also suspended on medical grounds the sentence of Pavlos Serifis, a convicted member of the leftist terrorist group 17 November (17N). Serifis attracted media attention upon his release by filing a petition with the European Court of Human Rights to protest the "inhumane conditions" of his imprisonment. The Court accepted the petition, and other 17N prisoners have since lodged complaints on similar grounds. In November, another convicted ELA member, Eirini Athanassaki, had her 25-year sentence suspended unanimously by an appellate court so that she could care for her elderly and ailing parents. Despite these releases, a Greek court in October denied the plea for release on medical grounds of 17N prisoner Savvas Xiros, whose botched bombing attempt in June 2002 led to his arrest and the subsequent arrest and trial of several members of the 17N organization.

In July, after a five-month process, a second trial for members of the ELA terrorist organization resulted in acquittals for all six defendants. The court tried the defendants in connection with a 1985-1995 bombing campaign against government buildings and the 1994 bombing of a police bus that resulted in the death of an officer. Three of the six defendants were already serving 25-year sentences for other ELA offenses, which were unaffected by the acquittals. Yannis Serifis, a cousin of Pavlos Serifis and suspected terrorist leader himself who was tried and acquitted in 2003 for his ties to 17N, stood trial for the first time as a member of the ELA. Authorities alleged that Serifis was involved in the 1994 police officer's murder, but the court acquitted him on all charges due to lack of evidence.

A group appeals trial for fifteen 17N convicts and two previously acquitted individuals opened December 2. In December 2003, Greek courts had handed down multiple life sentences to key 17N members who were responsible over the years for hundreds of crimes and the murders of 13 Greeks and five U.S. Government employees. The appeals trials essentially represented a new trial for the convicts, since new facts and evidence can be introduced in the Greek judicial system. Additionally, Constantinos Avramidis, a self-confessed member of anarchist organizations, was arrested and indicted as a member of 17N

in October. His trial still was not scheduled by the end of the year. Top Greek law enforcement officials maintained that further investigation of 17N suspects and evidence is ongoing, and that the case is not considered closed.

Similarly, police officials have not closed their investigation of the December 2004 killing of a Greek Special Guard at his post outside the residence of the British Defense Attaché. Greek authorities continued to regard this case as a domestic terrorist incident.

Anarchists periodically attacked what they call “imperialist-capitalist targets” with such tools as firebombs and Molotov cocktails. Since these attacks usually occurred in the middle of the night, few persons were seriously injured and there were no deaths. The perpetrators were not caught. Police have made some inroads against the anarchists; after a May incident in which anarchists threw Molotov cocktails at a police bus and stole police riot gear, police arrested two suspects in July after observing them attempting to dispose of the gear. The three suspects (another was arrested shortly thereafter) were charged on several felony counts. They remained in custody awaiting trial and were the subject of periodic demonstrations of support by the anarchist community.

Hungary

Hungary continued to support U.S. counterterrorism initiatives and contributed 186 personnel to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Hungary fields a light infantry reconnaissance company, a non-combatant medical unit, and a contingent of air traffic controllers. In addition, 18 Hungarian personnel are assigned to the NATO training mission in Iraq. Hungary donated to the Iraqi Army 77 T-72 tanks and four support vehicles that arrived in time for the crucial December parliamentary elections.

U.S.- Hungarian cooperation on export and border controls is outstanding. In September, the United States and Hungary signed a cooperative agreement for the destruction of Hungary's stockpile of 1,540 SA-7 man portable air defense systems (MANPADS) missiles and related equipment. Final destruction and verification were completed later in the year.

Iceland

In May, Iceland signed both the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism CETS No. 196 and the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure, and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism CETS No. 198.

In support of maritime security, the Government of Iceland gave increased attention to scenarios involving large passenger and cargo vessels. In August, the Icelandic EOD unit conducted a bomb disposal exercise at Sundahofn port in Reykjavik on an American cruise liner, the Seven Seas Navigator.

Ireland

There were notable positive developments in Irish counterterrorism cooperation. A remarkable change from 2004 was the September 26 decommissioning of weapons by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA). In addition, Ireland passed new counterterrorism legislation, signed a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) with the United States, and came into compliance with a 2004 UN International Maritime Organization code.

On March 9, the Irish Government made strides in strengthening counterterrorism legislation when President Mary McAleese signed the Criminal Justice (Terrorism Offenses) Bill into law. It enabled Ireland to ratify and accede to four international conventions and protocols on terrorism, and significantly strengthened the government's ability to seize assets and prosecute those suspected of supporting terrorism.

Before this law was passed, authorities could only pursue and prosecute terrorist suspects if they committed criminal offenses in Ireland or were designated by the United Nations or EU. On September 15, Ireland signed, subject to ratification, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

In July, the government completed the installation of new counterterrorist security measures at Irish international seaports, bringing Ireland into compliance with the UN International Maritime Organization (IMO) code established in July 2004. These arrangements are aimed at preventing a terrorist strike on Ireland or the use of Irish ports for an attack on another country. In July, the Irish Justice Minister and the U.S. Ambassador signed a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) to further increase cooperation in the fight against global crime and terrorism. This agreement allows for more bilateral cooperation in police investigations and updated rules on extraditions. Nonetheless, the Irish courts' restrictive approach to carrying out extraditions continued to be of concern to U.S. officials.

In August, three men who had been found guilty in Colombia of aiding Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) terrorists secretly returned to Ireland to escape Colombian prison sentences. They were detained and questioned by the Irish national police but released without charge. The Colombian Government requested their extradition. Ireland does not have an extradition treaty with Colombia, but the case remains under review. The Irish Director of Public Prosecutions is investigating whether charges can be brought against one of the three for traveling on a false passport.

On July 28, a spokesman for the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) made a statement calling for an end to the PIRA's armed campaign and instructed its members to cease all forms of illegal PIRA activity. The Independent International Commission on Decommissioning announced on September 26 its judgment that the PIRA had "put beyond use ... all the arms in the IRA's possession." The Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) reported that since the September decommissioning, PIRA did not demonstrate any evidence of training and recruitment of terrorists or intent to return to violence.

The IMC released reports on paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. The Seventh Report of the IMC, published in October, analyzed continued activity in the Republic of Ireland by the following terrorist groups:

The Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA) maintained its terrorist capacity and was capable of effective sporadic attacks. The IMC reported that CIRA intends to continue to engage in terrorism and other crime. In the Republic, two CIRA members were arrested in January in possession of an under-car explosive, and nine members were imprisoned for charges related to 2003 arrests. Two members were also convicted of unlawful possession of firearms. In December, the Special Criminal Court in Dublin charged a man with possession of an improvised explosive device and membership in an unlawful organization styling itself the Irish Republican Army. Police are investigating his links to CIRA. The case was still pending at year's end.

The Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA) continued to be a threat. The IMC reported that RIRA is committed to terrorism as a result of its continued efforts to gain and train members in the use of explosives. In the Republic, five people were convicted of membership in RIRA this year.

In the first half of 2005, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) maintained its capacity as a terrorist organization. The IMC reported during this period that PIRA decreased its involvement in violence, but increased its participation in organized criminal activity. It was unclear how active PIRA was in the Irish Republic, but Irish Government officials suspected continued recruitment of members until the July 28 statement ending PIRA's armed campaign. Prior to this statement, the Justice Minister estimated there were approximately 1,500 active members in PIRA.

Italy

Italy worked to fight terrorism within its borders, cooperated internationally, and participated in Coalition activities with a strong military presence in peacekeeping operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Italy's law enforcement authorities maintained an initiative against locally based terrorist suspects through investigations, detentions, prosecutions, and expulsions. In extensive raids throughout Italy on May 18-19, law enforcement officials arrested 18 individuals associated with the Moroccan Islamic Combat Group and Ansar al-Islam. After the July 7 bombings in London, Italian law enforcement officials detained multiple terrorist suspects and quickly passed enhanced counterterrorism legislation that increased the government's ability to expel extremists considered a threat to national security, authorized improved surveillance techniques, and brought Internet operators under state supervision.

Italy expelled 13 individuals in the interest of national security, including Turin-based Imam Bouchta Bouriki. The closely coordinated investigation, arrest, and extradition of failed London suicide bomber Hamdi Isaac is an example of effective international cooperation. Law enforcement authorities arrested Casablanca bombing suspect El Bahri Abdelouahed on May 9. Italy has submitted more names of suspected terrorist financiers to the UN 1267 Committee than any country other than the United States.

A controversial judicial decision to release three suspected terrorists, on the grounds that their activities to recruit fighters for the insurgency in Iraq did not “necessarily constitute terrorist activity,” complicated the government's aggressive campaign to pursue terrorist suspects and resulted in calls for increased coordination of national terrorism prosecutions.

Domestic anarchist-inspired terrorist groups presented a diminished threat as a result of Italian authorities' continued efforts to dismantle their organizations. However, the Informal Anarchic Federation claimed responsibility for a series of small package bombs causing minimal damage. Extremist groups protesting a high-speed train line between Turin and Lyon, France, caused considerable disruption and also threatened violence.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan authorities recognized an indigenous extremist problem following the revelation of participation by Kazakhs in the terrorist bombings in neighboring Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 2004. Since then, the government has improved counterterrorist legislation and has stepped up cooperation with the United States.

The trial of 16 individuals accused of participating in the 2004 Tashkent bombings resulted in their conviction in December 2005, with sentences of six to 25 years in prison. At the end of 2005, the Kazakh Parliament was working on a terrorist financing law to make it easier for prosecutors to win convictions.

Kazakhstan had a growing problem with the Islamic extremist group Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), an extremist political movement advocating the establishment of a theocratic Islamic state throughout the entire Muslim world. HT walked a fine line between free speech and incitement to terrorism, thus creating a high level of concern among Kazakh authorities. Because existing counterterrorist legislation did not provide legal grounds to designate HT as a terrorist group, the government adopted in February the Law on Extremism creating a new, albeit poorly defined, legal category of banned "extremist" organizations. To date, HT is the only group designated under this new law. The United States has no evidence that HT committed acts of international terrorism, but the group's radical anti-American and anti-Semitic ideology is sympathetic to acts of violence against the United States and its allies.

The United States added the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), sometimes called the Islamic Jihad Group (IJG), to its list of designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations. The IJU is a terrorist splinter group from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) that appeared in southern Kazakhstan. (See Chapter 8, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, for further information.)

Kazakhstan, along with China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, is a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which established a regional antiterrorism center in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan is also a member of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasia Group, a regional anti-money laundering organization, or Financial Action Task Force-style regional body, that includes Belarus, China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Russia. Kazakhstani cooperation and timeliness in sharing terror-related

information with the United States improved. In November, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Defense Threat Reduction Organization held a one-week training class in Kazakhstan on combating terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Kazakhstani participants were drawn from the Committee for National Security, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Border Guards, and the Atomic Energy Commission.

Kyrgyzstan

Following the change of government in March, Kyrgyzstan remained a dependable and outspoken ally in the global war on terror, taking political, legislative, and law enforcement initiatives to disrupt and deter terrorism. In August President Bakiyev signed a law on counteracting extremist activities. In September he signed a decree creating a special agency targeting terrorism financing and money laundering. In October, however, the Parliament rejected by one vote a draft law on money laundering that would have increased Kyrgyzstan's efforts in fighting terrorism financing and opened up further international cooperation.

Kyrgyzstan's military and internal forces worked to improve their counterterrorism capabilities and to expand cooperation with regional partners in 2005. Kyrgyzstan is a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO), which established lists of banned terrorist groups in an effort to streamline cooperation. With U.S. assistance, the Kyrgyz National Guard opened a counterterrorism training center in January.

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), banned as an extremist group since 2003, is a political movement that advocates the overthrow of existing governments and their replacement by a borderless state throughout the Muslim world. HT is highly secretive and organized on a cell-based structure. It has followers in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Germany, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and the Middle East. Local specialists estimate that there are more than 5,000 HT members in Kyrgyzstan, located primarily among Kyrgyzstan's ethnic Uzbek population in the south but with growing support in the north as well. Although the government generally does not arrest individuals for being members of HT, police detained 73 individuals this year for distributing HT literature and shut down a HT printing facility in Jalalabad in May.

The United States has no evidence that HT has committed any acts of international terrorism, but the group's radical anti-American and anti-Semitic ideology is sympathetic to acts of violence against the United States and its allies. HT has publicly called on Muslims to travel to Iraq and Afghanistan to fight Coalition forces.

Latvia

Latvia contributed troops to Coalition efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and cooperated productively with the United States on money laundering and terrorist finance concerns.

Latvia's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) continued to maintain a terrorist financing (OFAC) database that it shared with local banks. Bilateral efforts to combat financial crime

accelerated, and the Latvian Government and Latvian banks continued to take steps to strengthen anti-money laundering and “Know Your Customer” regimes against possible terrorist exploitation. In response to U.S. concerns about financial crime, the Latvian Parliament in May passed an anti-money laundering legislative package that introduced enhanced regulatory and law enforcement measures designed to strengthen the government's ability to combat financial crime.

Latvia contributed a ten-person team to support the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan; in October, the team's mandate was renewed for 12 months. In Iraq, Latvia contributed up to 137 soldiers under Polish command.

Lithuania

In January, the Lithuanian Parliament approved a new national security strategy that cited international terrorism as a threat to Lithuania's security. In September, Lithuania's State Security Department established an antiterrorism division. Lithuanian law enforcement cooperated fully in monitoring and freezing assets of suspected terrorists.

Lithuania had approximately 55 troops in Iraq, including three trainers in the NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I). In Afghanistan, Lithuania has committed to deploying 40 Special Operations Force personnel when their current training rotation ends. Lithuania also leads a Provincial Reconstruction Team in western Afghanistan's remote Ghor Province that undertook water sanitation and bridge-building projects and repaired a community orphanage and mosque.

Macedonia

Macedonia was a ready and willing partner in the global war on terror on multiple fronts, increasing its participation in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Iraq to 40 officers and Special Forces.

The Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance Program office conducted six antiterrorism training courses for Macedonia. More than 120 Macedonian officials participated in this training, which was designed to assist Macedonia in countering the threat of terrorism.

Malta

Malta made significant progress in the area of customs inspection and border security procedures, helped by extensive U.S. assistance. Improvements included establishment both of the authority for Maltese Customs to inspect goods transiting the container port (Malta Freeport) and the necessary procedures for effectively using the container-scanning the Cargo, Vehicle, and Container Inspection System (VACIS) system to prevent the transshipment of WMD material through the Freeport.

In June, the Maltese Parliament approved an amendment to the criminal code to include provisions on terrorism. The bill defined, for the first time, an "act of terror" and "terrorism," and specifically enumerated actions that constitute the offense. The legal notice making this act law has not yet been issued. Regardless, provisions exist in Maltese law that provide adequate opportunity to prosecute and punish terrorist acts or activities.

U.S. and Maltese authorities reached agreement in November on new extradition and legal assistance agreements following more than a year of negotiations.

Malta criminalized terrorist financing in 2005. In 2002, the criminal code was amended in such a way that terrorist financing would meet the standard for categorization as a serious crime under Malta's Prevention of Money Laundering Act. On June 6, the Act was extensively amended and expanded to include provisions on funding of terrorism.

Moldova

Moldova has deployed to Iraq three separate contingents of servicemen, a total of 55, who specialize in demining, liaison, and convoy security. The separatist-controlled Transnistria region of Moldova remains a potential area for terrorist activity. There have been documented instances of contraband smuggling and suspicions of weapons smuggling remain. Moldova participated in a number of theoretical and practical antiterrorism assistance training events, seminars, exchanges, and conferences organized by the U.S. Embassy.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands continued to respond to the global terrorist threat with leadership and energy in the areas of border and shipping security, terrorist financing, and support of efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Netherlands has 378 personnel deployed to the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan's Baghlan province as part of the NATO ISAF mission, and 254 personnel and Special Forces participating in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan since April 18 on a one-year deployment. Dutch OEF personnel and Special Forces troops (more than 700) supported the Afghan elections in August. The Dutch pledged 75 million euros toward the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund to support the transition from humanitarian to reconstruction assistance between 2004 and 2006.

In July, the Amsterdam District Court sentenced Mohammed Bouyeri to life imprisonment for the murder of film director Theo van Gogh, the attempted murder of eight police officers, and threatening the life of MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The court found that Bouyeri acted "with terrorist intent" in November 2004 when he murdered Van Gogh, impeded the work of Hirsi Ali, and possessed a firearm. Bouyeri did not appeal the verdict. Bouyeri is also charged, along with 13 other alleged members of the so-called Hofstad group, with membership in a terrorist organization. The trial of these 14 alleged members of the Hofstad terrorist network began on December 5. The 14, including Bouyeri, were charged with participating in a criminal organization "with terrorist intent." Bouyeri was not sentenced because he is already serving a life term. This was the first case tried under the Terrorist Crimes Act that took effect in August 2004. Under the Act, membership in a terrorist group is a crime; ordinary group

members may be sentenced to a maximum jail sentence of eight years, and leaders to 15 years.

A new terror alert system became operational in June. This early warning system was designed to trigger a clear and rapid response to terrorist threats by both the public and private sector. It linked the sector-specific measures to the latest threat information from the National Counterterrorism Coordinator. There are four alert levels: basic, low, moderate, and high threat. Initially, the port of Rotterdam, Schiphol Airport, the petrochemical industry, the railways, and the water supply sector were included; the natural gas, electricity, and nuclear sectors were added in October. By 2007, a total of 14 sectors will be part of the system. The first bi-annual national counterterrorism exercise, "Operation Bonfire," was held in the spring.

Using national sanctions authority, the Dutch blocked the accounts and financial transactions of a HAMAS fundraiser, the al-Aqsa Foundation, and the al-Qaida-affiliated Benevolence International Nederland in 2003. In July 2004, the Netherlands froze all financial assets of the Dutch branch of al-Haramain. The Dutch have been active in seeking support for an EU designation of Hizballah as a terrorist group. They also played a crucial leadership role in establishment of an informal US-EU dialogue on terrorism finance, pursuant to commitments of the June 2004 US-EU Declaration on Combating Terrorism.

Norway

Alleged Ansar al-Islam leader Mullah Krekar continued to reside freely in Norway but was unable to travel abroad, as his travel documents were confiscated, and he remained under a government expulsion order. In September, the Oslo City Court rejected Krekar's suit against the government's expulsion decision. He appealed, and resolution of his case in the Norwegian courts is expected to take months if not years. The new government said that it will continue to pursue Krekar's expulsion, and that he would be returned to Iraq as soon as there is an agreement with the new Iraqi Government on the conditions for his return.

Poland

Poland worked to fight terrorism within its borders, cooperated in international counterterrorism efforts, and participated in Coalition activities with a strong presence in peacekeeping operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In May, Polish border guards conducted a one-week training program in railway inspections for their counterparts from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Croatia.

Chechen refugees from Russia continued to enter Poland, with 6,500 arriving in 2004. Most of these refugees simply transited Poland to other EU countries. However, some legitimately sought refuge in Poland. Poland granted refuge to 200 Chechen refugees in 2005, while three others were denied refuge following adverse security checks by Poland's internal security agency.

Portugal

Indian terrorist Abu Salem Ansari, whom the Portuguese arrested in September 2002, was extradited to India with his wife and codefendant Monica Bedi in November after they exhausted their appeals. Salem was convicted by the Portuguese High Court in November 2004 of using false documents, making false statements, resisting arrest, and bribing a law enforcement officer. He was sentenced to prison for four years and six months; Bedi was sentenced to two years. Salem was wanted in India for suspected involvement in a series of 1993 bomb blasts that left 278 dead in Mumbai, and for more than 20 other high-profile murders, money laundering, and extortion. He was also sought for his criminal association with notorious underworld figure Dawood Ibrahim, who is on New Delhi's list of 20 most wanted criminals.

In July, Portugal formally agreed to join the Container Security Initiative; its office is now staffed and fully functioning. That same month, Portugal and the United States signed bilateral Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance instruments.

Romania

Romania's President Basescu stressed the importance of a proactive approach to fighting terrorism that involves taking concrete steps beyond Romania's national borders. About 1,400 Romanian troops serve in Iraq and Afghanistan, and President Basescu and other senior leaders said publicly that Romania would maintain its commitment of troops in both countries as long as necessary.

In the fall, Romania deported five students for allegedly having ties to al-Qaida and attempting to recruit supporters. The five had been under surveillance since early 2005. A Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) spokesman stated that "the operation aimed to stop this radical Islamic group in Romania and remove these people from the national territory."

The Romanian Government established internal mechanisms to combat terrorism, including adoption of a national antiterrorism strategy. In February, the government adopted an ordinance, enacted by Parliament in May as Law 162/2005, modifying and strengthening the law regarding the establishment of the Directorate for Terrorism and Organized Crime Investigations.

Bucharest is the site of the Southeast European Cooperation Initiative (SECI), a regional center that provides law enforcement training and intelligence sharing on transborder criminal activities, including terrorism, for 12 member countries in Southeast and Central Europe.

In July, Romania ratified the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Organization's Additional Protocol to Combat Terrorism, signed in Athens in December 2004. In October, the Romanian Minister of Administration and Interior and his counterparts from 13 other European nations signed an agreement on fighting terrorism, illegal migration, organized crime, and corruption.

Romania adopted adequate legislation to address financial crimes and terrorist financing. Nevertheless, Romania remains vulnerable to money laundering and other financial crimes that potentially finance terrorist organizations. Weaknesses include insufficient resources, both of funding and personnel devoted to prosecuting financial crimes. Romanian financial entities independently identified one case of possible terrorism financing activity in Romania. Information on the case has been forwarded to the United States.

In August, legislation took effect that extended the jurisdiction of the Romanian Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) beyond money laundering offenses to suspected acts of terrorist financing (Law 230/July 2005 amending Law 656/2003 for the Prevention and Combat of Money Laundering). The FIU was authorized to conduct proactive investigations. The law extended the reporting requirements applicable to financial institutions, defined to include banks, insurance companies, gambling firms, and pawn companies, for transactions suspected to involve terrorist financing.

Russia



A Russian army armored personnel carrier patrols a street of Grozny in October after a roadside blast targeted their convoy in the center of the Chechen capital. (AFP Photo/Khasan Kaziyeu)

In the face of new terrorist attacks on Russian soil, the Russian Government and public continued to view counterterrorism as a top priority. Much of the terrorist activity in the region and elsewhere in Russia was homegrown and linked to the Chechen separatist movement, although there was evidence of a foreign terrorist presence in Chechnya and of international financial and ideological ties with Chechen groups. Russia claimed a success in March with the slaying of Chechen separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov; its assertions that the insurgency was terrorist in nature were bolstered by the addition in August of the terrorist Shamil Basayev to the

Chechen separatist leadership structure.

Major terrorist incidents in Russia were centered in the north Caucasus and included:

- On July 19, attackers in the village of Znamenskoye in Chechnya blew up a vehicle and fired on a police vehicle, killing 14 and wounding approximately 34, including civilian bystanders.
- On October 13, 200 to 300 gunmen attacked police and military facilities in the city of Nalchik in Kabardino-Balkaria in the north Caucasus, killing 24 law enforcement officials and 12 civilians. Authorities reported approximately 91 gunmen killed and 39 detained.

All Russian regions passed regulations to strengthen counterterrorism measures in educational, social, and cultural facilities following the 2004 Beslan school siege. A parliamentary commission worked during the year to examine, among other things, the performance of the federal authorities during the Beslan siege, and its preliminary report on December 28 criticized local authorities.

The number of domestic terrorism-related investigations and prosecutions expanded in 2005. One local non-governmental organization reported 28 terrorism-related convictions and 50 pending terrorism trials in Russia by December. Noteworthy cases included:

- In April, a Moscow court found two airport employees guilty of aiding and abetting the terrorists who brought bombs onto the two Russian airplanes downed in August 2004.
- In May, Russian authorities began the trial of Nurpachi Kuliyeu, accused of taking part in the 2004 terrorist school seizure in Beslan.
- In September, three people charged with a gas pipeline explosion in Bugulma (two of them former Guantanamo detainees who had been repatriated to Russia) were acquitted by a jury trial in Tatarstan.

The U.S.-Russia Counterterrorism Working Group (CTWG), co-chaired by Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak, met in May and December. The group fosters cooperation between numerous U.S. agencies and their Russian counterparts on counterterrorism issues. Notable milestones included the February signing of a comprehensive agreement facilitating information sharing on man portable air defense systems (MANPADS) and the November signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on counternarcotics that established closer cooperation and exchange of information. The FBI and Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) forged a highly productive joint counterterrorism operational capability that led to several arrests and convictions.

The United States and Russia continued bilateral cooperation to destroy, safeguard, and prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. President Bush and President Putin made intensified cooperation on nuclear security a centerpiece of their February summit in Bratislava.

Russia originally proposed and then played a major role in securing consensus in the UN General Assembly to enact on April 13 the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which became the thirteenth UN legal instrument to combat terrorism.

Russia is an increasingly active member of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (FATF). After fulfilling its pledge to create a Eurasian FATF-style regional body (FSRB) in 2004, known as the Eurasia Group on Money

Laundering (EAG), Russia was the group's leading force and remained its chair. The EAG, whose members also include Belarus, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, made significant progress toward building Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) and established the necessary legislative and regulatory frameworks in member states to help those states improve their compliance with international standards.

Russia used its position in international fora to build cooperative mechanisms and programs to counter terrorism. For example, Russia led efforts to make counterterrorism cooperation a key element in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Serbia and Montenegro

In June, a Serbian police officer arrested 22-year-old Moroccan Abdelmajid Bouchar while he was traveling by train in Serbia on a false Iraqi passport. In September, Bouchar was extradited to Spain. The Spanish Government had sought Bouchar, a member of al-Qaida, for his suspected role in the 2004 Madrid train bombings.

Serbia and Montenegro created a new directorate, which is still being organized, to coordinate counterterrorism policies and assistance. The Ministry of Defense's 2005 strategy highlighted the global war on terror as one of the new fundamental organizing principles for the revamped Serbian and Montenegrin armed forces.

Kosovo

The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) continued to administer Kosovo pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1244. UNMIK's Central Intelligence Unit (CIU) continued to monitor suspected terrorist activity in Kosovo. UNMIK and the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) monitored individuals entering Kosovo at official points of entry. This regulation, in force since July 1, required persons who were not employed by an international organization to register with the KPS' Office of Foreign Registration upon entering Kosovo.

UNMIK police froze the assets of 34 individuals and groups on suspicion of links to terrorist activity. Kosovo's Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG), in cooperation with UNMIK, increased monitoring of 11 foreign NGOs suspected of extremism and issued regulations restricting their activities, including the appropriation of one mosque. It also required each NGO to submit documentation that explains its projects and shows its bank accounts. The Kosovo Islamic Community (KIC) evaluated foreign NGOs and prohibited them from using public facilities for gatherings if their views were found to be extremist.

In March, the KPS established an organized crime and terrorist unit, composed of 12 foreign police officers and three KPS officers. UNMIK initiated an ongoing Internal Security Sector Review (ISSR) that recognized Kosovo's need to increase its internal capacity to prevent such future strategic threats as terrorism, inter-ethnic extremism, organized crime, and corruption.

Despite these advances, Kosovo's counterterrorism efforts were hampered by porous boundary lines easily crossed by individuals trafficking in people or goods. An insufficient number of KPS border officials limited the ability to monitor wide expanses of mountainous terrain between crossing points. Underpaid border and customs officials were often easily corrupted.

Domestic extremist groups or individuals continued to commit inter-ethnic violence and violence against UNMIK employees and property. Between March and December, there were approximately 18 attacks on public or UN facilities, such as explosive devices damaging vehicles, shots fired at UNMIK vehicles, and grenades or Molotov cocktails thrown near UN vehicles or UNMIK headquarters. There were no fatalities, although approximately five persons were injured as a result of these attacks.

Slovakia

Slovakia continued to support U.S. counterterrorism initiatives and contributed 57 personnel to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and 112 personnel to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Slovakia fields a team of deminers and construction engineers in Afghanistan and deminers in Iraq. Slovakia also donated materiel to the Afghan National Army.

Slovenia

Slovenia's economic stability and location on the Balkan drug route offered attractive opportunities for money laundering. Slovenia ratified seven Council of Europe conventions relating to counterterrorism. In 2003, Slovenia established an inter-ministerial Working Group for Implementing Sanctions and Activities in the War Against Terrorism, whose powers and competencies were re-established on March 24. In November, Slovenia participated in instructor training on dual-use licensing as part of its ongoing cooperation with the United States under the Export Control and Border Security program. Slovenia continued to provide police instructors in Amman, Jordan, to train Iraqi policemen.

Spain

Spain arrested scores of individuals with possible links to al-Qaida and related extremist organizations; there were 79 detentions. At year's end, 29 of those 79 detainees remained in custody, while the other 50 were released on bail or cleared of charges. The Minister of Interior reported in October that Spain held a total of 125 Islamist terrorist suspects; that figure rose to 131 total detainees by the end of the year. These detainees included individuals arrested in 2004 for conspiring to bomb Spain's High Court and other Madrid landmarks. In April, Switzerland extradited the alleged leader of this conspiracy, Mohamed Achraf, to Spain where he is awaiting trial. Authorities continued to hold 10 Pakistani nationals arrested in Barcelona in 2004 for allegedly providing logistical support to al-Qaida.

Spain cooperated closely with the United States to investigate and prosecute acts of terrorism and to prevent future attacks. Spanish authorities provided extensive information for the trial

in the United States of Zacarias Moussaoui. Spanish officials also provided U.S. investigators substantial information regarding the July 2001 visit to Spain of September 11 hijacker Mohamed Atta and other September 11 plotters.

Spain worked hard to disrupt terrorist acts that possibly were directed against U.S. interests. In June, Spanish police dismantled a network that was facilitating the movement of suicide bombers and other terrorists to Iraq to attack Coalition forces. On March 11, U.S. Attorney General Gonzales and Spanish Minister of Justice Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar announced the formation of the U.S.-Spain Counterterrorism Experts Working Group to increase cooperation in terrorism investigations and prosecutions. This working group brought together prosecutors, investigators, and other experts from both countries; it met twice to discuss terrorism cases of mutual interest.

Spain cooperated with the Department of Homeland Security on the Container Security Initiative to scan containers bound from the port of Algeciras to the United States for hazardous and illicit materials. Spain and the United States co-chair the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Terrorism Finance Working Group. Spain participated in all meetings of the G8 Counterterrorism Action Group (CTAG), based on its high level of counterterrorism assistance to third countries. The Spanish Government prepared but has not yet issued implementation regulations for the 2003 Law to Prevent Terrorist Financing.

A Spanish court sentenced 18 members of an al-Qaida cell to between six and 27 years in prison. Separately, authorities continued to investigate the March 2004 train bombings in Madrid that killed 191 people and wounded hundreds of others.

On September 26, Spain's High Court convicted Spain-based al-Qaida cell leader Imad Eddin Barakat Yarkas and sentenced him to 27 years in prison for membership in a terrorist organization and conspiracy to commit terrorist acts. Seventeen other members of the Barakat Yarkas cell also were convicted and sentenced to prison terms ranging from six to 11 years; six defendants were acquitted. Barakat Yarkas, a Syrian immigrant to Spain, was detained in November 2001 on charges of having provided support to al-Qaida and of having helped Mohamed Atta organize the September 11 terrorist attacks. Among those convicted was al-Jazeera journalist Taysir Alony, who was sentenced to seven years in prison for transporting funds from Barakat Yarkas to terrorists in Afghanistan under his cover as a journalist.

Spanish authorities continued their investigation into the March 2004 Madrid train bombings. Police arrested 31 individuals in connection with the investigation, bringing to 110 the total number of suspects detained as part of the investigation; 30 suspects remain jailed awaiting trial or further investigation. In September, Serbian authorities extradited Moroccan national Abdelmajid Bouchar to Spain in response to an international arrest warrant seeking Bouchar for his alleged role in the Madrid train bombings. Bouchar had escaped a Spanish police raid in Madrid in April 2004 and warned his colleagues of the approaching police, allowing the suspects to barricade themselves in their apartment. The seven suspected terrorists detonated explosives in the apartment, killing themselves and one police officer.

In April, Spain joined France, Germany, and Belgium in an agreement to link the criminal record registries of each country to help accelerate background checks on suspected terrorists operating in the region.

The High Court convicted Spanish national Hamed Abderrahman and sentenced him to six years' imprisonment for membership in a terrorist organization. Abderrahman was transferred to Spain from the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo in February 2004 at the request of Spanish authorities.

In the Basque region, a Spanish court initiated trial proceedings against 56 individuals charged with providing logistical support to the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) terrorist group. The case encompassed six separate investigations directed by the National Court against ETA between 1998 and 2002.

Though ETA carried out all the terrorist attacks in Spain in 2005, there were important detentions related to other terrorist groups, including:

- On June 1, a UK judge authorized the extradition to Spain of Moroccan national Farid Hilali. Spanish investigators believed Hilali was the person referred to as "Shakur" in multiple conversations intercepted by police as part of the Barakat Yarkas case. In his discussions with Yarkas, "Shakur" indicated significant knowledge of planning for the September 11 attacks in the United States. At year's end, Hilali had not yet been transferred to Spanish custody.
- On June 15-28, police undertook "Operation Tigris," arresting 11 individuals on charges of working on behalf of Ansar al-Islam to recruit potential suicide bombers in Spain for operations against Coalition and Iraqi Government forces in Iraq.
- On November 23, police arrested 11 Algerian nationals on charges of providing financial and logistical support to the Algerian terrorist group GSPC from the proceeds of narcotics trafficking and credit card fraud. Four of the suspects, Khaled Bakel, Said Bouchema, Salim Zerbouti, and Lyies Sihamida, allegedly sought to purchase explosives and were suspected of having links with extremists in Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Belgium, and Denmark. The four were held pending further investigation, while the other seven Algerian nationals were released on bail.
- On December 9, authorities arrested seven more suspected GSPC members in several towns along Spain's Mediterranean coast on charges of raising funds for the GSPC through robbery. According to press reports, this cell was in contact with senior GSPC figures responsible for extending GSPC actions beyond Algeria's borders, and had funded terrorist attacks in North Africa, Afghanistan, and possibly in Pakistan and Chechnya.
- On December 19, police arrested 19 suspected Islamist extremists on charges of recruiting individuals to carry out suicide bombings in Iraq. The detainees included

12 Moroccans and one national each from Spain, France, Belarus, Ghana, Egypt, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. The investigating magistrate ordered six of the individuals held in pre-trial detention while the rest were released pending further investigation. Three of the detainees reportedly served as imams in their local mosques in Malaga and Ceuta.

Spain continued to make progress in its decades-old campaign to eliminate ETA. Spanish authorities arrested 71 individuals for membership in or association with ETA and dismantled six ETA operational cells. Spain cooperated with French authorities in this effort, with French police arresting 33 suspected ETA members and extraditing five of them to Spain to stand trial. Spanish authorities charged 41 members of ETA's illegal political front group Batasuna, including senior Batasuna figure Arnaldo Otegi, with membership in a terrorist organization and providing financial support to ETA. As of December 12, ETA had carried out 30 bombings; although there were no deaths as a result of these attacks, there were injuries and significant property damage.

The conviction in September of Imad Eddin Barakat Arkas and 17 associates was believed to have significantly reduced al-Qaida's direct presence in Spain, although al-Qaida affiliates and supporters appeared to remain active.

The Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) was believed to be active among extremist elements in Spain's large Moroccan immigrant community. Many of the Madrid train bombing suspects had direct or indirect relationships with the GICM. GICM figure Hassan El Haski and three associates were arrested in Spain in December 2004.

The Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) is known to use Spain as a logistical base and transit point. On November 23, authorities arrested 11 Algerian citizens on charges of raising funds for the GSPC through drug trafficking and credit card fraud. Police released seven on bail, but continued to hold four of the suspects on charges that they also sought to obtain explosives. On December 9, police arrested a second group of seven GSPC members on similar charges.

Police believed that the Iraqi terrorist group Ansar al-Islam was the main organizer of a terrorist facilitation network that funneled potential suicide bombers from Spain to Iraq, primarily through Syria. In June, police arrested 11 individuals on charges of recruiting terrorists for Ansar al-Islam.

Authorities believed they had nearly eradicated the extreme leftist First of October Antifascist Resistance Group (GRAPO), but a joint Spanish, French, and Italian police operation in October that resulted in the arrest of two GRAPO members led observers to speculate that the group possibly was reconstituting itself.

Sweden

In June, the Swedish Foreign Minister approved a new counterterrorism strategy for MFA activities. This strategy called for increased multilateral cooperation, increased capacity

building and prevention through foreign assistance, and improved internal analysis and threat assessment.

Sweden contributed US \$125,000 to the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation, a collaborative endeavor spearheaded by the Australian and Indonesian governments to increase regional counterterrorism cooperation in Southeast Asia.

In May, the Stockholm District Court convicted two Iraqi citizens living in Sweden of conspiracy to commit terrorist crimes in Iraq. The court found the men guilty of violating Sweden's 2003 Terrorism Law for having sent money to the terrorist organization Ansar-al Islam. The two men, 25-year-old Fermi Abdullah and 29-year-old Ali Berzenghi, were sentenced to six and seven years in prison, respectively. Both appealed the conviction, which an appeals court subsequently upheld. The appeals court, however, lowered Berzenghi's sentence to five years in prison and Abdullah's to four years and six months. It additionally found both men guilty of violating the 2002 terrorist financing act and ordered that both be expelled from Sweden upon completion of their sentences. This case marked the first occasion in which Sweden convicted individuals under both the 2003 Terrorism Law and the 2002 Terrorist Financing Act.

In November, Bosnian authorities in Sarajevo arrested Mirsad Bektasevic, an 18-year-old man with Bosnian and Swedish citizenship, on suspicion of conspiracy to commit terrorist acts. Swedish police initiated an investigation into this case.

Pursuant to a U.S. arrest warrant and INTERPOL Red Notice, Czech authorities in December arrested Oussama Kassir, a Lebanese-born Swedish national, as he was in transit from Stockholm to Lebanon. Kassir was wanted in the United States on allegations that he had conspired to provide material support to terrorists in the planned establishment of a terrorist training camp in Bly, Oregon. At the end of 2005, Kassir remained in Czech custody pending extradition to the United States.

Sweden endorsed the June 2004 revised EU Plan of Action on combating terrorism, as well as the European Commission's September 2005 communication on terrorist recruitment, which subsequently was approved by the European Council in December. In May, at a summit meeting in Warsaw, Sweden signed the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, an instrument to increase the effectiveness of existing international texts on the fight against terrorism. Sweden is an active participant in EUROPOL and EUROJUST, European law enforcement institutions that coordinate member states' counterterrorism cooperation and activities. Sweden participates in the Nordic Council of Ministers' Regional Forum for Nordic Governmental Cooperation.

Sweden freezes assets of entities and persons on the UN 1267 Sanctions Committee list once the EU takes action. It also acts on entities designated by the UN Clearinghouse process. Sweden has not yet proposed individuals or entities for inclusion on any such lists. Assets of Ahmed Yusuf, one of three Swedes designated on UN and EU lists in 2002 for connections with the al-Barakat terrorist organization, remained frozen by Swedish authorities.

Tajikistan

Sharing a 1,400-kilometer border with Afghanistan, Tajikistan is well aware of the negative effects of state-sponsored terrorism and offered its limited resources to assist the United States unconditionally. Tajikistan allowed its territory and air space to be used for counterterrorist actions. The Tajik Government's main impediment to counterterrorism performance remains its lack of resources.

Within the framework of the war on terrorism, Tajikistan prohibited extremist-oriented activities and closely monitored terrorist groups like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and extremist groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT). Tajikistan participated in the counterterrorist activities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Commonwealth Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the CIS Counterterrorist Center.

In 2005, approximately 74 members of HT were arrested and 44 HT activists arrested the previous year were convicted and sentenced to prison terms of three to 20 years.

Turkey

Domestic and transnational terrorist groups have targeted Turks and foreigners, sometimes including U.S. Government personnel, for more than 40 years. International and domestic terrorist groups operating in Turkey include Marxist-Leninist, radical Islamist, separatist, and pro-Chechen groups.

In August, Turkish authorities arrested Luay Sakka, a Syrian national linked to al-Qaida and the Zarqawi network. Sakka is an important international terrorist, connected to the funding of the November 2003 Istanbul bombings and the deaths of U.S. and Coalition forces in Iraq. Sakka was in Turkey allegedly plotting a terrorist attack on Israeli cruise ships in Turkish ports.

A criminal trial is underway for dozens of defendants allegedly involved in the November 2003 Istanbul bombings. The lead defendants admitted to contacts with al-Qaida and warned of further attacks if Turkey continues to cooperate with the United States and Israel. Most of the other defendants, however, denied responsibility for or knowledge of the bombings.

In addition to sharing intelligence information on various groups operating in Turkey, the Turkish National Police (TNP) and the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) conducted an aggressive counterterrorist campaign and detained numerous suspected terrorists in scores of raids, disrupting these groups before terrorist acts could be carried out. Overall, in the last five years the Government of Turkey has worked closely with the United States in the apprehension, conviction, and punishment of those responsible for terrorist attacks in Turkey. However, Turkish law still defines terrorism as attacks against Turkish citizens and the Turkish state. Though the government recognizes the need to align this legal definition with international norms, the old definition has yet to be amended. The TNP continues to provide excellent protection of U.S. diplomatic and military facilities throughout Turkey; its response is always immediate and substantial when alerted to threats or incidents involving U.S.

interests. Similar to the handling of security at high profile events such as the Istanbul NATO Summit in 2004, security at the World University Games that took place in August in Izmir was appropriately proactive and without incident.

Turkey commanded the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan for a second time from February to August, contributing 1,500 troops.

Turkey permitted the transport to Iraq of humanitarian goods, contributed humanitarian goods and services, and helped re-supply Coalition forces in Iraq with the transport and sale of fuel, food, and water. Turkey also allowed Incirlik Air Base to be used as a cargo hub for non-lethal goods transported to support OIF and OEF, and for the outbound rotation of U.S. troops returning from Iraq. Turkey was active in reconstruction efforts, including providing electricity to Iraq. Some 70 Turkish citizens were killed providing logistical support to Coalition forces or performing reconstruction in Iraq. Turkey contributed headquarters personnel to the NATO training mission in Iraq, helped train Iraqi diplomats and political parties, and offered senior military leadership training in Turkey as a further contribution to NATO's Iraq Training Mission.

Turkey's ongoing struggle against the Kongra-Gel/PKK was marked by increased violence across Turkey. In the Southeast, Turkish security forces were active in the struggle against the Kongra-Gel/PKK. There were a number of bombings and attempted bombings in resort areas in western Turkey and Istanbul, some of which resulted in civilian casualties. A Kurdish separatist group calling itself the Kurdish Freedom Falcons (TAK), widely believed to be affiliated with the Kongra-Gel/PKK, claimed responsibility for many of these attacks.

Turkey is working to strengthen its counterterrorism finance regime for an upcoming peer review under the auspices of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Pursuant to its obligations under UNSCR 1267 and subsequent resolutions, Turkish officials continue to pass UN and U.S.-designated names of terrorists to all law enforcement and intelligence agencies, as well as to financial institutions. The Government of Turkey submitted legislation to Parliament that will explicitly criminalize terrorism finance and offer safe harbor protection for filers of suspicious transaction reports (STRs).

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan's strategic location bordering Iran, Russia, Afghanistan, and the Caspian Sea makes it a possible route for narcotics smuggling and money laundering. Despite a lack of formal cooperation on counterterrorism activities, three government officials participated in the U.S.-OSCE sponsored Conference on Combating Terrorist Financing held in Vienna in November. Since late 2001, Turkmenistan has granted blanket overflight rights for U.S. aircraft supporting Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). CENTCOM is contributing \$5 million to build two border crossing stations on Turkmenistan's borders with Afghanistan and Iran.

United Kingdom



Police officers stand in front of a sealed off area around a bus in London after the July 7 terrorist attacks. (AFP Photo/Carl de Souza)

London suffered terrorist attacks on July 7 and July 21. The July 7 attacks were carried out by four suicide bombers who detonated their bombs on the London public transportation system, three in the Underground and one on a city bus. Fifty-six people, including the terrorists, were killed in the July 7 attacks and more than 700 were injured. Three of the bombers were UK-born citizens of Pakistani descent; the other was a British national of Jamaican descent and a convert to Islam. A video of one of the bombers, Mohammed Siddique Khan, was released through the media after the attacks, and in that video Khan attributed his act of violence to anger over UK foreign policy.

A separate group of terrorists attempted to detonate bombs in the London Underground on July 21, but those bombs failed to detonate completely and did not cause any casualties. UK authorities have arrested individuals in connection with this attack; the suspected bombers are East and West African in origin.

Government authorities reported that at least two attempted attacks have been thwarted since July. In August, Prime Minister Blair outlined plans to strengthen counterterrorism efforts in the United Kingdom by augmenting government authority to deport and exclude foreigners engaged in extolling extremism and justifying terrorism, increasing powers to arrest and detain suspects, and proscribing groups and individuals glorifying or inciting terrorism. Prime Minister Blair met with senior leaders of the Muslim community in Britain for advice on how to curb radicalization and to solicit support from Muslim communities to do the same.

The United Kingdom has played a leadership role in working to develop an understanding of radicalization and in seeking to identify the structural and motivational factors that may drive the terrorist recruitment process. The British government worked with its European counterparts to stimulate discussion on radicalization and has sought to work with its domestic Muslim populations to identify how this process unfolds and how communities and governments can prevent the spread and appeal of extremist ideology.

The additional measures that the Prime Minister detailed in his August address to the nation have yet to be passed into law, although a draft Terror Bill is making its way through Parliament. The government engaged in a series of bilateral negotiations to allow the return of foreigners to their home countries, with a specific understanding that those individuals will not be subject to human rights abuses.

The July attacks in London pointed to a new phenomena in global terrorism, that of homegrown terrorism in Europe. While the United Kingdom has experienced homegrown terrorism in the past linked to Northern Ireland, the July 7 bombings were the first successful attacks carried out by UK-born Islamic extremists. It is not yet clear if the July 7 and 21 terrorists had any ties to al-Qaida or other international terrorist organizations. The July 7

terrorists traveled out of the United Kingdom to Pakistan prior to the attacks. The Khan video suggests that at a minimum Khan affiliated himself with the goals of al-Qaida.

The United Kingdom simultaneously held the presidency of the European Union and the chairmanship of the G8. The United Kingdom used its leadership of both entities to advance intra-EU cooperation on counterterrorism measures and policy. During the UK presidency of the EU, the EU agreed on a counterterrorism strategy and a review of the problem of radicalization and terrorist recruitment within Europe.

The United States and the United Kingdom work closely together within the United Nations and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to deny terrorists and their supporters access to the international financial system. The United Kingdom has strong legal provisions for freezing assets related to terrorist financing, including Terrorism (UN Measures) Order 2001, the al-Qaida and Taliban (United Nations Measures) Order 2001, and the Antiterrorism Crime and Security Act 2001.

When Prime Minister Blair gave his August 5 address listing his intentions to strengthen UK counterterrorism measures, he said he would seek to designate Hizb-ut Tahir (HT), an international group with operations in Britain. This group was not proscribed, however. Individuals, including prominent Muslim leaders within the United Kingdom, argued that the group, while endorsing violent action elsewhere in the world, does not manifest itself in the same manner in the United Kingdom. On other matters of proscription, the United States and the United Kingdom had regular consultations.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, Republican and Loyalist paramilitary organizations increasingly shifted their activity from political actions to criminal racketeering. This shift began with the 1994 ceasefires of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), and has accelerated further since the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998.

Two relatively small "dissident" Republican paramilitaries, the Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA) and the Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA), continue to advocate the use of armed violence to support their goal of uniting the northern and southern parts of Ireland. Loyalist paramilitaries also have a presence in the Republic of Ireland. In July, the Provisional IRA announced that it was ending its armed campaign and would pursue its goals through exclusively peaceful means. In September, the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning announced that the Provisional IRA had put all of its weapons "beyond use."

Uzbekistan

The potential for Islamic extremism and acts of international terrorism remained significant in Uzbekistan. Supporters of terrorist groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), al-Qaida, the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), and the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) remained active in the region. Members of these groups expressed anti-U.S. sentiments and have attacked U.S. interests in the past, including a 2004 suicide bombing at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent.

Information continued to suggest that some of these groups might be planning attacks in the region, possibly against U.S. Government facilities, Americans, or American interests. As a result, the Department of State authorized in June the departure of American Embassy Tashkent's non-emergency personnel and family members. The departure status was lifted in July, but U.S. Government personnel and facilities continued to operate at a heightened state of alert.

Uzbekistan was among the first states to support U.S. efforts in the global war on terror. Beginning in 2001, Uzbekistan hosted U.S. military forces within its borders. In July, however, the government formally invoked its right to request termination within 180 days of an agreement allowing U.S. access to the Karshi-Khanabad (K2) airbase and overflight of Uzbekistan. Uzbek authorities continued to stress the importance of the country's counterterrorism cooperation and said the decision to end access at K2 did not signal Uzbekistan's withdrawal from international counterterrorism efforts. As of December, Uzbekistan continued to permit U.S. overflight of its territory in support of ongoing operations in Afghanistan. The United States fully vacated the Karshi-Khanabad base on November 21.

Tashkent hosts the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO) Regional Antiterrorism Center Secretariat (RATS), which remained in the early stages of development. It began to focus on operational activities, such as developing a coordinated list of terrorist groups and facilitating joint counterterrorism exercises among SCO member states. Uzbekistan also participated in UNODC and OSCE programs aimed at ensuring that it enacts appropriate terrorism legislation.