

**THE FY20 BUDGET: STATE DEPARTMENT
COUNTERTERRORISM AND COUNTERING
VIOLENT EXTREMISM BUREAU**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA, AND
INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**THE FY20 BUDGET: STATE DEPARTMENT
COUNTERTERRORISM AND
COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM BUREAU**

**Wednesday, July 24, 2019
House of Representatives,
Subcommittee on the Middle East,
North Africa, and International
Terrorism,
Committee on Foreign Affairs,**

Washington, DC

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2 p.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Theodore E. Deutch (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. DEUTCH [presiding]. This hearing will come to order.

Welcome, everyone. The subcommittee is meeting today to conduct oversight of both the FY budget request for the State Department's Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism Bureau and the Trump administration's overall counterterrorism policy. I thank our witness for appearing today.

And I will now recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement before turning it over to the ranking member.

The purpose of our hearing is to conduct oversight of both the FY20 budget request for the Counterterrorism and CVE Bureau and the administration's overall policy. In FY20, the administration requested a total of \$170.8 million for the Bureau, taken collectively from the Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs, the NADR; ESF; American Salaries and Security Programs accounts. And while this amount is an increase from the \$160.6 million requested in FY19, it is a sharp drop from the \$237 million request in FY18 and the \$294 million request in FY17.

Vice President Joe Biden once observed, "Do not tell me what you value. Show me your budget, and I will tell you what you value." And looking at the FY20 request, we could reasonably conclude that the administration is de-emphasizing efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism, as the focus of U.S. foreign policy shifts toward greater power competition.

However, nearly 18 years after the terror attacks of 9/11, the United States still faces a wide array of challenges from jihadist organizations like ISIS and al-Qaeda, Iranian-backed groups like Hezbollah, and the growing threat of white nationalist terrorism. In an assertive policy started under President Obama and continued by this administration, we have successfully confronted ISIS and liberated territory in occupied Iraq and Syria. However, while ISIS's physical caliphate is destroyed, the organization maintains

a network of supporters and foreign fighters who are trained by ISIS operatives and loyal to the organization's cause. Most importantly, these individuals seek to launch attacks against innocent civilians in the Middle East, in Europe, and throughout the West.

The United States has considered Iran to be a State Sponsor of Terrorism for more than 35 years. Its proxies, such as Hezbollah and Shia militias in Iraq, continue to sow chaos throughout the Middle East, threatening U.S. interests and military personnel, as well as our regional allies and partners.

And finally, the transnational threat posed by white nationalist terrorism is clearly growing, as exemplified by the recent horrific attacks in Christchurch, at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, and at the Chabad of Poway, just north of San Diego. Many have argued that white nationalist terrorists lack the global networks that make both jihadists and Iranian-backed terrorists a potent threat. However, since 9/11, more Americans have perished in the United States at the hands of white nationalist terrorists than those inspired by radical Islamist terrorism. The point being both warrant our serious attention and concern. I am not convinced that the State Department or the entire U.S. Government is doing enough to counter white nationalist terrorism, and I expect that our witness will explain how our resources are utilized to meet this threat.

The administration's National Strategy for Counterterrorism, released in October of last year, highlighted many of these challenges. Ambassador Sales, I know you and your Bureau supported the development and drafting of the strategy, and I look forward to you describing how it informs the budget request and how your programs support its execution.

I am also interested in your explanation for why the Bureau plans to change its name from Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism to just the Counterterrorism Bureau. And while you may simply seek a concise name, I hope that the shift does not signal a diminished focus on CVE, which obviously is an important element of keeping Americans safe.

While the United States maintains CT and CVE tools that are second to none, success in these efforts requires working with other countries, and I am concerned that President Trump's frequent criticism of foreign nations hinders our policy and makes the Bureau's job more difficult. Certainly, I expect to hear more about our international cooperation to disrupt terror plots and quell the extremism that plagues too many regions throughout the world.

Ambassador Sales, we look forward to strengthening our understanding of how the State Department's resources are utilized to counter terrorism and violent extremism. I also hope you will identify areas where greater congressional support is needed, so that we can work together to fulfill our sacred duty of keeping the American people safe.

And with that, it is my pleasure to recognize my friend, the ranking member, Joe Wilson, for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Chairman Deutch. And thank you for this hearing.

I also want to thank our distinguished witness, Ambassador Nathan Sales, for being here to testify before the subcommittee.

All of us on this subcommittee know how important the work is of the State Department's Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism Bureau to our national security. Created in 1972 in response to the Munich Olympics attack, the Bureau forges partnerships with foreign governments, multilateral organizations, and NGO's, to coordinate and advance U.S. counterterrorism objectives and enhance global security as well as our own.

The mission of the Bureau is more important today than ever. Terrorist networks today are far vaster and more resilient than they were on September 11, 2001. The simple fact remains that there are more al-Qaeda fighters today than there were before 9/11. The evil ideology that inspired the hijackers today is more popular than it was at the time of the hijacks. It inspired thousands to travel to Syria and Iraq. It animated the brutal terrorist Statelet that called itself the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. The global jihadist movement today is greater than anytime since Bin Laden could have ever imagined.

Fortunately, ISIS has lost control of all of its territory it once held, but it is far from defeated. A Pentagon report from earlier this year noted, quote, that, "absent sustained pressure, ISIS could likely resurge in Syria within 6 to 12 months and regain limited territory."

At the same time, Iran is continuing to live up to the title of No. 1 State sponsor of terrorism. I applaud the Trump administration for taking a hard line against the mullahs in Tehran and their support for the terrorist groups throughout the world.

Chairman Deutch and I have just returned from a delegation with his very talented and involved son Cole that visited Argentina to mark the 25th anniversary of the bombing of the AMIA Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires. Iran is responsible for that attack which killed 85 innocent people. No one has ever been held accountable.

Iran is sponsoring terrorist militia proxies in nearly every Middle Eastern battlefield today. In Yemen, they have provided game-changing support to the Houthi rebels, effectively destabilizing the country and perpetuating the humanitarian catastrophe of epic proportions.

In Syria, Iran's Hezbollah henchmen and Pakistani and Afghani mercenaries put their lives on the line to prop up the Assad butcherous regime. And in Iraq, they fund an array of militias who do their bidding. The list goes on and on.

And I am grateful for the administration's designation of an Iranian-backed militia in Iraq earlier this year. This is just the beginning. It is time we call the Badr Organization and AAH what they really are, terrorist groups doing Iran's bidding in Iraq.

I applaud the White House's National Security for Counterterrorism Strategy. It correctly frames the battle in terms of an enduring challenge that must be managed to protect the homeland, instead of a mission that has a beginning and an end.

But I am concerned that the focus on great power competition will distract the United States from the very real terrorist threat. We are in a global war on terrorism, and this will be a generational

battle, whether we like it or not. There is no doubt that our geopolitical rivals, Russia and China, pose serious challenges to our national security, but it is the threat of terrorism that is, indeed, enduring. We are going to have to learn to walk and chew gum at the same time. We simply cannot afford to be caught asleep at the wheel again.

Ambassador Sales, thank you for your important work and being here today. We look forward to your testimony.

I yield back.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

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

It is now my honor to introduce our witness, Ambassador Nathan Sales. Ambassador Sales was sworn in on August 10, 2017, as the Coordinator for Counterterrorism with the rank and status of Ambassador-at-large. He leads the State Department's Counterterrorism Bureau and serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary of State on international counterterrorism matters.

Before joining the State Department, Ambassador Sales was a tenured law professor, served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at the Department of Homeland Security, and served at the Office of Legal Policy at the Department of Justice, where he worked on counterterrorism policy and judicial confirmations, and received the Attorney General's Award for Exceptional Service and the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award.

Thank you, Ambassador Sales, for being here today. I will remind you to please limit your testimony to 5 minutes. And without objection, your prepared written statement will be made a part of the record. Thank you so much for being here, Ambassador Sales.

STATEMENT OF HON. NATHAN SALES, COORDINATOR FOR COUNTERTERRORISM, AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE, BUREAU OF COUNTERTERRORISM AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ambassador SALES. Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Deutch, Ranking Member Wilson, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to be here to discuss the State Department's counterterrorism priorities, our FY 2020 budget request, and our efforts to protect our country from terrorist threats.

The threats we face today are more complex than ever before. We have destroyed the false ISIS caliphate in Syria and Iraq, but now we need to stop ISIS from continuing the fight from its networks and branches around the world. Meanwhile, al-Qaeda has taken advantage of the world's recent focus on ISIS to quietly reconstitute its capabilities. Today, its network is as strong as it has ever been.

Iran remains the world's worst State sponsor of terrorism. It has dedicated about \$1 billion a year to support terrorist proxies across the globe, including Hezbollah. Iran can and does strike anywhere. We were reminded of this last week in Buenos Aires, where I joined Secretary Pompeo and others in commemorating the 25th

anniversary of Hezbollah's bombing of the AMIA Jewish Community Center.

As the threats we face to continue to evolve, the United States and our partners increasingly will need to rely on civilian sector counterterrorism tools. Counterterrorism is not just a problem that needs military solutions; it is a problem that requires civilian sector solutions as well.

And the administration's 2020 budget request includes more than \$241 million to sustain a number of vital programs. Those include the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund, or CTPF, the Antiterrorism Assistance Program, the Terrorist Interdiction Program, as well as our CVE efforts. This will enable us to advance key priorities which include building law enforcement capacity to investigate and prosecute terrorists; enhancing aviation and border security; countering the financing of terrorism, and combating terrorist radicalization and recruitment.

The fight against terrorism is not a battle that we can win on our own. We need capable and willing partners to play their part in confronting this global scourge. Our budget request represents an investment in the CT capabilities of our partners on the front lines. Our goal is for them to be able to confront the terrorist threats they face without needing to rely on the United States for continued assistance.

While we are ready to help our partners fight the terrorist threat before it reaches our shores, we are also asking them to increase their own commitment of resources to this fight. Since the Trump administration began to emphasize equitable burden-sharing more than 2 years ago, some of our partners have stepped up in important ways, but there is more that they can and should be doing.

Let me review some of our main counterterrorism efforts. First, increasing our partners' ability to investigate and prosecute terrorists for the crimes they have committed. One example is our use of CTPF funds to develop the Somalia Police Force joint investigative teams. These teams have investigated more than 400 terrorist attacks, resulting in more than 100 convictions.

We are also promoting the use of battlefield evidence in civilian settings. Battlefield evidence can be crucial to convicting terrorists, including foreign terrorist fighters who have been captured and are in custody in Syria. Let me pause for a moment on that theme.

I should note that the CT Bureau has taken the lead in pushing nations to repatriate and prosecute their FTFs. We assess that that is the most effective way to prevent these battle-hardened terrorists from returning to the fight. While some countries have responded, others continue to refuse. Let me speak plainly. Hoping that others will solve this problem for you is not a recipe for success.

The second priority is stopping terrorist travel. Over the past year, we have expanded the PISCES system. That stands for Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System. In February, the Afghanistan border police were able to arrest a senior Taliban member, Abdul Jalil Haqqani, when he triggered a match in PISCES.

More broadly, CT promotes effective screening and watchlisting around the world. We are pushing ICAO to adopt a standard for

using passenger name record data to screen travelers, and we would like to see that in place by the end of this year. We are also leading an effort to extend access to INTERPOL data bases at ports of entry in 60 key countries by 2021.

Third, terrorist designations. We continue to hit terrorists and their sponsors in the wallet by making it harder for them to raise money and move it through the international financial system. Since January 2017, the State Department has completed more than 100 terrorism-related designations actions. That includes 43 actions against ISIS-related individuals and entities. We have also announced 30 actions related to al-Qaeda, 12 related to Hezbollah, and 13 related to other Iran-backed terrorists.

In April, Secretary Pompeo designated Iran's IRGC, including its Quds Force, as a foreign terrorist organization. This is the first time the U.S. has ever designated part of another government as an FTO. This unprecedented step will help us starve the Iranian regime of the resources it uses in its deadly campaign of terrorism around the world.

We continue to urge other countries to designate Hezbollah in its entirety and reject the false distinction between its military wing and a purportedly political wing. Just last week, Argentina became the first country in South America to do so, and we applaud it for its leadership. Argentina's action comes on the heels of the decision by the United Kingdom in May to designate Hezbollah in its entirety as well.

We also work closely with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to integrate the Rewards for Justice Program with our terrorist designations. In November 2018, we announced the \$5 million reward for information leading to the identification or location of Khalid al-Batarfi, a senior regional leader for al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

Finally, we are addressing terrorists' ability to radicalize and recruit by bolstering our CVE efforts. For 2020, we are requesting a substantial increase in funding for our CVE programming, nearly 60 percent above last year's request. Show me what you spend money on, and I will show you what you value.

Finally, we are addressing terrorists' ability to radicalize. I said that already. In the CVE space, we work to combat the underlying ideology that breeds terrorism. We are partnering with government officials, private sector actors, religious figures, and community leaders to help craft counter-narratives that are capable of turning people away from a path toward radicalization. In my written testimony, you will see examples of where these and many other efforts have yielded concrete and tangible results.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, we greatly appreciate the resources that Congress has appropriated to us as we execute this important mission. We have made responsible, effective use of those resources. They will help ensure that our partners remain committed to our common fight and have the tools they need to counter the evolving terrorist threat.

I look forward to your questions and to our conversation. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Sales follows:]

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

NATHAN A. SALES
Ambassador-at-Large and Coordinator for Counterterrorism
U.S. Department of State

HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Subcommittee on Middle East, North Africa, and International Terrorism

**FY 2020 Budget: State Department Counterterrorism and
Countering Violent Extremism Bureau**

July 24, 2019
2:00 p.m.

Chairman Deutch, Ranking Member Wilson, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to be here today to talk about the Trump Administration's counterterrorism priorities and discuss the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 resources we need to protect America's security at home and interests abroad from terrorist threats.

The Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism focuses on combatting the wide range of terrorist threats confronting the United States and our allies, including ISIS, al-Qa'ida, Hizballah, and other terrorist groups and state sponsors of terrorism, such as Iran. At last year's hearing, I laid out the Administration's National Strategy for Counterterrorism and the important role for the State Department in leveraging diplomatic and foreign assistance tools. We are making progress implementing that strategy, and I am here today to explain how the resources we seek will build on our initial successes.

The Administration's FY 2020 budget request for the CT Bureau includes more than \$241 million to sustain the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF), the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program, the Terrorist Interdiction Program (TIP), and programs on countering violent extremism (CVE). This request prioritizes funding to advance our long-term capacity-building goals and directly support top counterterrorism priorities laid out in the Administration's counterterrorism strategy. These programs address critical areas, including developing law enforcement capacity to investigate and prosecute terrorists; responding to crises in real time; enhancing aviation and border security; countering the financing of terrorism; and combatting terrorist radicalization and recruitment.

Our FY 2020 request represents an investment in the counterterrorism capacity of our partners. We want to boost their capabilities to the point they are able to address the terrorist threats they face on their own. The FY 2020 request also reflects our commitment to sharing more of the financial burden with our friends and allies. The United States continues to lead the world in global counterterrorism, but we cannot do this alone. We need our partners to increase their own commitment of resources to counterterrorism within and outside their own borders. Since the Trump Administration began to emphasize more equitable burden sharing two years ago, some of

our partners have stepped up in important ways. But there is still more that they can and should do.

Terrorist Threats to U.S. National Security

The CT Bureau's budget is shaped by U.S. national security interests and driven by the terrorist landscape, which has become even more complex over the past several years. ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and their affiliates have proven to be resilient and determined. They have responded to increased counterterrorism pressure by adapting their tactics and techniques.

On March 23, the President announced the liberation of the last territory held by ISIS in Syria and Iraq. This is an important milestone in our fight against global terrorism, and it was made possible by this Administration's decision over two years ago to take the gloves off and accelerate the campaign.

But this is not the end of the fight. ISIS remains a global threat capable of launching terrorist attacks against us and our allies. The group's leaders and followers see the loss of their false caliphate as a setback, not a defeat, and they are actively looking to continue the fight from ISIS branches and networks around the world. The ISIS-inspired attacks in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, and the subsequent video statement by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, reinforced that ISIS seeks to maintain capability, influence, and relevance through groups and networks outside Iraq and Syria.

In Africa, ISIS-linked groups are on the rise across the continent – from Senegal to Egypt to Mozambique, and many places in between. They have increased the lethality of their attacks, expanded into new areas, and repeatedly targeted U.S. interests. In South and Southeast Asia, ISIS continues to carry out attacks and, through propaganda campaigns, inspire regional groups to commit acts of terror, as we saw in Sri Lanka.

The CT Bureau is leading to coordinate the fight against ISIS outside the Iraq/Syria core. The recent D-ISIS Coalition Political Directors' meeting in Paris included a plenary session on increasing threats in West Africa and the Sahel, and Coalition members agreed to meet in the early fall to focus on practical steps we can take together in West Africa and the Sahel. We will take stock of our efforts in the region and identify gaps which need more attention.

Let me also address the places where the CT Bureau is contributing to the Defeat-ISIS fight inside Iraq and Syria, working with partners throughout the Department and interagency. The Syrian Democratic Forces are currently holding more than 2,000 ISIS foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). Many of these individuals remain a threat, particularly with their battlefield experience and skills honed in the conflict in Syria. The United States has repatriated and prosecuted a number of our own terrorist fighters. We applaud those countries that have also taken back their FTFs with the intention of prosecuting them, including North Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Kazakhstan, Morocco, and Italy. However, many more countries – including nearly all Western European allies – have yet to repatriate any of their citizens in SDF custody. On June 28, Italy set an important example by becoming the first Western European nation to repatriate a citizen who traveled to fight for ISIS. Refusing to take back citizens and instead leaving them in facilities abroad is an abdication of the duties of sovereign states. These fighters need to be brought home to face justice

now; the problem will only get harder to solve as time passes and circumstances on the ground change in unpredictable ways.

Some have called for an international tribunal to address SDF detainees. However, international tribunals will not solve any of the challenges our European partners have cited for not repatriating their citizens. The tribunals will still struggle to find admissible evidence for cases; there will still be the need to securely detain the fighters; and governments will still have to deal with the FTFs after they have served their sentences and been released.

With the world's attention largely focused on ISIS during the past five years, al-Qa'ida has quietly strengthened its capabilities, positioning to reassert itself as the ideological and operational vanguard of the global jihadist movement. Today, al-Qa'ida's network has more members than it did before 9/11, and it continues to exploit under-governed spaces, conflict zones, and global security gaps to recruit, fundraise, and plot attacks. Two al-Qa'ida affiliates in Africa – al Shabaab in the Horn and Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) in the Sahel – are among the world's most dangerous terrorist groups.

ISIS and al-Qa'ida also continue to inspire homegrown terrorists who have never set foot on a battlefield but have embraced their toxic ideology, and have planned and executed violent attacks against civilians. These attacks are not just happening in front line states grappling with instability and conflict. We are also seeing homegrown terrorists inspired by these groups strike into the heart of Western Europe, as in Paris, London, and Berlin.

Meanwhile, Iran remains the world's worst state sponsor of terrorism. The Iranian regime is responsible for intensifying multiple conflicts and undermining U.S. interests in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. We've seen Iran engage in terrorist activity directly through its Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Qods Force, including in plots in the United States, Europe, and Africa. We have also seen Iran continue to extend its malign influence through terrorist partners, such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and militia groups in Iraq and Syria.

The threat posed by Iran's support for terrorism is truly global, including here in the Western Hemisphere. For example, in 2017 two U.S.-based Hezbollah operatives – Samir el Debek and Ali Kourani – were arrested by the FBI in Michigan and New York, respectively. Among other activities, El-Debek was surveilling potential targets at Hezbollah's direction in Panama, including the Panama Canal. Kourani spent years surveilling U.S. military and law enforcement facilities on behalf of Hezbollah. He was just convicted by a federal jury in New York for these crimes.

This is why we are prioritizing cooperation and looking across national borders for new ways to improve our collective security. Just last week, Secretary Pompeo joined his counterparts from around the hemisphere in Buenos Aires to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the deadly Hezbollah attack on the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA) Center in Buenos Aires, and to discuss our collective efforts to protect this hemisphere from terrorism.

Finally, we are increasingly concerned and focused on the threat posed by racially and ethnically motivated terrorists. We've seen the results of this type of hatred in New Zealand, Norway, and

here at home, and are working closely with the FBI, DHS, and our foreign partners to address this growing threat.

What We Are Doing About It

The United States continues to lead the globe on counterterrorism issues. As the threats we face evolve, the United States and our partners increasingly will need to rely on civilian-sector CT tools, as explained in the Administration's National Strategy for Counterterrorism. Those include information sharing; boosting law enforcement capabilities; border and aviation security; combatting terrorism finance; and countering radicalization and recruitment. These are the types of capabilities that the CT Bureau helps build around the world through its funding and programs. Over the past year, working with our interagency partners, we've launched several new initiatives, including on battlefield evidence, terrorist use of the internet, and countering unmanned aerial systems.

Enhancing Law Enforcement Capabilities to Investigate and Prosecute Terrorists

Law enforcement is a key counterterrorism tool. Moreover, as terrorist networks grow more diffuse, civilian criminal justice "finishes" – arresting, prosecuting, and incarcerating terrorists – will grow more important. We'll need our partners to successfully respond to terrorists and prosecute them for the crimes they've committed, no matter where they're located. Let me flesh out some of our key initiatives.

Through **CTPF** and the **ATA** programs, the CT Bureau is building comprehensive counterterrorism capabilities with some of our most vulnerable partner states on the front lines. We have seen CT-trained law enforcement units disrupt major terrorist incidents around the world, including in Afghanistan, Mali, Kenya, Tunisia, and Somalia. We are also seeing partners successfully prosecute cases and put terrorist criminals in prison in Indonesia, the Philippines, and the Balkan countries, among others.

- In **Somalia**, we continue to see strong results from our investments in developing and mentoring Joint Investigative Teams (JITs) in the Somali Police Force. In just over four years, with assistance made possible through CTPF, we've built up a significant capability: our Somali partners have actively disrupted several terrorist attacks, responded to and investigated more than 400 terrorist attacks, referred more than 50 cases for prosecution, and supported the evidence-based conviction of nearly 100 terrorists and facilitators. The JITs also actively use DHS's biometric program – BITMAP, also funded through CTPF – to enroll and screen terrorist suspects. To date, the JITs have enrolled more than 90 terrorist suspects whose identities were previously unknown to U.S. law enforcement. On a daily basis, the JITs are saving lives and demonstrating the value of effective security forces and the rule of law for the citizens of Somalia.
- In **Afghanistan**, we have been operating through the ATA program since 2002, and currently partner with elite law enforcement units to build their capacity to address terrorist groups targeting urban centers such as Kabul, Kandahar, and Logar. In May, the unit in Kabul responded to a Taliban suicide attack on Counterpart International – an international NGO supporting civil society organizations that encourages peace and opportunities for women.

Relying on training and skills provided by CT, the unit quickly neutralized the attackers and safely secured Counterpart's staff. We are seeing these types of tactical successes from our Afghan partners over and over.

- In **Mali**, CT is building crisis response teams (CRTs) for Mali's National Gendarmerie. The CRTs successfully responded to terrorist attacks at Hotel Kangaba in Bamako in June 2017, and are now deployed to the Segou region in central Mali where there are rising incidents of terrorism over the past year. The CRTs are having an immediate impact, supporting gendarme posts, intervening in an armed robbery, and arresting suspected terrorists.

To help enable prosecutions, the United States has launched an important new initiative on **battlefield evidence** aimed at how to use this type of information more effectively in civilian courts, especially those of partner nations. This is an issue of growing importance as it can enable origin countries to more effectively prosecute their FTFs. Through this initiative, the U.S. conducted a comprehensive internal review of our own efforts and systems, to assess where we were succeeding and where we were falling short. We've made some important changes enabling us to more easily share information with our foreign partners, and are working with these governments to enable them to more effectively use information shared with them. We are now working with the United Nations and NATO to promote the use of battlefield evidence in other countries, and urge our partners to join us in this effort.

Combatting Terrorist Travel

CT is leading the charge on greater information sharing and promoting effective screening and watchlisting around the world. Detecting terrorists transiting borders and airports enables border security officials to prevent entry and, where possible, to prosecute them for their crimes. We need this information pushed out to the front lines. Too often, access to databases is limited to offices in national capitals and does not extend to immigration officials at ports of entry or police officers walking a beat. We have several important initiatives underway to improve both the quality of the databases and connectivity to them.

In previous testimony, I updated you on efforts to improve international use of **Passenger Name Record (PNR)** data under UN Security Council Resolution 2396, which obligates member states to develop the capability to collect, process, analyze, share, and protect PNR data. In November, at ICAO's 2nd High-Level Conference on Aviation Security, I conveyed the United States' call for an ICAO standard for PNR by the end of 2019. My team is now part of an ICAO PNR Task Force that will propose a draft standard for adoption in the coming months.

One of the best tools to prevent terrorist travel is CT's **Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES)** program. Over the past year we have expanded PISCES to several key countries including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo. Every day, more than 300,000 travelers worldwide are processed through PISCES-equipped border control sites in 23 priority countries, where they are screened against terrorist databases. In February, one of our partners, the Afghanistan Border Police, arrested a senior Taliban member, Abdul Jalil Haqqani, when he triggered a match in the PISCES system as he attempted to depart

for Pakistan at the Spin Boldak border crossing. Your support for **TIP** is critical to sustaining this program.

The CT Bureau is leading the drive to implement a G-7 effort to extend access to and use of **INTERPOL** databases at air, land, and sea ports of entry in 60 key countries by 2021. The **INTERPOL** system is an information-sharing platform that enables officials on the front lines to access **INTERPOL**'s criminal databases and allows member states to communicate with each other. CT has dedicated assistance funds to expand connectivity in Indonesia, Libya, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Tajikistan, and Thailand. In addition, other G-7 partners are funding the expansion in additional countries. In just one example, Indonesia has expanded I-24/7 connectivity at its 14 busiest international airports and five busiest seaports, screening all passengers coming through those ports against **INTERPOL**'s databases.

Together with Morocco, CT launched the GCTF **Terrorist Travel Initiative** in September 2018. The initiative is bringing together national and local governments, law enforcement and border screening practitioners, and international organizations to share expertise on how to develop and implement effective counterterrorism watchlisting and screening tools and better use traveler data. This initiative is helping our partners strengthen their use of biometrics, PNR data, watchlists, and other screening tools to limit the flow of terrorist travelers in their regions, and share information on this travel among themselves and with international partners, all within a rule of law framework. These efforts are aimed at helping countries help themselves – enhancing nations' abilities to detect and stop terrorist travel worldwide.

While not related to terrorist travel, we have launched another new GCTF initiative to **Counter Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Threats**, which we announced in December 2018 with our co-chair, Germany. The initiative is helping raise awareness of this new and increasingly exigent threat to civilian targets. We will collectively develop a set of non-binding good practices to assist countries in developing or expanding national action plans to identify, prioritize, and implement policies and measures to counter terrorist use of UAS. We plan to release these new good practices at the GCTF Ministerial on the margins of the UN General Assembly this fall.

Countering Terrorist Financing

One of our most effective financial weapons is **terrorist designations**. Designations isolate and expose our adversaries, making it harder for them to raise money and move it through the international financial system. Responsible financial institutions ensure that terrorists do not taint their networks. We have made significant advances in counterterrorism finance, but more work remains. We need our partners to develop the necessary legal regimes to sanction terrorists and their financial and logistical enablers, and we are working with them to help develop this capability.

Since January 2017, the Secretary of State has completed more than 100 designation actions against terrorist groups and individuals. That number includes 43 actions against ISIS-related individuals and entities, 30 actions related al-Qa'ida, 12 related to Hizballah, and 13 related to other Iran-backed terrorists.

This year, the Secretary has focused our designations tools to target some of our greatest national security threats, including ISIS, Hizballah, and Iran. In April, Secretary Pompeo designated the IRGC as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), an unprecedented step in our broader effort to counter Iran's deadly campaign of terrorism around the world by starving the regime of the resources it uses for its terrorist pursuits. It is the first time that the United States has designated part of another government as an FTO. The designation underscores that the Iranian regime's use of terrorism makes it fundamentally different from any other government.

This year we worked closely with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to integrate the **Rewards for Justice (RFJ)** program with terrorist designations. The RFJ Program recently announced a reward of up to \$10 million for information leading to the disruption of the financial mechanisms of Hizballah. This was the first time we've issued an RFJ reward offer focused solely on Hizballah financing. It was an important step in our maximum pressure campaign against Tehran and its terrorist proxies.

In addition to these important tools, we use the **Counterterrorism Finance Program** to provide technical assistance programs that increase our partners' capacity to prevent, detect, and prosecute terrorist financing. When we improve our partners' ability to identify and freeze assets, use financial intelligence, and investigate and prosecute suspects, we help shut down terrorists' access to the international financial system.

For example, we are working with Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Peru to increase their capabilities to detect and disrupt terrorism finance. Our nascent efforts are already yielding concrete results. At a CT Bureau-funded workshop in September 2018, Brazilian and Paraguayan authorities shared information about Hizballah financier and U.S.-designated terrorist Assad Barakat. The next day, Brazilian police arrested Barakat. He remains in Brazilian custody and is pending extradition to Paraguay to face charges.

In Iraq, CT deployed Treasury technical assistance advisors to continue to train and advise Iraqi financial institutions, including the Financial Intelligence Unit and Central Bank of Iraq on anti-money laundering, counterterrorism finance, and other best practices. Due to this and other assistance, Iraq achieved real progress and was removed from the Financial Action Task Force grey list in June 2018.

Countering Terrorist Recruitment & Radicalization

In addition to countering the violence perpetrated by terrorists, we also need to counter the underlying ideology that breeds terrorism. ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and other terrorist organizations continue to radicalize and recruit. Their messages transcend borders. Their call to violence continues to resonate in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Europe, and here in the United States. Despite our military success, young men and women across the world are still being convinced to join ISIS and al-Qa'ida or carry out attacks in their name. The United States and our partners must persuade them otherwise.

We are partnering with government officials, community leaders, religious figures, and others who have the standing to counter terrorist radicalization and recruitment. Working together we are able

to counter their violent messages and engage in communities most affected by terrorism. Here are a few good examples.

Counter messaging with credible partners is one of our key lines of efforts. In Southeast Asia, we trained university and high school students to create and share videos on peace, tolerance, and alternatives to terrorism and the ideology behind it. In another initiative, we supported a documentary by mothers whose children went to Syria to fight with ISIS. This widely viewed film showed the devastation families experience when their sons and daughters abandon them for a life of violence. It forced would-be recruits to think twice about their support for terrorism, and to confront the false ideas that encouraged them in the first place.

CT continued efforts to counter **terrorist use of the internet (TUI)**. With our interagency partners, we have continued to promote, with foreign partners, U.S. policy for countering TUI. We also provide training to foreign partners to counter terrorist activities online.

CT has increased its engagement with technology companies, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google, to improve information sharing, including on designated terrorists and terrorist trends and tactics. The companies have since expanded and more proactively enforced their terms of service to substantially increase their voluntary removal of terrorist content online. CT has worked closely with the industry-led Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), since its establishment in 2017, to share information and technology to counter terrorism online, in particular with smaller companies, which are at risk from terrorists exploiting their platforms sometimes without the companies' knowledge. The strengthened partnership between CT and the technology industry, as well as CT's and the U.S. government's encouragement of increased voluntary action by technology companies, is yielding results. In addition to continuing to increase removals of content clearly linked to ISIS, al-Qa'ida, or their affiliates, technology companies have expanded their review and removal policies regarding racially motivated terrorist groups.

CT is working with our global partners to share the burden on countering terrorist radicalization and recruitment. For example, the **Global Community Engagement & Resilience Fund (GCERF)** has raised more than \$60 million from 12 countries and the European Union, in addition to \$11 million in contributions from the United States. GCERF is a global fund that works with local partners to prevent and counter terrorism in Bangladesh, Mali, Nigeria, Kosovo, and Kenya. **Hedayah**, the international CVE Center based in Abu Dhabi, has raised more than \$28 million from multiple global partners, including the UK, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, and the Netherlands, in addition to \$4.8 million from the United States. The CT Bureau is a major donor to the **Strong Cities Network (SCN)**, a global network of city leaders developing resilience to terrorism radicalization and recruitment. To date, the SCN has raised over \$6 million and includes 125 cities from across the globe.

Conclusion

Chairman Deutch, Ranking Member Wilson, protecting the United States and our interests against terrorist threats is the CT Bureau's top priority. We greatly appreciate the resources Congress has appropriated to us over the past several fiscal years for this important mission. We have made good, effective use of those resources. They are vital to ensuring that our partners remain

committed to the fight and have the tools they need to ensure the lasting defeat of ISIS, al-Qa'ida, Iran-backed terrorists, and other terrorist organizations.

I look forward to your questions.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Ambassador Sales, for your testimony. We will now move to member questions. Under the 5-minute rule, I will begin, followed by Ranking Member Wilson, and then, we will alternate between the parties.

Ambassador Sales, I wanted, also, to pick up where you and Mr. Wilson left off on the topic of Hezbollah. I would like to commend you and the Bureau for your work that led to Argentina designating Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. As the ranking member pointed out, we were proudly part of a delegation also in Buenos Aires marking 25 years since the AMIA bombing and applauding Argentina for the designation.

I was also glad to see that in the joint communique of the Ministerial Conference for the Fight Against Terrorism 16 countries expressed concern about the activities of Hezbollah's network in the Western Hemisphere. In your opinion, what are the most important factors in securing those diplomatic victories? What are you doing? How can we be helpful? And in the victories thus far, do they offer any lessons for convincing other countries to designate and call out all of Hezbollah for their terrorist activities?

Ambassador SALES. Well, thanks, Mr. Chairman. I would say that success has many fathers and many mothers. A lot of people have been working this file for a very long time. There is one other deliverable that I would emphasize from the Ministerial that I think is also important. And that is that the United States has agreed with Argentina and Brazil and Paraguay to launch a new regional security mechanism that will be focusing on Hezbollah financing and other activity in the tri-border region of those three countries, as well as organized crime and the connection between organized crime and transnational terrorism. We look to build on the successes of the three-plus-one security dialogue, which has been dormant for more than a decade.

I think, going forward, the challenge will be to ensure that countries in South America have equipped themselves with the same legal tools that the United States has, and that now Argentina has, to make designations, to impose sanctions on terrorist groups like Hezbollah and cutoff their money. Argentina's decision to designate Hezbollah and, also, its decision to adopt a legal framework is a model for the rest of South America, and we are encouraging our partners to follow their lead.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you very much.

The National Strategy for Counterterrorism States, and I quote, "The strategy will protect the United States against all terrorists that threaten our country. We will not focus on a single organization, but we'll counter all terrorists with the ability and the intent to harm the United States, our citizens, and our interests abroad."

Ambassador Sales, how does white national terrorism fit into this approach, and what is the administration doing to meet the challenge of that sort of terrorism?

Ambassador SALES. Well, Chairman, I will start with the strategy that you began with as well. It begins with clearly identifying the threat, and this administration has clearly identified the threat. In the National Strategy for Counterterrorism, we specifically call out racially motivated extremism, racially motivated terrorism, as a problem that merits further attention, a problem that

threatens our interests here at home and abroad. We were the first administration to ever include a reference to racially motivated terrorism in a National CT Strategy. So, we are clear-eyed about this threat.

Let me say a few words about the division of labor. The State Department plays a role here alongside domestic agencies, such as the FBI and such as Homeland Security, both of which have sent representatives up to Congress to testify as to the actions that they are taking to confront this threat.

The State Department's role here is the one that I will speak to at greater length. We are looking at at least three lines of effort to address this challenge.

First of all, we are looking at the extent to which racially motivated, ethnically motivated, religiously motivated terrorist groups operate as international networks or seek to cross international boundaries.

A second thing that we are focusing on is the risk of a cycle of escalation between jihadist terrorist groups that might commit an attack, racially motivated groups that commit an attack in response or in retaliation, setting off a cycle.

And a third area that my team and I are focusing on is the extent to which racially motivated terrorist groups are learning from the techniques and tactics of jihadist groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda, such as online radicalization, such as communications, and such as fundraising.

I just returned—I know you are short on time, but there is one last point I wanted to share with you.

Mr. DEUTCH. All right. Good.

Ambassador SALES. In June of this year, I was in London for 3 days of meetings on this very topic with our like-minded partners, Western European countries that focus on the counterterrorism challenges that we focus on. And there was a consensus that this is a problem that requires more attention. I can also tell you our partners are just now beginning to address this problem in the same way that we are. So, it is something that we will be working on more going forward.

Mr. DEUTCH. I appreciate that, Ambassador Sales. I hope that you will keep us apprised on efforts that you are undertaking and that we can participate in with you in collaborating with our like-minded international partners who can help us address this.

Ambassador SALES. I am happy to do so. My team has offered a classified Members' level briefing, and we are working to get that scheduled for sometime this fall. So, I would be happy to brief you at greater length.

Mr. DEUTCH. Great. We will look forward to that. Thank you.

Mr. Wilson, you are recognized.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Ambassador, again, thank you for your service and your testimony. It has really been very helpful.

As you cited, last week Argentina, a very dynamic country of extraordinary citizens, designated Hezbollah a foreign terrorist organization. What is the significance of this designation and what are the prospects of other Latin American countries making similar moves?

Ambassador SALES. Well, thanks for the question.

I think there are two important dimensions to this. First, the symbolic and messaging dimension and, second, the practical dimension. The messaging aspect of this is clear. The Southern Hemisphere is awakening to the reality that Hezbollah is a global terrorist threat. It is not the defender of Lebanon, as it purports to be. It is a terrorist organization that operates as a proxy for the regime in Tehran.

Just as important I think are the practical consequences of this designation. It equips Argentina's law enforcement and financial sector, financial regulators, with the tools they need to cut off the flow of money to Hezbollah and its facilitators. We would like to see more countries in the region follow their lead.

Mr. WILSON. And I hope every effort is made to help the countries and Argentina itself. The prosecutor Nisman who was proceeding with the investigation was assassinated. And actually, there has been no prosecution. And so, any way that we could help countries around the world to identify who the perpetrators are, and then, bring them to justice, it certainly would be helpful.

Ambassador SALES. If I may on that point—

Mr. WILSON. Yes.

Ambassador SALES [continuing]. I strongly agree with you, Mr. Ranking Member, and that is why the Secretary of State announced a Reward for Justice in the amount of \$7 million for Salman Rauf Salman, who was the on-the-ground orchestrator of the AMIA attack in 1994.

Mr. WILSON. And that was front page of the newspapers in Argentina. So, congratulations on your and Secretary Pompeo's success.

The United Kingdom is considering making it illegal for citizens to travel to certain countries or regions within a country that are designated as terrorist areas, save havens. What are your thoughts on these proposals, and would it make sense for the U.S. to consider similar prohibitions?

Ambassador SALES. Well, I think every country needs to have a law on the books that enables them to hold accountable people who fight for ISIS or other terrorist organizations. Here in the United States, our prosecutors have used the material support statute to prosecute folks who have traveled to Syria to fight for ISIS or attempted to do so.

I do not have particular policy advice for our friends in the United Kingdom, but we applaud, as a general matter, their efforts to make sure that their statute books are updated to reflected the nature of the threat we face.

Mr. WILSON. Additionally, groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda continue to use social media for recruiting and virtually guiding attacks. How would you grade social media companies in their efforts to block extremist content? What is the CT Bureau's strategy to address social media companies based outside the United States that are taking insufficient action, like Telegram?

Ambassador SALES. I think they have made progress, but I also think they have some more work to do. The internet service was—let me take a step back. The U.S. approach for many years has been to support tech companies' voluntary removal of content that

violates their terms of service or that violates U.S. law. And we have been encouraged to see Silicon Valley do more to remove content from their platforms. They recently formed an organization known as the GIFCT, or Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, in which established players in the market are able to share techniques with new entrants about how to spot terrorist content online and the most effective techniques for identifying it and removing it. We would like to see more. We would like to see the content come down more quickly. We would like to see information shared more extensively. But we are pleased to see that the industry has taken some important steps.

Mr. WILSON. I am really grateful that I have had two sons serve in Iraq and am just so hopeful for a free and democratic Iraq. But it concerns me that there have been reports that U.S. foreign assistance has been dispersed to officially Iranian-backed militias tied to the IRGC. What is being done to make sure that American taxpayers' money is not being used ultimately to attack America?

Ambassador SALES. I share the concern, Mr. Ranking Member. Iran-aligned militias exist throughout Iraq. They have proven themselves to be a threat to the United States, and they have proven themselves to be a threat to the Iraqi government as well.

Let me just say, nothing is more important to the State Department than force protection. If our diplomats are serving abroad, if our soldiers are serving forward, it is essential to make sure that they are protected from violence or the threat of violence.

What we have done about this at the State Department, we have imposed terrorism-related sanctions on a number of these organizations, such as Kata'ib Hezbollah which operates in Iraq, such as HAN which operates in Iraq. We just designated HAN several months ago, and we are continuing to look at other organizations aligned with Iran that might meet the standards for terrorist designations.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much.

Ambassador SALES. Thank you.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Sherman, you are recognized.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

I want to commend you for designating the IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization. We fight terrorism, but I am not a fan of the change of name because I think fighting violent extremism, dealing with the ideology is the most important way to fight terrorism. Once there is already people plotting with guns and with explosives, and you intercept them, or you do not, that is already almost too late. You want to stop when they are even thinking that that would be a way for them to dedicate their efforts. That is why I think the most important thing we do is the broadcasting and the work on the internet to get the right message out.

I am familiar with the State Department over the last 22 years, very bright people who go to very, very good colleges and universities and grad school programs. But there are people in my district that may not have a degree in diplomacy but understand the culture of a country from which a lot of the terrorism comes. Do you have the flexibility to hire people because they understand Saudi Arabia or Iran, because they have lived there, they have grown up

there? Or do you pretty much just have to hire people that studied about Iran when they first got to college?

Ambassador SALES. No, Congressman, we want the best and the brightest.

Mr. SHERMAN. But do you have the flexibility to hire people based on their understanding of a culture and the language as a native speaker, as an understander, as someone who grew up in the culture, rather than somebody who can prove it because they have a master's degree?

Ambassador SALES. Yes, we do.

Mr. SHERMAN. OK, good.

Ambassador SALES. And I say it as somebody who does not have a master's degree in foreign relations.

Mr. SHERMAN. What?

Ambassador SALES. I say this as somebody who does not have a master's degree in foreign relations.

Mr. SHERMAN. OK. And then, for the record, I would like you to describe what somebody should do if they want to enter the chat rooms and combat the violent extremists, but they do not want to be thought of—they do not want the FBI knocking on their door and saying, “Hey, you're in the chat room. Time to be deported.” What can be done by people to register with or cooperate with law enforcement, so that they can be volunteers in the chat rooms?

The U.S. dollar has played a critical role in everything we have done. It is the reason why Iran is exporting only half a million barrels of oil. And you recognize that. You have got a whole program of counterterrorism finance and assistance to other countries to help them develop financial intelligence units. The people working against you most effectively are those creating crypto currencies. The administration, both Mnuchin and Trump, have denounced those crypto currencies. They are going to undermine your efforts. You are not going to be able to do this. Are we going to see from the administration proposed legislation to ban crypto currencies or just the press releases?

Ambassador SALES. Well, Congressman, it is an important topic. Terrorists are very adaptive. When you cutoff one avenue for them to raise money, they look for others.

Mr. SHERMAN. And we know that Hamas advertises for Bitcoin contributions. We know that the advocates of Bitcoin brag about how this is a device to escape the power of the U.S. Federal Government. And we know that Zuckerberg is planning to allow people to trade in his currency—I call it the “Zuck buck”—without anyone actually knowing who they are.

But I want to shift to one other question. The United Kingdom ended this fictitious designation, their distinction between Hezbollah's military and political wing. Argentina took a similar step. What is the State Department doing to get other countries to recognize that Hezbollah is Hezbollah?

Ambassador SALES. Hezbollah is Hezbollah, and we can take their word for it. We do not have to look at their finances to know that they are a terrorist organization, root and branch. We can simply look at what their leaders say.

So, we are holding up to other countries the example of the U.K. and the example recently set by the Argentines. I cannot get into

the details of confidential diplomatic negotiations here, but I can—

Mr. SHERMAN. Well, I would hope that you would involve Members of Congress. These Ambassadors and foreign ministers come to us all the time. And if you can identify those that should hear from those on this committee and subcommittee that deal with them, please allow us to be helpful in that.

And I will yield back.

Ambassador SALES. Well, thank you for that, and we will certainly take you up on that kind offer.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you.

Mr. Kinzinger, you are recognized.

Mr. KINZINGER. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Mr. Ambassador, thanks for your good work and for being here.

There is certainly a military component to counterterrorism. I think it is a central component. If somebody is radicalized and they have made it clear that they want to destroy the United States, like a group of ISIS, then they deserve to be on the receiving end of U.S. military power, and certainly we are in and we will continue to be.

But I also think there is a social component, which is really where your kind of bread and butter comes in. And my concern, when you look at the situation in Syria, for instance, I think our inaction there has been, frankly, a big shame on our country in the long term. I think we have a situation where terrorists have been recruited, not out of necessarily an affection toward that thought process, but because they see no other alternative to a guy that killed their dad and their grandparents, and their kids in some cases. And so, they have radicalized.

And so, my concern with Syria specifically is, when you think of the 7-, 8-, 9-, 10-year-olds right now that are in the refugee camps in Lebanon and Turkey and Jordan, and displaced anywhere else, one of the best ways to prevent, whether it is somebody being recruited into a gang in the United States or into a terrorist group, is to give them hope and opportunity, and to give them a future, because they are much less likely to be radicalized.

I appreciate your budget proposal, and I think we will be very supportive of it, but what in there are you guys focusing on in terms of preventing the next generation, the 7-, 8-, 9-year-olds? Because they are going to be the ones that have to actually defeat terrorism because they are going to do it within their own religion.

Ambassador SALES. No, I agree with that, and this really goes to what we are trying to do with our CVE programming. And I want to agree with what Congressman Sherman said a moment ago. By the time they have strapped on the SVEST, it is too late to change them from a path to radicalization and violence. We have got to get to them earlier.

So, we have done a number of different programs in the CVE space, and our request for a 60 percent increase in CVE-related funding will help us expand these efforts. One of the things we have done is create an online graphic novel that depicts the realities of life under ISIS's brutal rule and it shows would-be recruits the effects that their decision to travel to Syria would have on their

families, on their mothers, fathers, their siblings. It was seen by 17 million people, and as a result, we saw a really dramatic decline in viewers' support for terrorist organizations and terrorist ideology. Support for radical ideology went down 40 percent among the 17 million people who saw this, and support for specific organizations went down even more dramatically, by 50 percent.

So, that is the kind of battle of ideas that I think has to be a central part of any campaign against terrorists, and that is the sort of work that my Bureau wants to do with the budget that Congress entrusts us with.

Mr. KINZINGER. Well, I think about it because I think the difficulty of your job—and frankly, the military, too—is you can never quantify what did not happen that could have happened. For instance, we have debates in here with people that want to cut the U.S. military, of people that want to pull the troops out of everywhere around the world and become, basically, neoisolationists. And the reality is, it is hard to quantify what actually has been prevented by, for instance, fighting terrorists where they exist instead of where we exist.

So, I would continue to encourage you to look at that next generation, because I think, like the cold war, you know, it took decades to win, it ultimately was won, yes, by our military buildup economically, but it was won by the ideas behind the Iron Curtain that eventually overthrew the yoke of communism. And the same will happen here.

I want to just touch on a couple of other issues. It may not end up being a question because I have limited time. But Josh Rogin today put out a piece in the Washington Post about Rukban in Syria that is 30,000 people under the protection of the United States near the Tanf area, and how we are not feeding them, and that we are actually in negotiation right now with Russia to help feed them.

I just want to put it out there on the record that I think those kinds of things—and they may be out of your purview—but those kinds of things will actually help to recruit terrorists in the future, when they see the United States not feeding an area of people that are desperate and hungry and starving, when 400 meters away U.S. troops are fed. I think those are basic things you can do to eliminate that population.

Iran also, again, as everybody else has, I want to commend you on what you have done with Hezbollah. I think seeing Iranian investment in terrorism prior to the nuclear deal, during the nuclear deal, and post-pullout of the United States of the nuclear deal, I think you would definitely see that those investments track along that action. And we have seen, for instance, in Lebanon much less Iranian investment in Hezbollah there because they simply do not have the money.

And the last point I want to make in my 17 seconds is Afghanistan. I think the United States is making a strategic mistake by negotiating with the Taliban without including the Afghan government, because the Taliban are a terrorist organization. You cannot trust the Taliban. Eighty percent of the Afghan people support the United States being involved in Afghanistan, and I think to leave

the Afghan government out of those negotiations is a terminal mistake.

So, I know some of that is not in your purview, but I wanted to get that on the record. Thank you so much for your service and for being here.

And I yield back.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Kinzinger.

Mr. Keating, you are recognized.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Ambassador, for being here today and the work you are doing.

It was not long ago that a group of us in Congress went around sort of tracking the foreign terrorist fighters and where they came from originally. Clearly, one of the areas with the greatest influx of these recruited terrorist fighters was the European area as a whole and the thousands of people that were there.

I am just curious in terms of coordination with Europe, what are they doing there? What is the EU doing? What are countries perhaps doing individually to try and deal with this? And how are we coordinating with them?

Ambassador SALES. Well, thanks for the question. I think the answer is not enough. As you pointed out, Western Europe was a pretty fertile ground when it comes to ISIS recruiting. Thousands of them traveled to Syria to fight for the false caliphate, and a number of them are now in custody of our coalition partners.

Our policy in the Trump administration is that every country has a responsibility to repatriate their citizens and prosecute them for the crimes they have committed. We think that is the most effective way to ensure that they never return to the battlefield. Because if given the opportunity, they certainly will look for ways to continue the fight.

This is something the United States has lived up to. We have repatriated five fighters, four men, one woman, and they have faced charges here in the United States. It is not too much to expect that Western European countries that have deep pockets and courts that are accustomed to trying difficult cases will be able to do the same.

Other countries around the world with fewer resources and fewer capabilities have been able to repatriate and prosecute. Kazakhstan, for instance, has brought back several hundred of its citizens. Kosovo has brought back a number of its citizens as well. We would like to see that kind of activity in Western Europe, too.

Mr. KEATING. Yes. Now, as we mentioned before, we are really fighting an ideology and an idea. We did a great job, I think, with our allies working on the caliphate, reducing the geography there. But it is safe to say, is it, that there is going to be more incubation of other terrorists, maybe not the scope that we had during the last several years where there was a caliphate to go to, but is this still ongoing?

The prisons, particularly in Europe, are a great incubator of conversion to this kind of extremist ideology. So, in terms of the current efforts in preventing future terrorist fighters or extremists, anything going on in Europe with that that you are aware of? And are we coordinating with them in any respect?

Ambassador SALES. We are, yes. I think our European allies are well aware of the vulnerability that they face to radicalization in their societies. The countries that saw the greatest number of their citizens travel to ISIS are, in no particular order, the U.K., France, Belgium, and Germany, measured per capita.

And I think that the outflow of fighters was a real wake-up call for our European partners that we need to be doing more at the front-end of a terrorist life cycle.

Mr. KEATING. Yes.

Ambassador SALES. We need to engage them as they begin to take the steps toward radicalization.

Mr. KEATING. Along those lines—and I apologize; I only have a minute and a half left—but, along those lines, this committee and the full committee have worked hard to engage women in prevention of this kind of extremist behavior and growth of this ideology. They are in a wonderful place, in the better place I think, as a mother, as a sister, to see this really transpire and to deal with it. Are we engaging women? I mean, we have done a lot with Women, Peace, and Security, and the administration is joining in that effort. But is this an area of concern? Is this an area of focus for the administration, engaging women in this prevention?

Ambassador SALES. Absolutely. And let me give you a couple of examples of some of the things we are doing. Women can be victims of terrorism. They can be perpetrators of terrorism. They can be observers of terrorism and serve as a sort of early warning mechanism, as radicalization begins to take place.

So, some of the things that we have done to address this challenge, the set of challenges, in Southeast Asia and in the Balkans, we have a number of programs where we work with mothers, to help them spot the signs of radicalization in family members, so that they are able to intervene before it becomes too late.

It is also the case that women are able to gain access to certain communities that males may not be able to gain access to. And that is why in Iraq, for instance, we recently trained an all-female class of police recruits, because we assess that they will be able to make connections with parts of the population that is unique. And we are doing that sort of work, also, in places like Niger and the Philippines as well. So, this a top priority.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you. I have been there for some of those trainings, as a matter of fact, a few years ago.

I yield back.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Keating.

Mr. Mast, you are recognized.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Chairman. I appreciate it.

Sir, I would love to just start with something that has been spoken about a lot on both sides, and it is the underlying ideology, the under ideology, the caliphate. And if you could just be a little bit more specific and identify for us what is the underlying ideology that we are all combating that breeds terrorism?

Ambassador SALES. Well, thanks for the question. So, let me start with ISIS, in particular—

Mr. MAST. Please do.

Ambassador SALES [continuing]. Because there are obviously variations among different groups. ISIS, in particular, advances a

supremacist and intolerant vision of Islam that sees people who are Sunni but practice differently as inferior, and that certainly sees Shia Muslims, Jews, Christians, and people of other faiths or no faiths, as “the other”. And the ideology further prescribes the use of violence to achieve a desired political end-State of a caliphate, particularly the use of violence against people who do not subscribe to ISIS’s teachings. That is it in a nutshell, Congressman.

Mr. MAST. So, beyond somebody committing a violent act, which is a pretty telltale sign that somebody has been radicalized, what are some of these signs of radicalization that you have been speaking about and others have been asking about?

Ambassador SALES. Yes. So, other signs of radicalization that are short of acts of violence or support for violence would be support for supremacists or intolerant theological interpretations. The notion that, if you are a Christian, if you are a Jew, if you are a Shia, you are less than fully human. You are not entitled to the same legal protections as others. You should be shunned. You should be subjected to various forms of pressure. Those are some of the signs that are not always associated with violence, but that can lead to steps down the road to violence.

Mr. MAST. So, where would you say, in looking at this ideology and some of these signs of radicalization, do we see our partners lacking in capabilities in combating terrorism, in combating these that are becoming radicalized? And then, I would say, even more specifically, which partners are lacking in those capabilities? Obviously, there is a difference between lacking in capability and lacking in commitment. And so, if it leads you to touch upon that as well, I would encourage you to do so.

Ambassador SALES. Sure. I think a lot of countries have some work to do here. I would say that the United States has been relatively successful compared to some of our peer countries in combating ideology that terrorists use to radicalize and recruit.

One of the things that we have been trying to do in the CT Bureau is to partner with authorities who can speak credibly and offer alternatives to this radicalizing and intolerant ideology. So, we work with members of civil society and religious leaders in places like Jordan, places like Morocco, Indonesia. These are all parts of the world that have longstanding and deep roots in a version of Islam that emphasizes pluralism and tolerance and respect for difference and coexistence. And those are the sorts of voices that I think we in the United States, and other countries that are struggling with radicalization, need to be partnering with, because they have a credible account that Western governments simply cannot match.

Mr. MAST. So, are they lacking capability or commitment then?

Ambassador SALES. I think it is not so much commitment. I think there is a recognition of the problem and there is a will to address the problem. I think some countries are—overwhelmed is too strong a term, but worried about their resources and their ability to reach the vulnerable populations, which is why I think partnering with those authentic voices is the most effective approach.

Mr. MAST. So, I want to go to back to this a little bit more. When we talk about U.S. taxpayer dollars, looking for partners that need

assistance with their capabilities, and us partnering with them, so that we can, hopefully, prevent attacks here at home, who are some of these specific partners that need help with their capabilities? And where do our resources go to help with a capability, not a lack of commitment, based upon the ideology within their own population?

Ambassador SALES. Well, I can tell you that we are very active in this CVE work in places like West Africa, East Africa, the Balkans, Southeast Asia. These are all regions where countries may not have the same resources that the U.S. has, but they have the will to address the problem and the will to be a partner of the U.S. So, I think we are seeing some good returns on investment there.

Mr. MAST. My time is expiring. I thank you for the time, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Mast.

Mr. Allred, you are recognized.

Mr. ALLRED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for being here.

I want to begin by talking about ISIS. Despite the claim from the President that ISIS has been defeated, as you noted in your testimony, we have an ongoing fight here. And I recently met with the regional representative for Kurdistan. In that meeting, she expressed her concerns about the resurgence of ISIS near Kirkuk in Iraq in the disputed territories between Kurdistan and Iraq, and in that area where neither is able to fully exert themselves.

And there is an agreement there. DoD is onboard that the Kurds and the Iraqis should work together to combat ISIS there. But we need, I think, to apply more pressure to Baghdad to make sure that they get onboard with this and that they help our Kurdish allies there. Can you address that?

Ambassador SALES. Yes, I am happy to. So, as you rightly pointed out, the physical caliphate in Syria and Iraq has been destroyed, but that does not mean that the fight against ISIS is done. It means we are moving into a new phase.

I think the next phase has two components. I have spoken a bit about using civilian tools to attack ISIS networks around the world, but there is another component to it as well. That is, in theater, in Syria and Iraq, making sure that the remnants of ISIS are not able to reorganize themselves into an insurgency and carry on the fight there on the ground.

So, there is a military dimension to that, but there is also a diplomatic and civilian-side dimension to that as well. We need to work with the Iraqi government and the Kurdish officials, of whom you have spoken, to make sure that we do not let the boot off of ISIS's neck. We have got them on the ground, but we cannot let up now.

So, what specifically do we need to be doing? Well, we need to maintain our training of Iraqi military, Iraqi law enforcement, and others who are there on the front lines to make sure ISIS cannot resurge.

Mr. ALLRED. Yes. Well, and I will also just ask you to apply whatever pressure you can to the Iraqi government to work with the Kurds, especially there in that region, in those disputed terri-

tories, to combine forces, do what we can. I agree with you, we do not want to let them resurface.

And I want to also address a couple of the aspects of ISIS that have been the hardest to combat; namely, their sophisticated media apparatus and their financing. And you addressed it a little bit in your testimony, your written testimony. Can you discuss what our plan is going forward to try to combat those two elements of their sustained capability to exist and operate?

Ambassador SALES. Sure, I am happy to. I have spoken a bit about the ideology and the CVE efforts that we are trying to pursue to prevent radicalization and recruitment. So, let me say a bit about financing and ways of facilitating terrorist attacks.

I mentioned that we have designated 43 ISIS-related individuals and entities since 2018—since 2017. That is a good start, but we have got more work to do. ISIS was able to raise an extraordinary amount of money through a variety of different means when it held a so-called caliphate. It could tax a population. It could exploit natural resources. It could launder money.

Some of those revenue streams have gone away, but others are still there. And so, ISIS operating as an organized crime syndicate, we need to think about it that way. Raising money through money laundering, raising money through illicit trade, including in narcotics. And so, we have to attack those nodes in the ISIS fundraising network through a combination of things like unilateral sanctions, sanctions at the United Nations, in which our domestic efforts are amplified by international pressure, and by bilateral engagement with other countries to encourage them to take the same kinds of actions that we are taking.

One example of that that I would point to is the TFTC in the Gulf, the Terrorism Financing Targeting Center, in which the United States partners with a number of Gulf countries to jointly issue designations. We have done some against Hezbollah and the IRGC. We have also done some ISIS-related entities in tandem with our Gulf partners. We would like to see more of that.

Mr. ALLRED. And do you believe that you have the authorities right now to conduct the additional pressure campaigns that you are talking about there?

Ambassador SALES. I think we do, yes.

Mr. ALLRED. All right. OK, good. Well, I have only 30 seconds left, so I also want to just mention the Iraqi Shia militias that are backed by the Iranians. This is another thing that was raised for me in my meeting with the Kurdish representative and something that I think we need to keep our eye on, make sure that we are not forgetting that. And I want to commend some of the actions that have been taken in terms of designating some of the Iranian elements as terrorist organizations. So, thank you for that.

Ambassador SALES. Thank you.

Mr. DEUTCH. All right. Thank you, Mr. Allred.

Mr. Watkins, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WATKINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ambassador, thank you for your time and insight.

How integral is the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership to interagency efforts to combat terrorism in Trans-Sahara Africa?

Ambassador SALES. I think it is important. The Sahel and the Maghreb regions of Africa face a perfect storm of challenges. You have a number of terrorist organizations that are extremely active there, groups like JNIM, AQIM, ISIS West Africa, ISIS Greater Sahara, Boko Haram. And coupled with that, you have States that have in many cases porous borders, States that do not have complete control over the periphery of their territory, police forces that may not have the same capabilities that we are accustomed to in the United States.

And so, the efforts that we are taking under the TSCTP and other lines of effort I think are incredibly important. We need to boost the capability of these States that are on the front lines of the fight against ISIS affiliates and al-Qaeda affiliates and other terrorist groups.

Mr. WATKINS. And how is the Department of Defense, USAID, the Department of State coordinating their programs, both in the field and here in Washington?

Ambassador SALES. Well, we all have different comparative advantages that we bring to the table. DoD, of course, is second to none in providing assistance to partner military forces. USAID focuses on the humanitarian and relief and development dimensions. My Bureau focuses on building the capacity of the institutions that nations need to counter the terrorist threat more effectively—financial intelligence units, border security officials, police, judges, prosecutors, and so on.

Mr. WATKINS. Going back to al-Qaeda and ISIS, how do those two threats compare to each other?

Ambassador SALES. Boy, that is—how much time do you have, Congressman?

Mr. WATKINS. I have got 3 minutes.

Ambassador SALES. OK, I will be concise.

The world's attention has been focused on ISIS in recent years. They grab the headlines. But we should not be fooled into thinking that al-Qaeda is less of a threat than it has been. As some of your colleagues have pointed out in today's hearing, the number of AQ fighters today is greater than was the case before 9/11. Al-Qaeda has been strategically patient. They have been content to allow ISIS to absorb the brunt of the counterterrorism pressure that the world has brought to bear. But that does not mean they are out of the fight. Al-Qaeda affiliates are extremely active, particularly in Africa. I talked about AQIM and JNIM already. In the Horn, Al-Shabaab is an extremely dangerous terrorist organization. They commit attacks on a routine basis within Somalia. They also have shown the ability to strike their neighbors, Kenya, in particular. So, I would rate the threat from al-Qaeda as high and underappreciated by the public.

Mr. WATKINS. And what is the larger threat to the U.S. homeland?

Ambassador SALES. I think they are both equal threats to the U.S. homeland. They both have the capability and the intent to hit us here at home.

Mr. WATKINS. All right. I yield the balance of my time. Thank you.

Ambassador SALES. Thank you.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Watkins.

Mr. Malinowski, you are recognized.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you.

Ambassador Sales, you wrote an op-ed recently with Ambassador Brownback on the Chinese Communist Party's persecution of Muslims, which I thought was absolutely first-rate. And in particular, you made the point that, quote, "By painting its human rights violations as a legitimate counterterrorism effort, these abuses in China undermine the global consensus on counterterrorism." Exactly right.

My question to you is, this is not just a Chinese phenomena, though? You would agree that there are a number of countries around the world that also paint their human rights abuses as legitimate counterterrorism?

Ambassador SALES. Unfortunately, China is not unique in that respect.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Right. Can you think of some others?

Ambassador SALES. I would be happy to share them with you in a different setting, Congressman.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. OK.

Ambassador SALES. But, yes, I can.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Well, I wanted to ask you, in particular—there are so many examples—but I wanted to ask you, in particular, about Egypt, where you have had tens of thousands of people detained in horrific conditions in prison for mostly the peaceful exercise of their political views, and many of them prosecuted under counterterrorism laws. You have bloggers, journalists, human rights activists prosecuted explicitly under counterterrorism laws.

According to Amnesty International, at least 35 individuals have recently been detained on charges of, quote, "joining a terrorist group, because they stood together in solidarity in a small, peaceful protest against increased metro fares." Does that help bolster the international consensus on counterterrorism?

Ambassador SALES. Well, peaceful political protests and the expression of dissident political views, that is fundamental to what it means to be an American. The reason it is in the First Amendment is because we care about freedom of speech and expression and assembly more than any other.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Right. It is wrong, but would you also make the same argument that you made about Chinese repression of Uyghurs, that when it is justified as counterterrorism, it undermines the global effort to identify and fight real terrorism?

Ambassador SALES. So, I believe that States should use their counterterrorism tools to confront actual terrorists. And I would also say that the scope of the repression in China is so vast and overwhelming that it sets it apart from other human rights concerns that we have elsewhere in the world. We are talking about—

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Well, it is of enormous scale, but we are talking about tens of thousands of people in Egypt as well, and I would not underplay that.

Ambassador SALES. And I do not mean to, Congressman.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. OK. Syria, I wanted to echo Representative Kinzinger's points as well. We are seeing, as anyone would have

predicted, the resurgence of ISIS after the defeat of the caliphate, driven, in part, at least in Syria, by perception among Sunnis living under control of the SDF that they are not being included in decisions; their rights are being violated. Do we have a civil-military plan in Syria in the areas where our troops are present to deal with that?

Ambassador SALES. We do. And I am happy to update you on where things stand, but I am going to defer in the main to Ambassador Jeffrey, who has the lead for the U.S. Government on these questions.

Our vision for the end-State in Syria is fairly straightforward. We want a Syria that is not a threat to its neighbors or a threat to its own people. And for too long, the Assad regime has been both.

The end-State we seek is one in which ISIS is defeated enduringly, in which there is a political settlement, pursuant to the applicable U.N. Security Council resolutions, and in which human rights are respected. That is a vital U.S. national security interest. And finally, an end-State in which all Iranian-commanded forces are removed from Syria.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Understood, but I asked a much more discrete question, and I would love it if you could get back to me on exactly what the State Department is doing to ensure that the SDF, which is our allied force, is not violating human rights, because I think you would agree that has counterterrorism implications.

Ambassador SALES. We would be happy to followup.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Finally, to get back to an issue that Mr. Deutch raised, the massacre of Muslims in the mosque in Christchurch, was that a terrorist act?

Ambassador SALES. Yes, it was, and the White House has called it as such.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. OK.

Ambassador SALES. May 15.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. All right.

Ambassador SALES. Yes.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. A little late, but—

Ambassador SALES. And National Security Advisor Bolton also called it a terrorist attack in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attack.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. OK. Thank you.

I yield back.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Malinowski.

Mr. Cicilline, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

I want to begin where Mr. Malinowski left off. Since September 11th, more Americans have been killed in the United States by a white nationalist terrorist than by radical Jihadist terrorists, and a number of attacks have already been referenced in this hearing. So, I would really like to know what—first of all, do you acknowledge that white national terrorists are as much of a threat to Americans as radical Jihadists?

Ambassador SALES. We recognize that it is a significant terrorist threat. And you can turn to our National Strategy on Counterter-

rorism, where we were the first administration ever to specifically call out racially motivated terrorism as a threat that needs to be confronted.

Mr. CICILLINE. So, would you talk a little bit about how your Bureau is using the countering violent extremism tools to counter white national terrorists worldwide? And do you think the Bureau can do more, should be doing more? What is the current status of those efforts?

Ambassador SALES. Sure. So, let me say a word, first, to situate what we are doing at the CT Bureau within the context of the broader U.S. Government approach. When it comes to racially motivated terrorists here in the United States, domestic terrorists, as you know, that is a DHS and FBI responsibility. Our responsibility at CT begins where the water begins.

And so, the things that we are doing in the CVE space, in particular, we have been engaging with internet companies, with tech companies, about the removal of radicalizing content. One of the things we have seen is that racially motivated terrorists around the world are quick studies. They have learned from ISIS and its use of social media to propagate messages of hate and intolerance and violence. And so, we engage social media companies about the need to remove content that violates certainly law, but also their terms of service.

Mr. CICILLINE. OK. In addition to that, what else?

Ambassador SALES. And so, another thing that we do is, with the Strong Cities Network, which is a program that my Bureau funds, we connect people and cities in the United States with municipal officials overseas to exchange best practices for confronting radicalization, including racially motivated extremism.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Ambassador, as the Acting Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, you are responsible for oversight of the Bureau of Democracy, Rights, and Labor, is that right?

Ambassador SALES. That is correct.

Mr. CICILLINE. And what type of work does the Bureau known as DRL perform?

Ambassador SALES. Well, as Congressman Malinowski well knows, it is the principal organ within the U.S. Government that monitors and advocates for the promotion of human rights around the world.

Mr. CICILLINE. And I take it you have confidence in the knowledge and the capabilities of the men and women who serve in DRL to advise you and the Secretary on issues of human rights?

Ambassador SALES. I certainly do, and if you could put in a word with your Senate colleagues, we would love to have the nominee confirmed to lead the office on a permanent basis.

Mr. CICILLINE. And you are familiar with the Secretary of State's recently announced Commission on Unalienable Rights?

Ambassador SALES. I am.

Mr. CICILLINE. And so, you know that, according to the notice, the purpose of this Commission is to, and I quote, "provide fresh thinking about human rights discourse where such discourse has departed from our Nation's founding principles of natural law and

natural rights.” End quote. Were you consulted or involved in the creation of this Commission?

Ambassador SALES. I was not.

Mr. CICILLINE. Can you define “natural law” for me?

Ambassador SALES. As a former law professor, I could probably spend the next hour doing so. A concise version of it is the law that is natural to human beings qua human beings. That is to say, law that is written on the heart of man, to use the 18th century expression.

Mr. CICILLINE. How about “natural rights”?

Ambassador SALES. Natural rights, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal” and endowed with certain unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Ambassador, you may know that the terms “natural law” and “natural rights” have close associations with movements that are expressly homophobic and discriminatory toward women and minorities. Do you believe that rights for women are included in the Secretary’s definition of “unalienable rights”?

Ambassador SALES. I absolutely do.

Mr. CICILLINE. And what about the rights of the LGBTI community?

Ambassador SALES. Absolutely.

Mr. CICILLINE. Are you aware that the Chairwoman, and some of the other members of this Commission, has a history of publicly arguing against and disparaging the rights of LGBTI individuals?

Ambassador SALES. Well, Congressman, I am here to talk about the State Department’s counterterrorism—

Mr. CICILLINE. Well, I am going to ask questions, sir. Are you familiar with that?

Ambassador SALES. I am here to talk about counterterrorism.

Mr. CICILLINE. Are you familiar with that Commission Chair?

Ambassador SALES. I am here to talk about counterterrorism.

Mr. CICILLINE. Sir, please answer my question.

Ambassador SALES. I am here to answer questions about the—

Mr. CICILLINE. Well, I will ask another question. What type of message do you think it sends to the LGBTI community when the State Department, and many of whom are serving overseas in very difficult capacities, to have a chair of a commission that has historically been used to discriminate against the LGBTQI community, who has said disparaging comments about the community? What kind of message does that send to diplomats who serve our country in dangerous places around the world?

Ambassador SALES. I think the message that we are sending is the one that the Secretary has been very clear about from the day he took the oath of office. And that is that every person is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their views, regardless of their backgrounds. And that is a message that I, personally, convey to my team, as Under Secretary and as Assistant Secretary, and it is one that we take very seriously.

Mr. CICILLINE. My time has expired. I wish I had a little more time to followup on that, but I yield back.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Cicilline.

Mr. Trone, you are recognized.

Mr. TRONE. Ambassador, thanks for being here today.

On April 8th, as we talked about earlier, you designated the IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization. This is the first time that we have a State institution designated as such. Does that represent a shift in the U.S. definition of terrorism?

Ambassador SALES. No, Congressman, I think it represents an extension of longstanding definitions of terrorism to a State actor in the IRGC that has been engaging in terrorism for a long time, but has never been called out as such.

Mr. TRONE. OK. So, there could be more coming?

Ambassador SALES. I am not in a position to sneak-preview any sanctions that may or may not be happening, but we are always on the lookout for individuals or organizations that might meet the legal standards for designation.

Mr. TRONE. As you weigh this out, what are the benefits and risks of this designation?

Ambassador SALES. Well, I think the two principal benefits of the designation are, first of all, the messaging, which illustrates in a very dramatic way that Iran is unique among the nations of the world in its use of terrorism as a basic tool of Statecraft. The IRGC promotes, and does more than just promote and support, but actively engages in terrorism around the world.

A second benefit is that this gives us new tools for prosecutors to hold accountable people who provide support to the IRGC. It is a Federal criminal offense to knowingly provide material support or resources to a designated FTO. And so, with the FTO designation of the IRGC, this creates opportunities for our prosecutors to pursue additional charges.

Mr. TRONE. Any downside?

Ambassador SALES. Any downsides? I do not think that calling the IRGC a terrorist organization is a bad idea.

Mr. TRONE. OK. The CT Bureau is responsible for CT-related cooperation with international partners, including programs to enhance partners' law enforcement capacities. What are some of the achievements that CT partnerships have brought us the last year?

Ambassador SALES. Well, one of the most important things that we do is train crisis response teams around the world. We need to make sure that the people serving on the front lines are able to respond to terrorist attacks in real time as they are happening, and either turn the attacks off or mitigate the amount of damage that is being done.

And we have seen some pretty dramatic successes from our work in this field. I just returned from Kenya several weeks ago, where I was present for a U.N. Conference on Terrorism Threats in Africa. And Kenya is a pretty important success story about how we have been able to boost the ability to respond to terrorist attacks. You will recall, in 2013 and 2015, Al-Shabaab militants, Al-Shabaab terrorists committed attacks against the Westgate Mall and against the university with really extraordinarily high casualty counts.

Fast forward to January of this year. Al-Shabaab tried it again, this time attacking the Dusit Hotel Complex in Nairobi. While they were successful in killing, I believe, 20 people, the response teams that the CT Bureau trained were able to intervene very early on

in the attack and minimize the casualties. Of course, we mourn the 21 lost lives, but we are grateful that this team was in place to prevent the carnage from being far worse.

Mr. TRONE. Who are the most challenging partners you deal with?

Ambassador SALES. I am happy to answer that question in a different setting, sir.

Mr. TRONE. OK. How do you ensure compliance with international law and human rights law when implementing the CT cooperation programs in complex environments like Afghanistan, Iraq, and sub-Saharan?

Ambassador SALES. Well, let me start by saying why that is really important. Respect for human rights and counterterrorism go hand-in-hand. Countries that have a lower respect for human rights are less resilient to terrorist radicalization. Security forces that commit abuses are an important source of motivation for terrorists. So, it is important that we get this right.

And the way we do this is we comply with the Leahy law, which requires us to withhold assistance from units that engage in gross violations of human rights. So, we robustly enforce that requirement through investigations that we conduct in cooperation with our embassies abroad, our regional bureaus that have oversight, as well as the intelligence community.

Mr. TRONE. Thank you for your service.

Ambassador SALES. Thank you.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Trone.

Mr. Zeldin, you are recognized.

Mr. ZELDIN. Thank you to the chair for holding today's hearing and the ranking member.

Ambassador, thank you for being here.

I believe that, briefly, earlier on in the hearing, you got into the topic of social media and as it relates to your mission statement. We have designated foreign terrorist organizations operating on social media platforms in other parts of the world. Hamas comes to mind. They still have accounts. Muslim Brotherhood is not a designated foreign terrorist organization, although there is a debate in Congress as to whether they should be.

But, focusing specifically on the designated foreign terrorist organizations, it is interesting, using Hamas as an example—and I have been engaged, a number of Members have been engaged with Twitter on the back-and-forth. I believe that if you look at Twitter's own criteria for a violent extremist group, which is the term that they use, the three elements that Twitter uses, Hamas meets that definition of a violent extremist group.

If an operation is conducted abroad against that designated foreign terrorist organization, and any of the traditional media platforms are taken offline, Hamas is able to stand up their media operation in an instant utilizing, for example, their Twitter platforms.

So, can you speak in a little more detail as far as what is the path forward? You have United States companies providing this invaluable resource to designated foreign terrorist organizations, and it harms not only our national security interests, but those of our allies.

Ambassador SALES. I think that is exactly right, Congressman. And another thing I would add is that it could harm the social media companies that host this content as well, because, presumably, they do not want to be seen as enabling the activities of a terrorist organization like Hamas, like Hezbollah, or like the IRGC.

One of the things that we have done at my Bureau—and other players in the executive branch have done this as well—has been, when there is a designation of an individual or organization as a terrorist, to reach out to social media companies to make sure that they are aware of the fact that this person or this group has been designated, so that they are able to consider the implications for a decision to continue to host that person or group on their platforms.

We have actually seen social media companies respond to our designations. After the IRGC designation was announced in April, we saw some social media platforms evict IRGC-related individuals, so as to not run afoul of U.S. sanctions requirements.

Mr. ZELDIN. One of the things that the social media companies will do, using Twitter and the Hamas example as one that is perfect for this back-and-forth, is try to separate a political wing from a military wing. That debate played out in Parliament in Germany when they were trying to decide recently whether or not to designate Hezbollah's political wing, as they would call it. We would advocate for Germany to designate Hezbollah as a whole. There are European countries/entities that have designated specifically just the military wing.

So, in your interactions with these social media companies, are you able to get down to that level and make headway? Because while some platforms clearly are being removed from certain entities, Hamas still has their Twitter accounts.

Ambassador SALES. Yes, we do discuss that with social media companies. And the U.S. position on Hezbollah, in particular, is perfectly clear. It is a terrorist organization through and through. We reject the false distinction between a political wing and a military wing.

Hassan Nasrallah is not a political figurehead. He runs a terrorist outfit, full stop. And so, we have communicated to social media companies that, when seeking to comply with U.S. sanctions/law, you should be aware of the fact that we see the entire organization as sanctionable.

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, real briefly, switching gears, a quick question. Just last week, there were disturbing reports in the media about the ISIS flag being flown at a camp in northeast Syria which currently houses women and children. Can you speak briefly to, are you concerned about these camps serving as incubators for radicalization?

Ambassador SALES. Yes. Yes, we are. So, I think you are referring to the Al-Hawl camp in Syria, which houses, I believe, about 70,000, give or take, mostly women and children. The majority of the population is either Iraqi or Syrian, but there are about 11,000 people in the camp who hail from other countries around the world, Western Europe, Africa, the Gulf, Southeast Asia, and so on.

Our policy for how to treat the residents of these camps is essentially the same as our policy for what should be done with the male

fighters with which they are associated. They need to be taken back to their countries of origin. In the case of women, some of them may have committed crimes. If that is the case, they should be repatriated and prosecuted, and we should not give them a pass simply because they happen to be a woman. The United States does not do that. We have prosecuted a woman whom we repatriated from Syria and Iraq, and we expect other countries to do so as well.

The point is, for as long as these women and children are in an internally displaced person's camp in the middle of the desert, we are not going to be able to do the hard work of de-radicalizing them and reintegrating them into society. That can only happen if countries of origin take responsibility for their citizens and intervene actively to disengage them from the ideology.

Mr. ZELDIN. Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate your concern. I am out of time.

Ambassador SALES. Thanks.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Zeldin.

Mr. VARGAS, you are recognized.

Mr. VARGAS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And, Ambassador, thank you very much for being here. I appreciate it very much, as we all do.

I am glad you are talking about ideology and ideas. I think that your job is very important and what you do within the administration is very important, because I do think that this is ultimately a battle of ideas and philosophy. I mean, I am very optimistic about the future of humanity. I am not pessimistic.

And the reason for that is, I look back in history and look at what was happening in Spain under Moorish Spain. You had a high degree of tolerance under Moorish Spain between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. It was not perfect, but I do remember what happened once the Catholics got involved and, ultimately, reconquered. You had Isabella and Ferdinand with the expulsion, the forced conversions, horrible things that we Catholics did. We learned our lesson and found out that it was a very bad idea and I have hoped we have reformed. It took us a while to do that, but that is why I am optimistic. I know that people can change.

So, that is why I look at your budget, and the work that you do I think is very, very important in this battle of ideology. But it seems like you are not getting the money that you need, the personnel that you need, the positions. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Ambassador SALES. Sure. I am happy to, Congressman. So, first of all, thank you for the support that you and the committee and Congress as a whole have provided to us, financial support. Our budget request of \$241 million is the amount of money that we think we need to do the job effectively. Now it is less than we were appropriated last year.

Mr. VARGAS. Sure.

Ambassador SALES. But if you compare this year's request to the long-term historical trend, it is actually right in line. So, from 2009 to 2015, our budget request was typically between \$230 and \$250 million in foreign assistance. Now there was a spike in fiscal years 1916 and 1917 where the numbers were substantially higher. But

this year's budget request represents a return to the historical norm. I think we were effective in 2015. I think we would be effective with this budget as well.

Mr. VARGAS. OK. It does concern me, again, because it seems like we were going in the right direction. I like this investment that we are making with counterterrorism, the fight between ideology and philosophy. I think you guys are doing a good job, but it seems like we are starving you. And I do not agree with that. I will support this budget, but I would like to see an enhancement.

I do want to yield the rest of my time, though, to my good friend from Rhode Island, who has some questions. Thank you.

Mr. CICILLINE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Ambassador, you just said, in response to Mr. Trone's question, "Respect for human rights and counterterrorism go hand-in-hand." It is in light of that statement that I am particularly disappointed that the Acting Director of the Bureau of Democracy, Rights, and Labor, who claims he has confidence in the men and women of his Bureau, will not at least acknowledge the inappropriate statements of the chair of this new commission and condemn them publicly, who made comments disparaging and arguing against the rights of LGBTI people.

And the impact that has on the agency, on our standing in the world, is very disturbing. And I hope you hear the message loudly and clearly that those of us who believe that the United States plays an important role in defending human rights around the world, as one of the most important ways to keep this country safe, have a responsibility not only to speak those, but to live those actions by the conduct we engage in.

Ambassador SALES. And I would—

Mr. CICILLINE. And I will tell you that your refusal to even acknowledge it is gravely disappointing to me.

Ambassador SALES. Well, Congressman—

Mr. CICILLINE. But I will move—no, no, sir, you are not going to acknowledge it. So, are you prepared to acknowledge what the chairwoman said?

Ambassador SALES. Mr. Chairman, am I allowed to answer the question?

Mr. DEUTCH. The gentleman asked you a question.

Mr. CICILLINE. The question I asked you is, are you aware that the chairwoman and some of the other members of this new commission have a history of publicly arguing against and disparaging the rights of LGBTI individuals?

Ambassador SALES. My answer to your question is that the Secretary and I, and the rest of the Secretary's leadership team, are fully committed—

Mr. CICILLINE. That is not the question, sir.

Ambassador SALES [continuing]. Fully committed—

Mr. CICILLINE. I will repeat the question.

Ambassador SALES [continuing]. To human rights—

Mr. CICILLINE. Are you aware that the chairwoman—

Ambassador SALES [continuing]. To the rights—

Mr. CICILLINE [continuing]. And some of the other members of this commission, not you, not the Secretary, I am asking about the chairwoman of this newly created commission that is supposed to

talk about natural rights has made disparaging comments and argued against the rights of LGBTI people? That is a yes or a no.

Ambassador SALES. I cannot speak for—

Mr. CICILLINE. You are not aware of it?

Ambassador SALES. I cannot speak for people to whom you are referring. I can only speak for myself, the State Department, and—

Mr. CICILLINE. So, your answer is, no, you are not aware that the chair of this commission—

Ambassador SALES. But I can tell you—

Mr. CICILLINE [continuing]. Has made disparaging comments? Is your answer no?

Ambassador SALES. And I can tell you that anyone who comes to work for the State Department is expected to live by the highest standards of personal integrity. That includes respect for others, because of the inherent dignity which all people are entitled to—

Mr. CICILLINE. Sir, sir, with all due respect—

Ambassador SALES [continuing]. Regardless of their background—

Mr. CICILLINE [continuing]. That is not my question.

Ambassador SALES [continuing]. Regardless of their views—

Mr. CICILLINE. I am asking whether you are aware, as you sit there today, that the woman who was appointed to chair this commission and several of the members have made disparaging comments and argued against the rights of LGBTI people? That's a yes or a no. Either you do, are aware of it or you are not.

Ambassador SALES. I am telling you—

Mr. CICILLINE. I am not asking you to characterize their views. I am asking you, are you aware of those positions of the members of that commission?

Ambassador SALES. Congressman, you are characterizing their views. I am not in a position to express an opinion other than what I have told you, which is that I personally, and the Secretary and the entire State Department leadership team are committed—

Mr. CICILLINE. Reclaiming my time—

Ambassador SALES [continuing]. Fully committed—

Mr. CICILLINE [continuing]. You are not going to answer the question; I am not going to allow you to make a speech.

I yield back.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you.

Before we conclude, Ambassador Sales, I would just like to clarify one thing from earlier. Radical Islamist terrorism, we have spent a lot of time talking about it is a worldwide movement of different groups committed through their ideologies to terror activities, correct?

Ambassador SALES. I would—yes, broadly, yes.

Mr. DEUTCH. And I am just looking in broad terms. Racially motivated terrorism, is that the same? Is there also a network of groups committed to racially motivated terrorism? Or does the term “white nationalist terrorism” more accurately reflect that collection of groups that is committed to that ideology?

Ambassador SALES. Well, the term that our interagency settled on was “racially motivated terrorism” a year and a half ago—

Mr. DEUTCH. Right.

Ambassador SALES [continuing]. When we started working on the National CT Strategy. So, that is the term that we use to express, and there are other terms. I have heard the term “ethno-violent extremism,” and various others.

Mr. DEUTCH. I understand. Before we wrap up, I just wanted to make sure I understood whether there is a worldwide epidemic of racially motivated terrorism, whether you are saying it is the same as white nationalist terrorism, or is white nationalist terrorism part of it? Because a lot of us believe that the data suggests that it is white nationalist terrorism that is the growing threat.

Ambassador SALES. Well, the way I would answer that question is to say there are different terms that are being used to attempt to describe essentially the same phenomenon. And the terms that you have used, that I have read in the literature, that our international partners use, all differ, but I think we are all trying to describe the same problem.

Mr. DEUTCH. OK. Thank you.

I thank you and all the members for being here today. This was a terrific hearing, Ambassador Sales. Thanks for your testimony.

Members of the subcommittee may have some additional questions for you. We ask that you please respond to those questions in writing. And I would ask my colleagues to submit any questions to the subcommittee clerk within five business days.

Mr. DEUTCH. And with that, without objection, the subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:28 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

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

Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and International Terrorism

Ted Deutch (D-FL), Chairman

July 24, 2019

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held by the Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and International Terrorism in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/>):

DATE: Wednesday, July 24, 2019

TIME: 2:00 pm

SUBJECT: The FY20 Budget: State Department Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism Bureau

WITNESSES: Ambassador Nathan Sales
Coordinator for Counterterrorism
Ambassador-at-Large
Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism
U.S Department of State

By Direction of the Chairman

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON Middle East, North Africa, and International Terrorism HEARING

Day Wednesday Date 07/24/19 Room 2172

Starting Time 2:00 PM Ending Time 3:28 PM

Recesses 0 (to) (to)

Presiding Member(s)
Chairman Theodore E. Deutch

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session Electronically Recorded (taped)
Executive (closed) Session Stenographic Record
Televised

TITLE OF HEARING:
The FY20 Budget: State Department Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism Bureau

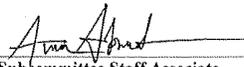
SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:
See Attached

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

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

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*
QFR - Rep. Ted Deutch

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
OR
TIME ADJOURNED 3:28 PM


Subcommittee Staff Associate

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA, AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
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	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
X	David Cicilline, RI
	Ted Lieu, CA
X	Colin Allred, TX
X	Tom Malinowski, NJ
X	David Trone, MA
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X	Brian K. Fitzpatrick, PA
	Guy Reschenthaler, PA
X	Steve Watkins, KS

**Questions for the Record from Representative Ted Deutch
The FY20 Budget: State Department Counterterrorism
and Countering Violent Extremism Bureau
July 24, 2019**

Question:

The National Strategy for Counterterrorism includes the term “racially motivated extremism,” which Ambassador Sales used throughout the hearing. House Foreign Affairs Committee staff was previously told other terms were under consideration, including “ethno-nationalist terrorism.”

What other terms were considered before the State Department and interagency settled on the term “racially motivated extremism”?

Answer:

Ambassador Nathan Sales: The Administration is committed to confronting terrorism in all of its forms, and included racially motivated extremism in the 2018 National Counterterrorism Strategy as one of several terrorist threats to the United States. This was the first time the United States ever explicitly referenced the threat posed by racially motivated terrorist groups in a National Counterterrorism Strategy. Both the U.S. and our foreign partners are still assessing the scope of the threat, and what steps we can take to counter this dangerous phenomenon. I look forward to discussing our view of the threat and our efforts to counter it during the upcoming Member-level HFAC briefing in September.

Question:

Is the debate over the use of the term “racially motivated extremism” settled or ongoing?

Answer:

Ambassador Nathan Sales: While discussions continue in the U.S. and among our partners about the appropriate terminology for the recent spate of racially motivated terrorist attacks, countering the full scope of these threats is a top priority for the State Department. We have been engaging in extensive, in depth consultation with our close allies about these issues. We also are providing funding for important and timely projects that focus on countering racially motivated extremism, including the Strong Cities Network. I look forward to discussing these issues during the upcoming Member-level HFAC briefing in September.

Question:

Is the State Department or interagency no longer considering the term “ethno-nationalist terrorism”?

Answer:

Ambassador Nathan Sales: While discussions continue in the U.S. and among our partners about the appropriate terminology for the recent spate of racially motivated terrorist attacks, countering the full scope of these threats is a top priority for the State Department and for our interagency and international partners. I look forward to discussing these issues during the upcoming Member-level HFAC briefing in September.

Question:

Is the State Department focused on any other types of “racially motivated extremism” besides extremism inspired by white nationalism? If so, what other types of ideologies and organizations fall under the purview of “racially motivated extremism”?

Answer:

Ambassador Nathan Sales: The Administration’s 2018 National Strategy for Counterterrorism was the first national counterterrorism strategy ever to explicitly reference the threat of “racially motivated extremism.” The Strategy also emphasizes the need to confront other domestic terrorist threats, such as “sovereign citizen extremism” and “militia extremism.” The State Department and the interagency remain vigilant against all extremist threats to the United States and its people. As the FBI and DHS work to combat these extremists domestically, the State Department is working to combat them overseas, focusing on groups with international ties or international ambitions; any “feedback loop” of revenge or retaliation between racially motivated and global jihadist groups; the extent to which these organizations are mirroring or learning tactics and approaches from global jihadist groups; and improving governments’ responses to terrorism no matter the perpetrator.

Question:

During the hearing, Ambassador Sales stated, “One of the things we’ve done is create an online graphic novel that depicts the realities of life under ISIS’ brutal rule and shows would-be recruits the effects of what their decision to travel to Syria would have on their families, their mothers, fathers, and siblings. It was seen by 17 million people. As a result, we saw a really dramatic decline in viewers’ support to terrorist organizations and terrorist ideology. Support for radical ideology went down 40 percent among the people who saw it; support for specific organizations went down even more dramatically, by 50 percent. So that’s the kind of battle of ideas that has to be a central part of any campaign against terrorists and that’s the kind of work my bureau wants to do with the type of budget that Congress entrusts us with.”

What metrics did the State Department use to measure reduced sympathy for both terrorist ideology and terrorist organizations?

Answer:

Ambassador Nathan Sales: Reducing sympathy for terrorist groups and their ideology are important aspects of our countering violent extremism (CVE) work. We employed a variety of metrics to assess the impact of the graphic novel including, focus group data, analysis of media habits, surveys, and interviews.

Question:

What was the baseline measurement and how did sympathies change?

Answer:

Ambassador Nathan Sales: The baseline data surveyed at-risk youth in Jordan and Morocco prior to any exposure to the content. We measured changes in attitudes toward terrorism and terrorist groups by comparing the respondents' views about terrorism and terrorist groups before and after exposure to the on-line content.

Before viewing the program, we asked respondents whether certain descriptors accurately or inaccurately described extremists and asked this question again after they viewed the content. In comparing the before and after results, we noted a significant positive shift in peoples' trust in state institutions and a decline in sympathy towards extremists after viewing the content.

Question:

Did the State Department conduct a follow up assessment to learn if this decreased sympathy persisted? If no, does the Department plan to follow up?

Answer:

Ambassador Nathan Sales: This program has concluded and therefore the State Department has not conducted a follow up assessment. The CT Bureau continues to explore opportunities to support other innovative programming aimed at countering terrorist ideology. CT will continue to incorporate monitoring and evaluation for all ongoing and planned programs.

Question:

If possible, please provide a breakdown of the nationalities, ages, genders, and locations of the 17 million people who saw the graphic novel.

Answer:

Ambassador Nathan Sales: This program included print and online components with target audiences in Morocco and Jordan. The referenced 17 million viewers includes individuals who viewed the graphic novel on its online portal and social media platforms including Facebook and YouTube. Approximately 95 percent of viewers of the Jordan and Morocco pages were nationals of these countries. The audience comprised youth between the ages of 16 to 24 and the

majority of viewers in both countries were male, with 46 percent female viewers in Jordan and 31 percent female viewers in Morocco.

Question:

Ambassador Sales’ testimony claims, “The Administration’s FY 2020 budget request for the CT Bureau includes more than \$241 million to sustain the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF), the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program, the Terrorist Interdiction Program (TIP), and programs on countering violent extremism (CVE).” However, a recent Congressional Research Service report cites a \$170.809 million budget for the CT Bureau: \$7.915 from Security Programs, \$17.394 million from American Salaries, \$9 million from Economic Support Funds, and \$136.5 million from Non-Proliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Accounts (NADR).

Please provide a detailed accounting of the approximate \$241 million top-line number for the CT Bureau and the specific amounts the CT Bureau will draw from CTPF, ATA, TIP, and CVE.

Answer:

Ambassador Nathan Sales: The Administration’s FY 2020 budget request includes more than \$241 million for foreign assistance funding to sustain the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund, the Antiterrorism Assistance program, the Terrorist Interdiction Program, and programs to counter violent extremism. Breakout as follows:

Account/Sub-Account	FY 2020 Request
Total	\$241.6 million
Non-proliferation, Antiterrorism, and Demining Related Programs (NADR) Total	\$232.6 million
Antiterrorism Assistance	\$182.6 million
<i>of which, Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund</i>	<i>\$41.4 million</i>
Terrorist Interdiction Program	\$50 million
Economic Support and Development Fund (ESDF)	\$ 9 million

Of the total request for foreign assistance funds, CT Bureau estimates that \$15 million will be directed at CVE programs from both NADR and ESDF accounts.

In addition, the CT Bureau is also requesting \$25.31 million in Diplomatic Engagement funding for bureau operations, including salaries, travel, contracts, and supplies.

A more detailed description of how these funds will be used and a breakout by sub-account is outlined in the State Department’s FY 2020 Congressional Budget Justification and the accompanying appendix documents.