

ASEAN Regional Forum
11th Inter-sessional Meeting on
Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime
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U.S. Statement (As Prepared for Delivery)

I'd like to thank the Government of Vietnam for hosting and the Government of Australia for co-chairing the 11th Inter-sessional Meeting on Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime. The United States values the ASEAN Regional Forum, and we welcome this opportunity to discuss national and collective measures to countering the serious transnational threats that our countries face. Building partnerships and strengthening multilateral institutions like the ASEAN Regional Forum is a top U.S. foreign policy priority. In fact, it is one of the main principles in both the U.S. National Security Strategy and the National Counterterrorism Strategy. These strategies recognize the importance of helping our partners build strong and enduring counterterrorism capabilities. We also encourage regional efforts to support implementation of international counterterrorism instruments and the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy. In July 2011, President Obama also released his National Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime. A key pillar of the Strategy is to enhance international cooperation with key partners to combat the lethal nexus of organized crime, narco-trafficking, terrorism, and to protect our communities from the violence, harm, and exploitation wrought by transnational threat networks. The Strategy also challenges the U.S. government and our international partners to work together to combat transnational illicit networks and converging threats, and take that fight to the next level by breaking

their corruptive power; attacking their financial underpinnings; stripping them of their illicit wealth; and severing their access to the financial system.

To combat terrorism and transnational crime challenges, we must continue to strengthen existing partnerships and build new partnerships with governments, multilateral bodies, the private sector, and civil society. Events over the last decade have shown that these partnerships are becoming more critical as transnational threats proliferate.

We have seen al-Qa'ida's core diminish, however, al-Qai'da affiliates have continued to spread across regions, and other groups with al-Qaida -related ideological leanings have gained prominence. Much of al-Qaida's activity has now been undertaken by its affiliates; many individuals are still receptive to al-Qai'da's ideology. A clear example of how this terrorist activity can affect ARF members was the kidnapping and murder of expatriate workers earlier this year at the In Amenas gas field in Algeria.

Recent terrorism-related activities in Thailand and the Philippines demonstrate the persistent terrorist threat in Southeast Asia. The United States has joined with our partners Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia, in capacity building efforts. These efforts have improved local law enforcement's abilities to detect, deter, detain, and prosecute suspected terrorists and their plots. This has limited the activities of Southeast Asia-based terrorist groups, including Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

Our partnerships and multilateral efforts have helped put significant pressure on terrorist groups. In the ASEAN region, we have seen promising signs of success including: the successful prosecution and sentencing of Jemaah Islamiyah member and 2002 Bali bombing mastermind Umar Patek in Indonesia; regional law enforcement training in Bangkok; and the successful use of the UN 1267/1989 al-Qa'ida sanctions regime to ban the travel of and halt financial support to terrorists.

It's clear that the international community has made great strides over the past decade in tactical counterterrorism—taking individual terrorists off the streets, disrupting cells, and thwarting conspiracies. But to be effective over the long term, our national and collective strategies must promote strategic counterterrorism. We must strengthen criminal justice sectors, ensure the rule of law and bring terrorists to justice. We must also address the drivers of violent extremism through a multilayered approach that diminishes the recruitment of new terrorists.

The United States' Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) strategy emphasizes the need to develop highly targeted strategies customized for specific communities. We have supported efforts by countries to engage youth in at-risk communities through police-led sports programs, for example. We are also working with countries, including Indonesia and Australia, through the Global Counterterrorism Forum's Southeast Asia Working Group to focus on effective prison management both to counter the spread of violent extremist ideologies in prisons and detention centers and to engage detained terrorists in de-radicalization programs.

There is widespread agreement on the need to prevent individuals from starting down the path toward radicalization, the embrace of violence, and support for

terrorism, as well as to divert persons already on that path before they are fully committed.

We must also emphasize building the capacities of states to eliminate breeding grounds for terrorism, recruitment, and instability, so governments can provide security, education, and employment opportunities for their citizens. We are particularly focused on helping to build governments' criminal justice capabilities, which are at the core of a successful counterterrorism approach. To this end, we are looking forward to sponsoring two training activities in Southeast Asia in the coming months under the auspices of the GCTF's Southeast Asia Working Group. These workshops will bring together senior counterterrorism prosecutors and investigating judges from across the region to discuss ways to implement the GCTF's Rabat Good Practices on Effective CT Practice in the Criminal Justice Sector. These good practices are focused on ensuring that all interested countries develop robust but human rights-based tools to allow their criminal justice systems to become more proactive in addressing the terrorist threats in the region.

We must also work together to combat transnational crime and corruption. Sustainable economic growth depends on our progress to combat corruption and illicit trade and its pernicious impact on the environment and markets. Illicit trade and the illegal economy undermine social stability and the welfare of our communities. Illicit enterprises not only distort the legal economy, but they also divert revenue from legitimate market drivers, such as businesses and governments. Illicit trade further hampers development by preventing the equitable distribution of public goods. This goes beyond just economic harm. The illegal economy also incurs a significant negative social cost, and in some cases, devastates vital ecosystems and habitats.

The global illicit trade in wildlife products is highly lucrative -- conservative estimates place it as an \$8-10 billion dollar annual enterprise. To that end, we are raising the profile of wildlife trafficking in bilateral and multilateral fora for law enforcement and criminal justice engagement, including in the following: East Asia Summit, APEC, UN Crime Commission, US-China Joint Liaison Group for Law Enforcement Cooperation, and the G8 Roma Lyon Group.

As former Secretary Clinton discussed last November at her event, wildlife trafficking, like other forms of transnational organized criminal activity, such as drug trafficking, weapons trafficking and money laundering, relies on porous borders, corrupt officials, and illicit networks of organized crime, all of which undermine our individual and collective security. Addressing the problem effectively therefore requires a holistic approach.

Smuggling networks also traffic in dangerous goods such as dual-use technologies and other items that contribute to WMD programs. Criminal enterprises do not distinguish in their trafficking activities so long as there is money to be made. Although WMD proliferation is a global security issue, combating the criminal networks that traffic requires the same holistic approach used to address other transnational crimes.

Similarly, the United States also believes maritime security is an important focus area within the ARF CTTC. Maritime security is vital to the overall stability and prosperity of the region. Issues such as smuggling and trafficking of humans, wildlife, narcotics, arms, dual-use technologies, and other illicit goods, as well as

toxic waste dumping and illegal fishing, will remain challenges for the foreseeable future.

In all aspects of maritime security, whether combating crime or terrorism, maritime domain awareness is a key to success. But before this information can be shared, there must be information to share. Regulations adopted by the International Maritime Organization have improved awareness of certain vessel traffic but additional efforts to address vessels not subject to these regulations, such as small boats and fishing vessels, are important because they enable better maritime domain awareness. If vessels and their patterns of movement are known, spotting anomalies becomes much easier, and resources can be better focused.

Another key aspect of maritime security is maritime criminal justice. We must work together to establish the legal foundations and build maritime criminal justice sectors, institutions, and capabilities so that nations are equipped to address what to do after a suspect vessel, cargo and crew have been captured and brought to port. This includes investigation and prosecution of crimes, as well as the seizure, administration, and disposition of vessels, cargo, and assets.

Before closing, I would like to mention a couple priority areas for the United States in the coming years.

Following our National Strategy for Counterterrorism, the U.S. Government will continue to focus on the following three elements: creating capable partners through capacity building; countering violent extremism; and strong partnerships,

both bilateral and multilateral. The United States is committed to building an international architecture for dealing with 21st century terrorist threats as demonstrated by our efforts to help launch the Global Counterterrorism Forum. In addition to the work underway on prison radicalization, which I previously mentioned, over the past year, the GCTF Southeast Asia Working Group has also focused on delivering human rights-compliant training to criminal justice officials in Southeast Asia on how to prevent and respond to terrorism within a rule of law framework. One way we support the creation of capable partners is through police training and justice sector reform programs throughout Southeast Asia. We have significant efforts underway to train law enforcement in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, and we are working closely with prosecutors and other justice sector actors in those countries to counter corruption, develop prosecutorial skills, and improve coordination to counter transnational crime.

The GCTF and ASEAN also plan to hold a joint training workshop to be hosted by Indonesia later this year for first responders for victims of terrorism. The main objective of this training is to build capacity in ASEAN member countries for law enforcement units and first responders to address the needs of victims in the immediate aftermath of a terrorist or other major criminal attack.

Whether it is strengthening ties with traditional allies or creating new partnerships and alliances, such as the GCTF, with its core goals of strengthening rule-of-law institutions and diminishing terrorist recruitment, there is a critical role for diplomacy in the broader counterterrorism effort. We look forward to exploring ways that ARF members can best support the efforts of the GCTF and its Southeast Asia Working Group.

We note the success of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia and its Singapore-based Information Sharing Center as a model of arrangements to promote and enhance cooperation against transnational criminal threats like piracy and armed robbery against ships. The President of the United States has committed the United States to acceding to this important organization and we are on track to do so.

In this vein, we are prepared to help the region further by co-chairing the ARF Transnational Threat Information-sharing Center development workshop which the ministers at the 18th ARF approved. We continue to look for a co-chair and we are hopeful that a suitable ASEAN co-chair will volunteer for this concept development process soon so we can begin making progress on addressing the urgent issue of trafficking illicit drugs in the region.

Trafficking in persons is a global challenge and constitutes the second largest international criminal activity after drug trafficking. 55% of the victims of the trafficking are women and children originating from Southeast Asia. We are pleased at the work being done on this critical subject at the SOM-TC, and we look forward to the ASEAN TIP Working Group's development of a regional trafficking in persons convention, as planned, and will, in the coming weeks and months, explore further tangible signs of our joint commitment to combating trafficking in persons. We welcome the Philippines' proposal at the last ISM on including TIP as a new priority area in the ARF work plan on CTTC and strongly believe that to be a strong and vibrant security forum, issues such as TIP must find their way into the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Last year, the United States and Vietnam held a cybersecurity workshop to raise awareness of the threat of criminals and terrorists acting as proxies in cyberspace. This workshop was the first international conference to address this issue, and we hope to build upon the discussion from the workshop over the next year. In the ARF, we participated in a forward-looking conference on reducing the risk of conflict in cyberspace through the use of transparency and confidence-building measures. We think they have a key role to play in the region and will work to see such efforts continue.

We have come a long way in addressing cybersecurity challenges, but we have much more work to do. In 2011, the United States released its first International Strategy for Cyberspace, which describes our approach to protecting cyberspace and ensuring it promotes prosperity, security, and openness in the future. The objective that we lay out in that Strategy—an open, interoperable, secure, and reliable cyber infrastructure that supports commerce, strengthens security, and fosters free expression and innovation—is a goal that we can all embrace.

To reach that goal, we must continue to eliminate vulnerabilities and strengthen weaknesses in our counterterrorism capacities. We must maintain a secure and open cyber infrastructure, draft and implement national cyber security strategies, continue to increase confidence-building measures and ensure that our national computer security incident response teams (CSIRTs) are prepared to respond to cyber-related threats.

Deepening our cooperation and strengthening national capacities will be essential to deny terrorists the means and mobility necessary to carry out violent attacks.

The efforts and collaboration of Forum members have produced successes in many areas of counterterrorism and transnational crime. We are pleased to be here as we determine our way forward in addressing these threats, and we look forward to making continued progress in close cooperation with our partners in ARF.