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**2015-2016 Bureau of Counterterrorism Partnership Concept:
Europe**

Summary:

(SBU) Over the course of 2015, countries in Europe have continued to face a heightened threat from Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), al-Qa'ida (AQ), their affiliated organizations, and other terrorist groups. Increased lone offender attacks in Europe inspired by ISIL's call to attack U.S. and Western interests, coupled with the return of a large number of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) who have traveled to Iraq and Syria, pose significant challenges to European governments. Lebanese Hizballah (LH) too continues to operate in Europe, maintaining robust support and facilitation networks, as well as maintaining the capability to carry out attacks in Europe.

(SBU) Governments in Europe are increasingly committed to addressing terrorism and have taken significant steps to address the FTF threat, although cooperation and information-sharing is still varied across the continent. The Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT) seeks to strengthen counterterrorism partnerships in Europe in order to counter violent extremist groups operating and recruiting within Europe, including ISIL, AQ, and Iran and its proxies. More broadly, CT seeks to deepen partnerships with European countries to address terrorist challenges beyond the continent, including in Africa and the Middle East. Specifically, working closely with other U.S. government partners, CT will pursue diplomatic engagement, capacity-building programs, and other activities to advance the following strategic goals (in no particular order):

1. (U) Reduce and mitigate the threat posed by FTFs and other radicalized individuals in Europe by promoting law enforcement cooperation, designations, and information-sharing.
2. (U) Disrupt and deter the flow of FTF to and from the Western Balkans and South Caucasus, by building capacity of countries to conduct traveler screening and investigate and prosecute FTF cases.
3. (U) Counter the radicalization and recruitment of FTF and violent extremists more generally in the Western Balkans and South Caucasus through increased partnerships, community outreach, and strategic communications by and between law enforcement and civil society.
4. (U) Disrupt the flow of FTF and terrorist finances through Turkey by bolstering Turkish law enforcement capacity to secure its borders and points of entry and counter community-level support for violent extremism.
5. (U) Promote European bilateral and multilateral contributions to counterterrorism and CVE efforts in Africa and the Middle East through policy and programmatic coordination, dialogue, and cost-sharing;
6. (U) Constrain LH and Hamas' support and facilitation networks in Europe through diplomatic engagement, sanctions, information-sharing, and law enforcement cooperation.

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Strategic Context:

(SBU) Throughout Europe, concerns about terrorism have increased following the May 2014 shooting at the Brussels Jewish Museum, the January 2015 Paris attacks, the February 2015 Copenhagen, attacks, and foiled plots in Belgium and the United Kingdom. These attacks have heightened concerns about individuals or small groups of individuals who become radicalized and choose to commit attacks in their home countries. To respond to this increased threat, the European Parliament and EU Member States are taking a range of actions from expanded information sharing, increased efforts to counter radicalization and violent extremism, and improved border controls to combat terrorist travel and financing and weapons trafficking.

(SBU) According to open-source reporting, thousands of European foreign fighters have traveled or attempted travel to Syria and Iraq. To counter such threats, the United Nations Security Council in 2014 adopted Resolution (UNSCR) 2178, while the Council of the European Union (EU) urged comprehensive action in accordance with its 2005 Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The United States cooperates closely with the EU and numerous European countries on UNSCR 2178 implementation and associated counterterrorism efforts. Since September 2014, our European partners have made progress in implementing UNSCR 2178 by imposing stricter border controls on travelers entering the passport-free Schengen area, piloting Advanced Passenger Information/Passenger Name Recognition (API/PNR) screening at certain airports, and expanding information sharing bilaterally and through organizations such as INTERPOL. However, implementation has been uneven, [REDACTED]

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(SBU) A disproportionately high number of FTFs have traveled from Western Europe, the Western Balkans, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to Iraq and Syria. Moreover, many labor migrants in Russia from the North Caucasus and Central Asia have been radicalized and recruited as FTF. Many Western Balkans countries are taking steps to implement UNSCR 2178, but lack sufficient legal frameworks and/or law enforcement tools to monitor, interdict, and prosecute FTFs. In addition, building on the action agenda from the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), many of these Balkan states are taking steps to counter violent extremist messaging and recruitment as well as rehabilitate and reintegrate known violent extremists. Along with the European Union, the United States seeks to build regional capacity and cooperation to address the FTF problem.

(SBU) Turkey is the principal transit route for the majority of FTFs traveling to and from Syria and Iraq, as well as the transit of terrorist finances and illicit goods by ISIL. Turkey recently increased its role in the U.S.-led Counter-ISIL Coalition to disrupt and degrade ISIL, including by supporting a program to train and equip vetted Syrian opposition elements through tighter border control measures enacted in the last year, and, more recently, opening several military bases to the Counter-ISIL Coalition for kinetic operations. The U.S. continues to encourage Turkey to adopt a broader approach to countering terrorism away from its historic focus on the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Turkey is balancing significant challenges given the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, a large and growing Syrian refugee population, and its own domestic concerns about terrorism and violent extremism.

(SBU) Turkey is increasing the pressure on FTF travel; in the first part of 2015, the United States and Turkey enhanced law enforcement information-sharing on known and suspected terrorists

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with an eye to improving the border security of both countries. Recent Turkish counterterrorism operations have led to additional detention of over 1,300 suspected members of ISIL, al-Qa'ida, PKK, and the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C) since the ISIL-conducted suicide attack in Suruc, Turkey on July 20, 2015. Still, there is more work to be done to help Turkey prevent extremists from exploiting its proximity to the conflict, including by pressing our European allies to share more information with Turkey and to more robustly interdict suspected FTFs when they return home.

(SBU) The spillover effects of the Iraq and Syria conflict extend beyond the flow of foreign fighters problem, as refugees and migrants flow out to Europe at unprecedented rates. In late 2014 and early 2015, the numbers being smuggled across the Mediterranean began to grow, especially via Libya, where ongoing civil war contributes to lawlessness. Syrians and Palestinians escaping violence in the Middle East joined traditional migrant populations of Eritreans, Somalis, and Afghans. While the great majority of migrants are desperately fleeing conflict or extreme poverty, some small number may have ties to criminality and/or violent extremists. The U.S. has some concerns that EU Member States' ability to process these new arrivals is lacking, both in terms of the numbers who go unscreened as well as deficiencies in screening for specific terrorism threats. Countries on the southern and southeastern fringe of the EU are especially affected by significant refugee flows from the Middle East and North Africa and may be susceptible to terrorist infiltration. At the same time, backlash against these migrants can also help drive recruitment in vulnerable communities.

(SBU) LH and Hamas utilize Europe's freedom of movement and financing to facilitate and fundraise for their organizations, and Hizballah carried out an attack in Burgas, Bulgaria, in 2012. In the wake of the U.S-Iran nuclear deal, there is even more need to maintain pressure on Iranian-sponsored proxies operating globally. The United States works closely with European law enforcement agencies to counter these networks, including sanctioning individuals and freezing assets. In 2013, the EU added the military wing of LH to its list of terrorist organizations. Since 2014, the Department of State and Europol have co-hosted a series of law enforcement-focused workshops to build awareness of Hizballah criminal activities and the tools available to counter them. The EU also designated Hamas, but that designation was overturned by its General Court in December 2014; the EU has since appealed the ruling.

(SBU) More broadly, Europe's expertise in critical infrastructure security and resilience (CISR) can be leveraged to assist other key countries concerned about protecting their critical infrastructure in the energy (e.g. refineries), transportation (e.g. airports, highways, passenger rail), financial (e.g. banks) and other sectors from terrorist attacks. These critical infrastructure sectors are also at risk from pandemics and extreme weather, and all of these threats continue to evolve. Critical infrastructure is also globally connected. CT can partner closely with European countries and the European Union to leverage CT tools, capabilities and expertise in CISR engagements to help countries address CT-related threats and vulnerabilities and to improve the overall security and resilience of critical infrastructure.

(SBU) Finally, the EU and a number of European countries provide significant human, financial, and political resources to support counterterrorism and CVE efforts beyond the continent. For example, France has significant influence in Northwest Africa and carries out counterterrorism

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operations across the Sahel region. Turkey serves as co-chair of the GCTF's Horn of Africa Region Capacity-Building Working Group, and the United Kingdom (UK) also plays a significant role in the Horn of Africa. European countries are also playing significant roles in the coalition against ISIL. The United States works closely with European countries on all of these efforts.

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CT Strategic Goals:

(U) Working closely with other U.S. government partners, CT will seek to develop and pursue diplomatic engagement, capacity-building programs, and other activities in Europe that advance the following strategic goals (in no particular order):

1. **Reduce and mitigate the threat posed by FTFs and other radicalized individuals in Europe by promoting law enforcement cooperation, designations, and information-sharing.** Despite having significant capabilities, many of our European partners do not sufficiently share information and cooperate on law enforcement action across borders. To address these gaps, CT promotes stronger pan-European and domestic legal frameworks to enable cooperation and information-sharing, especially involving travel across EU countries and Schengen borders. CT encourages Europe to establish Advanced Passenger Information and Personal Name Record data systems. CT also seeks to strengthen bilateral information-sharing agreements and arrangements between the United States and EU countries, directly and within the Visa Waiver Program context. CT has supported DHS's efforts to engage Visa Waiver Program (VWP) countries in Europe on their security commitments under the program, particularly in the area of CT and law-enforcement information-sharing. With countries where diplomatic engagement has been ongoing for several years, CT cooperation is beginning to broaden outside traditional stove-piped relationships even in countries with strong data privacy frameworks. CT also promotes increased cooperation on designations and investigations of terrorist actors and their financing and facilitation networks. Finally, CT also promotes greater information-sharing and exchanges of CVE good practices, including online, between the United States and select European countries and to bolster nascent

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EU member state efforts to strengthen strategic communications, particularly counter-messaging capabilities.

2. **Disrupt and deter the flow of FTFs to and from the Western Balkans and South Caucasus, by building capacity of countries to conduct traveler screening and investigate and prosecute FTF cases.** Countries of the Western Balkans and South Caucasus have taken some initial steps in response to the increasing challenge of FTF traveling to and from Iraq and Syria, but continue to have significant gaps in their capacity to monitor, investigate, interdict, prosecute, and incarcerate foreign fighters and facilitators. Though there have been some improvements, countries in these regions rarely cooperate and share information on law enforcement matters. Through training courses, exercises, regional workshops, advisory support, and the provision of equipment, CT seeks to assist governments in the Western Balkans and to the extent possible, the South Caucasus, to address these gaps. When appropriate, CT provides traveler screening equipment and training to help countries to secure ports of entry and airports, especially with Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation Systems (PISCES) technology.

3. **Counter the radicalization and recruitment of FTFs and violent extremists more generally in the Western Balkans and South Caucasus through increased partnerships, community outreach, and strategic communications by and between law enforcement and civil society.** The White House CVE Summit process has helped to catalyze attention and activity in the Western Balkans on the need for an expanded tool kit to counter violent extremist radicalization and recruitment. Albania hosted a regional CVE summit this year and plans to launch a new regional CVE initiative. CT seeks to support multilateral and/or regional initiatives that attempt to address the life cycle of radicalization to violence and that can institutionalize CVE efforts by law enforcement. CT aims to fund programs in the Western Balkans to counter violent extremist messaging and recruitment through community engagement activities, to counter radicalization in prison settings, and to promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of returning FTFs. CT will use FY 2015 resources identified to pilot the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund (CTPF) to expand these efforts. CT will also work closely with the Strong Cities Network, launched as a result of the White House CVE Summit process, which will include a number of European cities.

4. **Disrupt the flow of FTF and terrorist finances through Turkey by bolstering Turkish law enforcement capacity to secure its borders and points of entry and counter community-level support for violent extremism.** Turkey is the principal transit country for FTF traveling to and from Syria and Iraq. ISIL also uses Turkey to smuggle bulk cash, oil, antiquities, and other illicit goods out of Syria and Iraq for sale in regional markets. The Government of Turkey is taking steps to crack down on this transit and smuggling. [REDACTED] Through diplomatic engagement, training, the provision of equipment, and advisory support, CT seeks to strengthen Turkey's law enforcement capacity to implement traveler screening and aviation security protocols and better secure land border crossing points. CT also seeks to support efforts to strengthen Turkey's legal frameworks and investigative

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capabilities, including financial intelligence capabilities, to disrupt FTF traffic through Turkey and crack down on terrorist-related smuggling activity. To enhance the effectiveness of these programs, CT seeks to work closely with other European allies and through multilateral frameworks. CT also seeks to partner with Turkey on key CVE initiatives such as promoting community engagement and empowerment and countering online radicalization and recruitment, including counter-messaging capacity-building.

5. **Promote European bilateral and multilateral contributions to counterterrorism and CVE efforts in Africa and the Middle East through policy and programmatic coordination, dialogue, and cost-sharing.** The EU, France, Turkey, and the UK, as well as other European countries, are providing significant support for ongoing efforts to counter ISIL, AQ affiliates and adherents, Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, and other violent extremist groups. Through diplomatic engagement and strategic dialogues, CT seeks to foster and deepen U.S.-European coordination, dialogue, and cost-sharing to strengthen these efforts and maximize collective resources. For example, CT seeks to foster increased dialogue with France about its counterterrorism efforts in the Maghreb and Sahel regions. CT also seeks to strengthen partnerships with EU countries to counter ISIL's message, such as potential partnership with the EU Strategic Communications Advisory Team. CT also continues to encourage strong European participation and leadership in GCTF, OSCE, NATO, and related forums. CT seeks to engage with European partners on the need to curb terrorism finance in the form of ransom payments, per international obligations under UNSCRs 2133, 2161, and 2170. CT promotes the policy of not making concessions – political or financial – to hostage-taking terrorists, emphasizing that ransom payments are a significant source of terrorist financing and that such payments incentivize terrorists to maintain the kidnapping for ransom business model.
6. **Constrain LH and Hamas' support and facilitation networks in Europe through diplomatic engagement, sanctions, information-sharing, and law enforcement cooperation.** LH and Hamas continue to exploit limited will and/or capacity by certain European law enforcement agencies to crack down on its activities. Through diplomatic engagement and technical assistance, CT will seek to raise awareness about these groups operations and address criminal justice sector gaps with key countries. CT will continue to promote information-sharing, coordinated designations, and overall cooperation through the international law enforcement task force focused on LH, co-chaired with the European Police Service. CT will explore new regional and multilateral mechanisms with European countries to strengthen information-sharing about Hamas' activities.

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Annex: Recent and Ongoing CT and Related State/USAID Programs**Current CT Bureau Programs:**

CT continues to fund major programs in the following areas:

- Strengthening Legal CT Frameworks and Prosecutorial Capacity:** CT, via the Department of Justice, is funding a regional Resident Legal Advisor (RLA) focused solely on counterterrorism issues. The RLA is based [redacted] and provides counterterrorism and FTF-focused investigative and prosecutorial assistance to government officials in [redacted]. [redacted] The RLA deployed [redacted] and will assist in executing a series of regional workshops for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges on best practices on the successful investigation and prosecution of terrorism cases, including online. CT also funds an RLA in [redacted] to focus on counterterrorism finance issues in-country and enhancing the legal frameworks around that particular issue set. CT founded the Rapid Respond Fund (RRF) initiative, under which DOJ advisors and experts are sent by CT to assist partner nations in addressing acute rule of law needs, including case-based mentoring on terrorism-related crimes. [redacted] benefitted from this assistance in FY15. CT also promotes programming with and through the [redacted]. Additionally, through the [redacted] Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), CT supports a training initiative in the Western Balkans and South Caucasus to promote the GCTF Rabat Memorandum on Good Practices for Effective Counterterrorism Practice in the Criminal Justice Sector, and through the UNODC Terrorism Prevention Branch, CT sponsors trainings for criminal justice sector professionals from the Balkans on how to address FTF cases within a rule of law framework.
- Enhancing Information Analysis and Fusion:** In FY 2014, CT assisted the Bulgarian government's efforts to stand up a national counterterrorism center. CT is supporting additional analytical training for the center staff through the end of 2015. NATO adopted an Action Plan in 2014 to accompany its Counterterrorism Policy Guidelines to identify initiatives that enhance the prevention of, and resilience to, acts of terrorism with a focus on improved threat awareness, adequate capabilities, and enhanced engagement with partner countries and other international actors in countering terrorism.
- Regional Law Enforcement Cooperation:** CT is funding a number of projects to strengthen law enforcement cooperation to address the FTF threat. CT supports a regional Counterterrorism Advisor via the Department of Justice, to increase capacity as it relates to information sharing in the region, counterterrorism investigative capabilities, and CVE efforts that involve law enforcement. The Balkans regional FTF forum will bring together law enforcement and justice sector officials from all the Western Balkan countries to discuss the capabilities to investigate and prosecute terrorism cases. CT is also providing funding support to INTERPOL's Foreign Fighter Fusion Cell, to help it build basic capacity to counter the threat of FTF.
- Border Security:** CT is funding a select number of DS/T/ATA- and DHS-implemented trainings and courses on [redacted]

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[redacted] CT is also funding regional training courses through UNCCCT to assist key source and transit FTF countries in Europe utilize advance passenger information more effectively. These trainings will bolster the capabilities of partners in the [redacted] disrupt terrorist networks and to disrupt the flow of FTF traveling to Syria and Iraq. CT also provides assistance on border security screening systems through its partnership with DHS or providing solutions through PISCES. CT currently supports the installation and implementation of the Automated Targeting System – Global [redacted]

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Countering Violent Extremism: As part of the U.S. government's commitment to CVE, CT supports multiple, localized CVE initiatives in the Western Balkans, bolstering the capacity of civil society and law enforcement officials to counter violent extremist narratives and recruitment. CT's CVE programmatic priority locations include the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus, and Turkey. Additionally, under the auspices of the OSCE, CT is supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in developing a national CVE action plan. The CT Bureau also plans to pilot Counterterrorism Partnership Fund (CTPF) CVE-related activities in FY15 in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia) and/or Georgia. CT regularly partners with the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), [redacted] and the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on CVE initiatives across the continent, as well as with UN counterterrorism bodies. CT provides subject matter expertise and promotes the sharing of CVE best practices and setting up exchange programs to facilitate CVE efforts in Western Europe.

- Countering LH: CT supports global programming initiatives intended to counter LH's activities around the world by encouraging the increased use of law enforcement tools to prevent fundraising and other illicit activities supporting LH from taking place in their jurisdictions. The objective of this concerted campaign in key regions, including Europe, is to build capacity to diminish the group's support networks and infrastructure. In October 2015, the CT-funded RLA [redacted] will co-host a workshop with the International Institute for Justice and Rule of Law (IJ) to address the activities of LH in Eastern Europe; [redacted] [redacted] will attend.

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Related Department of State, Department of Defense and USAID Programs:

- INL: INL has supported Department of Justice (both OPDAT and ICITAP) programming throughout Europe and Eurasia since the early 1990s. INL currently funds OPDAT and ICITAP personnel in the majority of the countries in the Balkans. [redacted]

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- CSO: The Strong Cities Initiative will aim to connect cities (and other relevant sub-national entities, city-level practitioners (including law enforcement)), and the communities they represent, to facilitate sharing of best practices, mutual learning, and development of new

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approaches to building community resilience to prevent and counter the radicalization of FTF and other violent extremists. Funds will also support workshops and training activities for FTF-affected cities included as part of this network. A number of European cities will be included in this initiative.

- USAID: USAID has engaged in democracy and governance programming in Europe and Eurasia since the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Currently, USAID's programming in this region focuses on fostering democracy, governance, and economic growth. Of interest for CT equities is USAID's programming promoting civic engagement, including inter-communal communication, and supporting civil society, including rule of law initiatives supporting judicial reform, and also capacity building for legal professionals in order to improve the delivery of justice. [REDACTED]

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