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**2015-2016 Bureau of Counterterrorism "Partnership Concept":
South and Central Asia**

Summary:

South Asia remains at the forefront of our counter-terrorism efforts. Although al-Qa'ida's (AQ) core in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been seriously degraded, AQ's global leadership continues to operate from the region. Pressure on AQ's traditional safe havens has constrained its ability to operate and engage both in and out of the region. Additionally, other South Asian groups, such as the Haqqani Network (HQN), Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), and Tehrike-e-Taliban Pakistani (TTP), continue to threaten Western and regional interests. The drawdown of the international military presence in Afghanistan may create vulnerabilities that these terrorist actors will seek to exploit. The growing regional presence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the Middle East, the 2014 establishment of a South Asian-focused ISIL affiliate that is conducting attacks against the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the prevalence of foreign terrorist fighters emanating from and returning to South and Central Asia (SCA) are also increasing concerns for SCA countries.

Governments are committed to addressing terrorism, but their approaches, willingness to cooperate with the United States, and capabilities vary. Strained bilateral relationships between many of the countries of the South and Central Asia also limit cooperation and add to the complexity of the evolving threat. Working closely with other U.S. government partners, especially the Department of Defense (DoD), the Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT) will pursue diplomatic engagements, technical assistance, and other activities in South and Central Asia to advance the following strategic goals (in no particular order):

1. Degrade the operational space of terrorist groups in the region through support for increased criminal justice sector capabilities allowing regional partners to respond to terrorist incidents and to investigate and prosecute terrorist activity.
2. Deter terrorist and foreign fighter transit throughout the South and Central Asia region through border security initiatives, including increased information-sharing and enhanced screening at official ports of entry.
3. Counter online and offline violent extremist radicalization and recruitment in regional hotspots through support for targeted community engagement, including by law enforcement agencies.
4. Reduce the threat posed by violent extremists in the region through counter-radicalization programs in prisons and broader rehabilitation and reintegration efforts for low-risk, disengaged combatants.
5. Reduce financial support for terrorism in South Asia by building the capacity of law enforcement agencies, Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs), and regulators in the region to be able to deter, detect, track, freeze the funds of, and prosecute those who engage in terrorism financing, particularly from the Gulf, and to reduce and deny benefits from kidnapping for ransom (KFR) payments.

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Strategic Context:

The United States continues to focus efforts in South Asia on eliminating AQ safe havens and degrading the AQ network. Specifically in Pakistan, U.S. government efforts are focused on working with partners to ensure the rapid degradation of AQ's leadership structure, command and control, organizational capabilities, support networks, and infrastructure as well as reducing the group's ability to operate and move in different regions of Pakistan. In Afghanistan, the U.S. military and NATO's Resolute Support (RS) mission are committed to building up the capacity of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and police elements to prevent AQ's return and disrupt terrorist networks, including ISIL's South Asia affiliate.

Since 2001, the United States has provided significant bilateral military and security assistance to Pakistan, which has had mixed results based on levels of Pakistani political will and partner absorptive capacity. While U.S. counterterrorism cooperation with Pakistan is improving in certain sectors, such cooperation is vulnerable to significant, sudden political tensions and changes that draw into question the sustainability of key capacity-building programs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Pakistan also continues to have a number of gaps in its capacity to monitor and curb financial support to terrorist organizations.

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[REDACTED] The Department of Defense (DoD) leads overall U.S. counterterrorism efforts in Afghanistan, and its mission is to train, advise and assist (TAA) the ANSF, counter AQ and other groups, and mitigate force protection threats posed by terrorist elements. However, the U.S. military presence downsized considerably in early of 2015 and will likely draw down further by the beginning of 2017. As DoD and NATO reduce their activities in Afghanistan, CT will need to broaden and identify new efforts to strengthen Afghanistan's counterterrorism capacity. Afghan law enforcement agencies have developed increased capacity over recent years, but continue to face a number of challenges in responding to, investigating, and prosecuting terrorist issues.

Despite core AQ's diminished leadership cadre, remaining members will continue to pose a threat to Western interests in the region and would attempt to strike the homeland should an opportunity arise. Notwithstanding ISIL's rise in global stature, Ayman al-Zawahiri remains a recognized leader of the global jihadist movement among AQ affiliates and allies and many of these groups continue to defer to his guidance on critical issues. In September 2014, AQ leadership announced the establishment of al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), which is an amalgamation of Pakistani militant organizations that have long been allied with AQ and focused on attacking government targets and Western interests in Pakistan and the broader region.

Other terrorist organizations also remain of concern in South Asia. Specifically, Pakistan-based LeT continues to foment tensions between India and Pakistan, and its leaders consistently speak out against India and the United States, accusing both countries of trying to destabilize Pakistan. LeT has attacked Indian and Western interests in South Asia in pursuit of its objectives, as demonstrated by the targeting of hotels frequented by Westerners during the Mumbai attacks in

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2008. LeT has also demonstrated the ability to use the Internet and Internet-based technologies in attack planning and coordination. In addition, HQN continues to pose a regional threat from its Pakistani safehaven. HQN is one of the most capable and lethal terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan and poses a serious threat to the stability of the Afghan state. The Haqqanis have conducted numerous high-profile attacks against U.S., NATO, Afghan Government, and other allied nation targets.

[REDACTED] the United States has worked to strengthen counterterrorism cooperation and information-sharing with India. President Obama's meetings with Prime Minister Modi in Washington in September 2014 and in New Delhi in January 2015 have deepened bilateral ties.

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In addition to concerns about terrorist organizations in the region, there are also increasing concerns about foreign fighters leaving South and Central Asia to fight alongside ISIL in Syria and Iraq. Global terrorist groups continue to seek recruits from the Maldives. Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan have also expressed increasing concern about the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters from their countries, especially after the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan's (IMU) announcement that it would be affiliating with ISIL.

While Central Asia has not suffered a major terrorist attack in recent years, the region faces challenges from porous borders and its proximity to Afghanistan, weak domestic institutions, widespread corruption, political repression, and intraregional rivalries. To the extent possible, the United States seeks to deepen cooperation with these countries to address the foreign terrorist fighter issue as well as to promote border security cooperation.

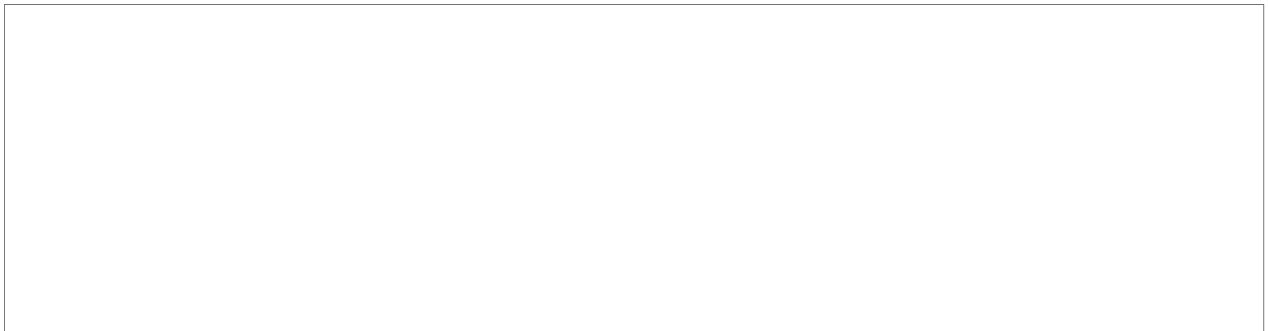
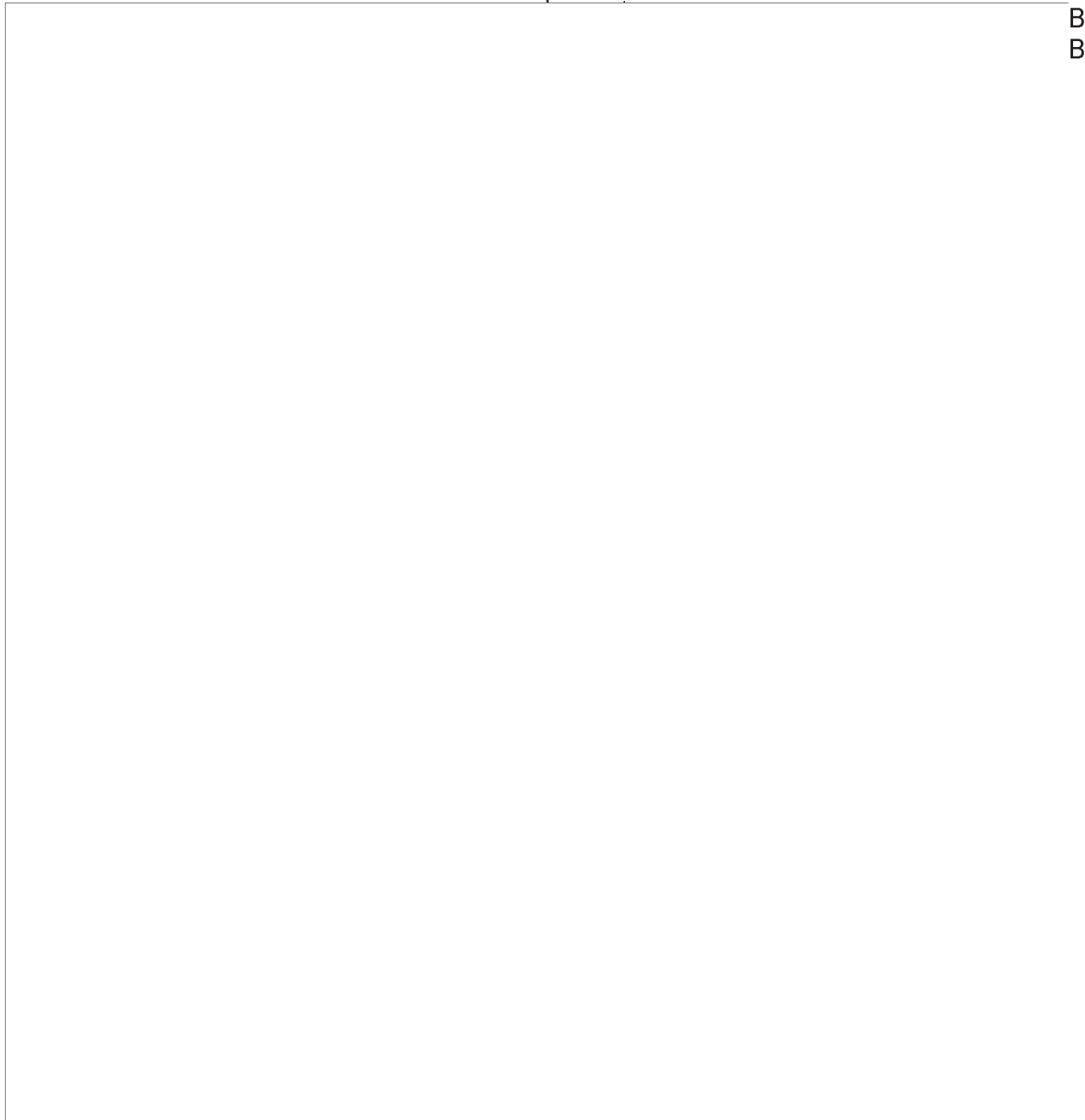
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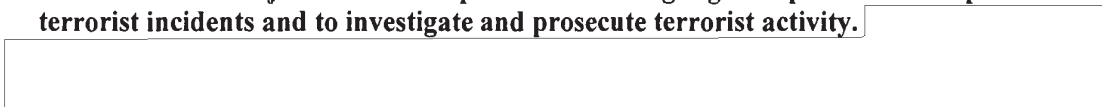
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CT Strategic Goals:

In close coordination with other U.S. government agencies, CT will develop and pursue diplomatic engagements, technical assistance, and other activities that advance the following strategic goals:

1. **Degrade the operational space of terrorist groups in the region through support for increased criminal justice sector capabilities allowing regional partners to respond to terrorist incidents and to investigate and prosecute terrorist activity.**



CT is pursuing programs in both countries to increase capacity across the spectrum of the criminal justice sector, specifically targeting law enforcement organizations' ability to employ intelligence-driven law enforcement operations that appropriately prioritize evidence collection and usage (vice

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reliance on testimonial and confessions) in support of prosecutions. Across the range of assistance engagements with Afghanistan, CT continues to pursue opportunities for Afghan units to build self-sustaining capacities in high-priority counterterrorism skills and, as appropriate, CT will target relevant and capable training institutions (internal training units, police academies, etc.) as potential recipients of assistance. Through training, workshops, mentoring, and advisory support, CT will seek to assist Afghanistan and Pakistan law enforcement agencies – especially at provincial and local levels – to effectively respond to terrorism incidents and to improve the capabilities of investigators, prosecutors, and judges to manage terrorism cases in a manner that is consistent with international human rights standards.

2. **Deter terrorist and foreign fighter transit throughout the region through increased cooperation, information-sharing, targeting of transit financial support networks, and enhanced screening at official ports of entry among border security officials from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, the Maldives, and countries of Central Asia.** As one of the least integrated regions in the world, South and Central Asia face complex challenges as they seek to strengthen border management and security issues. Foreign fighters and terrorist groups exploit porous borders in the region to travel. To deter terrorist and foreign fighter transit, CT seeks to provide training and equipment to build the capacity of border security officials across the region to prevent the flow of terrorist and terrorist-related material across borders, including both airports and land borders. CT also seeks to promote increased bilateral and regional information-sharing, including development of forensic databases, through regional trainings, workshops, and diplomatic engagements. CT encourages and assists governments to implement UN Security Resolution 2178 and the related GCTF good practices, which outline a series of actions that governments should take to monitor, prevent, and mitigate the threat of foreign fighters.
3. **Counter online and offline violent extremist radicalization and recruitment in regional hotspots through support for targeted community engagement, including by law enforcement.** The February 2015 White House CVE Summit helped to catalyze global attention to the need for an expanded tool kit to counter violent extremist radicalization and recruitment. Building on the White House CVE Summit action agenda, CT will focus in South Asia on strengthening community-police relations for CVE, supporting the development and implementation of national CVE strategies, and building the CVE capacity of credible, non-violent civilian actors. CT supports efforts in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and across South and Central Asia to counter the threat from violent extremist messaging and recruitment efforts, including through terrorists' use of the internet and social media. For example, CT may partner with other bureaus and the Department of Justice to work with India on cyber-related capacity building, including the development of appropriate legal frameworks and fostering information sharing to counter terrorist use of the internet and social media. CT also works with State's Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) to build the capacity of governments in India and Pakistan to counter violent extremist narratives. CT will also seek to empower those elements of civil society, especially among youth, women, and religious leaders, which are pushing back against extremist voices. These efforts aim to decrease the effectiveness of violent extremist

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recruitment and radicalization, while empowering civil society groups and communities to counter violent extremism within their society.

4. Reduce the threat posed by violent extremists in the region through counter-radicalization programs in prisons and broader rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

Law enforcement agencies in the region have arrested a number of violent extremist actors over recent years, but face challenges, especially in Afghanistan and Pakistan, in securing detention facilities, processing cases, and addressing violent extremist recruitment in prisons. Working closely with INL, CT will seek to support criminal justice sector officials in the region to address these challenges. CT will support efforts to assist our partners as they develop and employ effective procedures and programs to minimize the ability of hardened terrorist detainees/prisoners to radicalize at-risk or less ideological inmates. CT will also pursue targeted opportunities to support efforts to ensure that the Afghan population is fully aware of and takes advantage of the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP), and Afghanistan is able to effectively vet and track APRP participants.

5. Reduce financial support for terrorism in South Asia by building the capacity of FIUs and law enforcement agencies in the region to deter, detect, track, freeze the funds of, and prosecute those who engage in terrorism financing and to reduce, particularly from the Gulf, and deny benefits from kidnapping for ransom (KFR) payments.

Despite taking some action, governments in South Asia continue to face challenges in monitoring and stopping financial flows to terrorist organizations, including from the Gulf. CT will seek to assist relevant institutions in the region, including FIUs, to develop and ensure implementation of the necessary legal regimes and capabilities to counter terrorist financing, including strengthening financial transaction monitoring and export and border controls to prevent bulk cash smuggling. CT will also support governments in the region to fully implement UN terrorism sanctions, and have legally-sound, evidence-based, domestic designations authorities in which to designate additional terrorist organizations and individuals. CT will continue to engage the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan on both charity oversight and fundraising by UN listed charity fronts such as LT-affiliated Jamaat ud Dawa and Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation. Finally, CT also engages with South Asian 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 finance and that such payments incentivize terrorists to maintain the kidnapping for ransom business model.

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Annex: Recent and Ongoing CT Programs

Current CT Programs:

Over recent years, CT has funded major programs in the following areas:

- **Tactical Response and Incident Management:** CT has supported law enforcement training across the region to build capacity in tactical response to terrorism-related incidents, and in post-incident police coordination and management. Through the ATA program, CT has supported intensive training and institutionalization in dignitary/infrastructure protection for [redacted] as well as explosive incident response and SWAT training for [redacted] law enforcement officers. CT has also supported training in case management and crisis negotiation for officers from throughout the region.
- **Border Security:** CT has supported bilateral and regional training programs in border security skills for law enforcement officers throughout the region (including recently resumed efforts in [redacted]). Through ATA and related efforts, CT has supported border security-related training (land border management, fraudulent document recognition, airport security SOPs) for [redacted] units, as well as specialized regional border interdiction training to customs officers from throughout the region. Through ATA, CT has also provided specialized training in border security (and land border controls and law enforcement border SOPs) to security force partners in Central Asia. [redacted]

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- **Countering Violent Extremism:** CT has supported extensive work in community policing to a) improve the capabilities of [redacted] police in targeted communities to counter violent extremism through provision of professional police and investigative services, and to b) facilitate communication and relationship development between police and targeted communities in [redacted]. In addition, CT has supported CVE-related counter-narratives/counter-messaging assistance in [redacted]. [redacted] Regional partners ([redacted]) have participated in CT-funded, UNICRI- and ICITAP-implemented training on good prison rehabilitation and reintegration practices. Building on INL-supported training, [redacted] [redacted] have participated in CT-funded training on community policing practices and enhancing cooperation between police and targeted communities in Central Asia, with an emphasis on joint problem-solving, communication and information-sharing. Efforts in [redacted] include extremism responsive community-policing consultations and an upcoming counter messaging workshop in addressing online radicalization and recruitment to violence.
- **Strengthening Rule of Law/Legal CT Frameworks and Countering CT Finance:** CT has supported DHS-implemented financial investigations training for [redacted] border control officers, investigators, and judicial/regulatory personnel. CT has also

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supported regional training in countering illicit finance and smuggling; this training focuses on interdiction, enforcement, and investigation-focused issues and emphasis is on strengthening information-sharing mechanisms and interregional collaboration. CT has supported Rule of Law-focused Department of Justice (DOJ) Resident and Intermittent Legal Advisors (ILAs/RLAs) to assist officials in [redacted] with CT-related investigative techniques and development of legislative and regulatory frameworks.

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- Criminal Justice Reform: CT is supporting a UNODC comprehensive criminal justice reform program that includes: (1) three sub-regional seminars; (2) sixteen national capacity building workshops; (3) four on-line training courses; and (4) a compendium of counterterrorism legislation for South Asia. Judges, prosecutors and police officers are the target participants. Upon completion of this program, it is expected that criminal justice officials will be able to competently utilize and implement international legal instruments, Security Council resolutions and related implementing legislation. Also, UNODC is working on a project to enhance the capacity of South Asian countries to support witnesses and victims in terrorism cases. In addition, CT is funding CTED to host "Workshops on Effectively Countering Terrorism for Police Officers, Prosecutors and Judges." CTED will facilitate the organization of six one-and-a-half day regional workshops for police officers, prosecutors, and judges from South Asia to discuss the role they play in countering terrorism as well as the challenges they face in conducting effective investigations, prosecutions, and adjudications of cases. A key aim of the workshops is to strengthen the role of police officers, prosecutors, and judges in South Asia by promoting comprehensive and appropriate criminal justice responses to terrorism in line with the GCTF *Rabat Memorandum on Good Practices for Effective Counterterrorism Practice in the Criminal Justice Sector*. In addition, CT has supported an ILA in [redacted] who has made substantial progress in establishing and increasing the cooperation and coordination between [redacted] law enforcement investigators and its prosecutors and in reforming and expediting the processing of criminal cases by prosecutors and the judiciary.

Related State Programs:

- INL: INL provides law enforcement capacity-building assistance to partner countries in the region. [redacted]



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[Redacted] In cooperation with DOJ, INL's rule of law program trains prosecutors and judges, as well as provides infrastructure and commodity support to district prosecutor offices. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] The CCP

focuses on detecting illicit goods including narcotics and WMD.

[Redacted]

- CSCC: CSCC's Digital Outreach Team (DOT) conducts messaging related to [Redacted] through its [Redacted] language operations.
- PM: In Pakistan, PM has provided security assistance through Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capability Fund (PCCF) to improve the overall counterterrorism capacity of the Pakistani military and the Frontier Corps, [Redacted]

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