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**2015-2016 Bureau of Counterterrorism "Partnership Concept":  
Southeast Asia region**

**Summary:**

Many countries in Southeast Asia (SEA) have deep experience coping with terrorist threats and have increased their counterterrorism capabilities over recent years. However, violent extremists continue to operate, fundraise, and plot attacks in the region, especially in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. Governments in Southeast Asia are concerned about high numbers of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) from the region who have traveled to Syria and Iraq to fight alongside the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and al-Nusrah Front. Governments are concerned that returning FTFs will bring back new combat skills, hardened violent ideologies, and access to global threat networks. Several foreign terrorist organizations maintain fundraising, logistics, and operational networks in Southeast Asia, and Iran has a history of conducting and sponsoring operational activity in the region through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) and Lebanese Hizballah (LH).

Governments in the region are generally committed to countering terrorism and violent extremist ideologies, although their approaches, willingness to collaborate, and capabilities vary. Significant gaps remain in counterterrorism legal frameworks, aviation security, and countering violent extremism, especially in prison settings. Working alongside other U.S. government partners and international allies, the Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT) seeks to pursue diplomatic engagements, capacity-building programs, and other activities to achieve the following strategic goals in Southeast Asia:

1. Disrupt terrorist transit in Southeast Asia through support for information-sharing and aviation and border security capacity building programs.
2. Degrade financing, facilitation, and operational networks of FTFs, terrorist networks, and Iranian-backed entities, like the IRGC-QF and LH, by enhancing legal frameworks and building justice sector capacity that strengthens investigations and prosecutions.
3. Mitigate the threat posed by recidivist terrorist convicts and other violent extremists in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines by strengthening de-radicalization, rehabilitation, and reintegration programs and the management of terrorist prisoners.
4. Counter violent extremist radicalization and recruitment across Southeast Asia by building capacity and strengthening partnerships with governments, law enforcement agencies, civil society, and the private sector to conduct counter-messaging and community engagement.

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Strategic Context and Gaps:

While there have been a low number of terrorist attacks since the 2009 Jakarta hotel bombings, SEA countries remain concerned about a variety of terrorism threats, especially given transit of FTFs from the region. Aviation security is particularly a concern given that the region functions as a global transportation hub; gaps in security capacity and protocols have been exploited by terrorists coming to and returning from the war in Iraq and Syria.

A number of terrorist and violent extremist organizations are active in the region to varying degrees. Jemaah Islamiyah, responsible for anti-Western attacks in the 2000s, has largely withdrawn from violent activity but continues proselytization and recruitment efforts, while offshoots like Jemaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT) and others conduct violent attacks against Indonesia's police. In the Philippines, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) has been degraded into a loose affiliation of banditry groups, but its kidnapping-for-ransom, bombings, and extortion activities still fuel insecurity in the country's south. Regionally, extremist groups' numbers and operational capacity are expected to increase with returning FTFs from Syria and Iraq and with the ending of prison sentences for hundreds of terrorist detainees in Indonesia and the Philippines. ASG and JAT in Indonesia have recently pledged allegiance to ISIL. In addition, LH and IRGC-QF are both active in the region and have pursued attacks over recent years, particularly in Thailand.

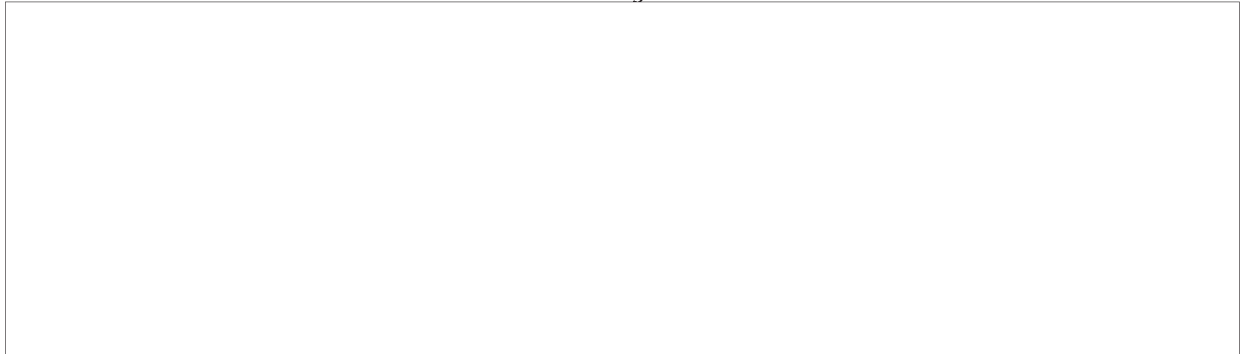
While several countries have made some strides in adopting counterterrorism legislation and enhancing counterterrorism policy frameworks, significant implementation gaps remain. Law enforcement counterterrorism units have increased their capabilities, but successful prosecutions and detention of terrorists remain a challenge, including securing sentences that are commensurate to their crimes. Indonesia has significant numbers of convicted terrorists in its prisons, some of whom will be released in the near future. Others have already been released after their sentences expired. Indonesia and the Philippines have received technical assistance to help counter violent extremist radicalization in their prisons and to bolster rehabilitation and reintegration programs.

The flow of foreign terrorist fighters to Syria and Iraq poses another significant challenge for the region, especially for Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. While many of the FTF who have traveled from the SEA region had previously been involved with violent extremist activity, a large number from diverse socio-economic backgrounds were radicalized and recruited through the internet and social media. ISIL has also managed to attract not only aspiring jihadists but families who believe they have a religious obligation to live under ISIL's so-called caliphate. Countries are rightly concerned about the threat posed by those individuals as they return with new skills. Countries in the region are attempting to implement their obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178, but significant capacity gaps remain regarding information sharing, airport security, legal frameworks, and prosecutions and investigations. Countries in the region also recognize the need to enhance efforts to counter violent extremist messaging and recruitment, including online.

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**CT Strategic Goals:**

Working alongside other U.S. government partners and key international allies, the CT Bureau seeks to pursue diplomatic engagements, capacity-building programs, and other activities, to achieve the following strategic goals in Southeast Asia:

- 1. Disrupt terrorist transit in Southeast Asia through support for information-sharing and aviation and border security capacity building programs.** CT seeks to help countries improve their counterterrorism efforts in the following areas: (1) internal interagency information-sharing; (2) traveler screening; (3) law enforcement at airports and major land border crossing points; and (4) regional information-sharing amongst countries and with INTERPOL and other international organizations. When appropriate, CT will identify opportunities to provide traveler and customs screening equipment and training to help countries to secure airports and other ports of entry, including Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation Systems (PISCES). In March 2015, Indonesia hosted and participated in a CT-funded regional workshop on stemming the flow of FTF to Syria and Iraq. This event provided a forum where regional partners from Southeast Asia discussed how domestic approaches feed into regional and international cooperation concerning stemming the FTF threat. Among other objectives, the workshop encouraged participants to share suspected FTF information with each other and through Interpol. It is critical to coordinate these activities with third-country partners such as Australia, which have robust immigration and border security programs already underway.
- 2. Degrade financing, facilitation, and operational networks of FTFs, terrorist networks, and Iranian-backed entities, like the IRGC-QF and LH, by enhancing legal frameworks and building justice sector capacity that strengthens investigations and prosecutions.** Through diplomatic engagement and technical assistance CT seeks to build the capacity of relevant law enforcement and justice sector institutions to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate terrorism cases, including FTF cases. CT is focused on: (1) supporting development of legislative reforms to facilitate prosecutions of foreign fighter travelers and other violent extremists; (2) supporting terrorist investigations and prosecutions, including expanding online and other types of evidence collection skills for law enforcement; and (3) improving partner capacity to freeze funds and to designate FTOs and their facilitators in accordance with UNSCRs 1267 and 2178 obligations. In coordination with its global diplomatic and capacity-building efforts, CT seeks to build awareness and capacity among law enforcement, judicial, and financial actors in the region to detect and counter LH's networks. CT also seeks to build broader capacity and adequate legal frameworks across the region to counter terrorist financing and money laundering, including through strengthening associated legal frameworks, border controls to prevent bulk cash smuggling, and financial intelligence units (FIUs). CT continues to fund programming by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) in Indonesia to advise and assist the

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3. **Mitigate the threat posed by recidivist terrorist convicts and other violent extremists in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines by strengthening de-radicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration programs and the management of terrorist prisoners.** Through training, advisory support, and other forms of technical assistance, CT seeks to support countries in the region to detect and mitigate violent extremist radicalization and recruitment in prisons and to strengthen rehabilitation and reintegration programs for returning foreign fighters: CT funds the Department of Justice/International Criminal Investigations Training and Assistance Program (ICITAP) and UNICRI to assist countries in the region to bolster their systems for managing terrorist inmates in prisons. ICITAP provides extensive training for Indonesians on how to handle and manage terrorist inmates, including developing the "Terrorist Inmate Management Guidelines" for their prisons. In Manila, CT and the Department of Defense are working with the ICCT and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology on a program to develop inmate classification and counseling tools to counter radicalization among suspected ASG members.
  
4. **Counter violent extremist radicalization and recruitment across Southeast Asia by building capacity and strengthening partnerships with governments, law enforcement agencies, civil society, and the private sector to conduct counter-messaging and community engagement.** Building on the White House CVE Summit action agenda, CT seeks to help governments and civil society actors in the region to: (1) develop and implement national counter violent extremism (CVE) strategies; (2) develop and implement counter-messaging and counter-recruitment campaigns, including online; and (3) build the capacity of credible, non-violent civil society voices to counter extremism. Through training, advisory support, and other forms of technical assistance, CT seeks to support countries in the region to detect and mitigate violent extremist radicalization and recruitment in specific communities where radicalization to violence is taking place. More broadly, CT also seeks to support countries in Southeast Asia to engage populations vulnerable to radicalization to violence to strengthen networks of credible, non-violent civil society actors who can counter violent extremist ideology, narratives, and messaging. For example, ICITAP-implemented Countering Violent Extremism and Conflict Community Derived Strategies project, is a Mission Indonesia success story. The project identified and implemented community-derived strategies and interventions to help stabilize areas vulnerable to extremism and increased cooperation between the National Police and local governments. This approach can be replicated in local communities across Indonesia. As development of counter-messaging is a nuanced and highly contextualized activity, CT assistance will avoid supporting the generation of counter-messaging content per se (e.g. by supporting workshops to promote tolerance) and instead focus on provision of technical assistance to local civil society organizations already engaged in counter-narrative efforts.

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

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

- Law Enforcement CT Capacity: Through the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program, CT assistance to the SEA region has focused largely on tactical capacity of civilian police to respond to domestic terrorism incidents. Tactical training includes, among others, training on emergency response, responding to terrorist incidents, and post explosion investigations. In addition, some training courses are focused on improving investigative skills.
- Airport and Border Security: CT has funded programs in the SEA region to improve border security through traveler screening, training on fraudulent document identification, and improving law enforcement skills to interdict cross-border terrorist financing.
- Prison Diversion, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration: Working with the Department of Justice (DOJ) International Criminal Investigations Training and Assistance Program (ICITAP), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), and regional embassies, CT is funding programs to build the capacity of [redacted] corrections systems to better manage terrorist inmates in prisons. The program includes the development and implementation of "Terrorist Inmate Management Guidelines" and assessment tools to determine the risks posed by terrorist inmates, allowing corrections officials to make critical decisions about inmate housing and the prospects of rehabilitation. B7(E)
- Counter-LH: CT is funding DOJ/OPDAT to host a regional workshop this December in [redacted] aimed at helping countries in the region to identify gaps and potential solutions to detect and address IRGC-QF activities and LH-related networks within the region. CT continues to encourage SEA partners to participate in other international efforts to increase information-sharing on LH and other Iranian-linked terrorist groups, including the work of the new International Law Enforcement Taskforce on Hizballah.
- Preventing Kidnappings for Ransom (KFR): KFR has been a major problem and a significant source of support for terrorist organizations in the Philippines and also Malaysia. CT-funded programs by the DOJ, FBI, DHS and others are seeking to address this problem through capacity building programs with anti-kidnapping law enforcement units. CT has funded special seminars to promote GCTF good practices and the model anti-KFR curriculum.
- Countering Violent Extremist Messaging: CT has funded a series of grants elevating the messaging of victims and former terrorists, working through educational institutions and developing basic social media skills for partners. CT has worked through embassies in the region to facilitate [redacted] engagement on CVE and CVE law enforcement dialogues/partnerships. B7(F)

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- **Strengthening Legal CT Frameworks/Capacity:** CT is funding regional Department of Justice (DOJ) Resident Legal Advisors (RLAs) in Southeast Asia. CT is funding an RLA [redacted] to provide counterterrorism finance and prosecutorial assistance to government officials [redacted]. CT has worked closely with INL to ensure that programs such as the OPDAT RLA programs are able to leverage each other's resources by co-sharing costs of salaries and programs in [redacted]

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- **Institutionalizing [redacted] Counterterrorism Capacity:** Over the past two years, the CT Bureau has been working with [redacted] to develop a strategic planning process focused on coordinating and enhancing the multiple lines of counterterrorism assistance and engagement with [redacted]. CT and [redacted] continue to hold biannual reviews of projects to identify and amend priorities as needed and to more fully capture the emergent needs identified by Post. Through this process, we seek to secure and institutionalize [redacted] progress in adopting a rule of law based approach to counterterrorism. [redacted]

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**Related Department of State Programs:**

- **INL:** INL provides [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] to work on areas such as anti-corruption, legislative reform, and prosecutorial and judicial training.
- **ISN:** The Export Control and Related Border Security Program (EXBS) supports programming in the region to bring export control systems up to international standards.
- **CSCC:** The Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications is providing guidance to the [redacted] on developing their own counter-messaging center. CSCC has funds for counter-messaging projects implemented by [redacted] [redacted]

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