

June 2011

COMBATING TERRORISM

Additional Steps Needed to Enhance Foreign Partners' Capacity to Prevent Terrorist Travel



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Why GAO Did This Study

Eliminating the threat of terrorist attacks continues to be a primary U.S. national security focus. According to the 9/11 Commission, constraining the mobility of terrorists is one of the most effective weapons in fighting terrorism.

This report (1) describes key gaps the U.S. government has identified in foreign countries' capacity to prevent terrorist travel overseas, (2) evaluates how U.S. capacity-building efforts address those gaps, and (3) assesses the extent to which the U.S. government is measuring progress in its efforts to close those gaps.

To identify the key gaps, GAO reviewed governmentwide assessments of vulnerabilities in the international travel system. GAO reviewed the strategies and documentation of U.S. agencies funding and/or implementing foreign capacity-building efforts to prevent terrorist travel overseas, including those of the Departments of State (State)—which coordinates U.S. efforts overseas—Defense (DOD), Homeland Security (DHS), Justice (DOJ), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). GAO also interviewed officials from the National Security Staff, of the National Security Council (NSC), which oversees counterterrorism policy. GAO met with these agencies and conducted field work in Kenya, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that (1) State develop a mechanism to improve coordination of various agencies' efforts to provide fraudulent travel document training to foreign partners, and (2) NSC develop a mechanism to measure, track, and report on overall progress toward the goal of enhancing foreign partners' capacity to prevent terrorist travel overseas. State concurred with the first recommendation. NSC did not comment on the draft report.

View [GAO-11-637](#) or key components. For more information, contact Charles Michael Johnson, Jr. at (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov.

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What GAO Found

The U.S. government has identified four key gaps in foreign countries' capacity to prevent terrorist travel overseas, as shown below:

Key Gaps in Foreign Countries' Capacity to Prevent Terrorist Travel Overseas

Key gaps	Illustrative examples
1. Sharing information about known and suspected terrorists	Lack of a database system with terrorist screening information (identifying or biographical information on people with known or suspected links to terrorism)
2. Addressing the use of fraudulent travel documents	Manufacture and use of fraudulent travel documents
3. Ensuring passport issuance security	Easily counterfeited or doctored low-quality passports
4. Combating corruption in passport issuance and immigration agencies	Corrupt immigration officials that allow terrorists to pass through checkpoints

Source: GAO analysis of National Counterterrorism Center and Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center documents.

U.S. government foreign capacity-building programs and activities address these gaps to varying degrees. For instance, as one of the U.S. efforts to enhance foreign partners' sharing of information about known and suspected terrorists, State's Terrorist Interdiction Program provides participating countries with hardware and software to develop, maintain, and use terrorist screening information. In fiscal year 2010, nearly 150 ports of entry overseas were using this program. With regard to addressing the use of fraudulent travel documents, GAO found the potential for overlap and duplication since seven components of three federal agencies are involved in providing training on fraudulent travel document recognition to foreign government officials, with no mechanism to coordinate such training. In two countries GAO visited, there was a lack of collaboration among agencies funding and implementing training on this topic. For example, in Pakistan, State and DHS were both planning to hold fraudulent travel document training for the same Pakistani agency during the same month without knowing of the other's plans. Regarding helping countries improve the security of their passport issuance, State and USAID have multiple efforts, including State's Bureau of Consular Affairs bringing delegations from foreign passport offices to the United States for briefings at passport-related agencies. Finally, the U.S. government has many efforts aimed at combating corruption overseas, such as encouraging countries to pass anticorruption laws. While these efforts are not aimed specifically at countries' passport and immigration agencies, they are intended to improve the effectiveness of all government functions.

The U.S. government lacks performance measures to assess governmentwide progress in closing the key gaps in foreign partners' capacity to prevent terrorist travel overseas. None of the governmentwide or individual agency strategic documents GAO reviewed contained such measures. While components of State and DOJ have some performance measures related to information sharing, these measures do not provide decision makers with comprehensive information on governmentwide progress in enhancing foreign partners' capacity.

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Abbreviations

ATA	Anti-Terrorism Assistance
CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
COCOM	Combatant Command
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOD	Department of Defense
DOJ	Department of Justice
DS	Bureau of Diplomatic Security
DSCA	Defense Security Cooperation Agency
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
HSPD-6	Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6
HSTC	Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
ICITAP	International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program
ILEA	International Law Enforcement Academy
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IO	Bureau of International Organization Affairs
ISN	Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
NCTC	National Counterterrorism Center
PISCES	Personal Identification, Secure Comparison, and Evaluation System
PM	Bureau of Political-Military Affairs
S/CT	Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism
State	Department of State
TIP	Terrorist Interdiction Program
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USCG	United States Coast Guard

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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

June 30, 2011

The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs
United State Senate

The Honorable John Tierney
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security,
Homeland Defense, and Foreign Operations
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
House of Representatives

Eliminating the threat of terrorist attacks continues to be a primary U.S. national security focus. According to the 9/11 Commission, constraining the mobility of terrorists overseas is one of the most effective weapons in fighting terrorism and constraining terrorist travel internationally should become a vital part of counterterrorism strategy. In 2006, the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)¹ released the *National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel*, which established governmentwide goals for preventing terrorist travel and identified enhancing the capacity of partner nations as one of two pillars supporting that strategy. The attempted attack on a Detroit-bound airliner on December 25, 2009, involving an individual allegedly affiliated with Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula who had traveled from Nigeria and transited through Amsterdam, highlights the continued critical importance of U.S. foreign partners' capacity to stop terrorists before they travel to the United States.

This report evaluates the U.S. government's efforts to close gaps identified in the capacity of foreign partners to stop terrorists from traveling across international borders. Specifically, this report (1) describes the key gaps the U.S. government has identified in foreign countries' capacity to prevent terrorist travel overseas, (2) evaluates how U.S. foreign capacity-building

¹The mission of the NCTC is to lead the U.S. effort to combat terrorism at home and abroad by analyzing the threat, sharing that information with U.S. partners, and integrating all instruments of national power to ensure unity of effort.

efforts address those gaps, and (3) assesses the extent to which the U.S. government is measuring progress in its efforts to close those gaps.

To address these objectives, we reviewed the *National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel* and U.S. government assessments of vulnerabilities in the international travel system that could be exploited by terrorists. We also reviewed documentation on U.S. capacity-building efforts to help countries prevent terrorist travel overseas, from the Departments of State (State), Defense (DOD), Homeland Security (DHS), and Justice (DOJ); the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); and the NCTC. For the purposes of this engagement, we define terrorist travel as movements of known or suspected terrorists overseas, crossing international borders outside of the United States by land, sea, or air. We also interviewed knowledgeable officials in Washington D.C., including those from the White House National Security Staff and relevant components of the intelligence community.

To obtain examples of U.S. efforts and more in-depth understanding of specific programs, we conducted fieldwork in four countries selected using criteria that included participation in U.S. capacity-building programs designed to prevent terrorist travel, designation as a terrorist safe haven, presence of key U.S. agency personnel at post, or coverage of key regions to counterterrorism. Based on these criteria, we traveled to Kenya, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand.² In each location, we met with U.S. government personnel involved in capacity building to prevent terrorist travel abroad to learn about the types of activities they undertake, how they measure progress, and their reported results. We also met with foreign government officials to learn about the challenges they face in improving their ability to prevent terrorist travel abroad and their perspectives on the effectiveness of U.S. efforts.

We conducted this performance audit from July 2010 to June 2011 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions

²We originally planned fieldwork in Yemen in March 2011 but were unable to travel there due to the deteriorating security situation at the time.

based on our audit objectives. Appendix I provides a more detailed description of our scope and methodology.

Background

The vulnerability of the international travel system to terrorists crossing international borders to perpetrate terrorist acts against countries' citizens became a major concern after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Subsequently, Congress passed a series of laws that called for various measures to address weaknesses in U.S. and other countries' foreign travel systems. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 directed the NCTC to submit to Congress a strategy for combating terrorist travel.³ In 2006, the NCTC issued the *National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel*. One of the strategy's two pillars was to enhance U.S. and foreign partner capabilities to constrain terrorist mobility overseas. Among the pillar's objectives were to suppress terrorists' ability to cross international borders and help partner nations build capacity to limit terrorist travel.

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 established the interagency Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC) to serve, in part, as a clearinghouse for all U.S. agency information on preventing terrorist travel, and to submit annual assessments of vulnerabilities in the foreign travel system that may be exploited by international terrorists. Later, the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 called for the HSTC to serve as the focal point for interagency efforts to integrate and disseminate intelligence and information related to terrorist travel.⁴ The 2007 Act directed DHS, with the cooperation of other relevant agencies, to ensure that HSTC have no less than 40 full-time positions, including, as appropriate, detailees from DHS, State, DOJ, DOD, NCTC, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the Department of the Treasury.⁵ Presently, DHS' U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) provides the director of the center, which includes personnel from State, DHS, and the U.S. intelligence community.

³Pub. L. 108-458, 118 Stat. 3809, Sec. 7201(b).

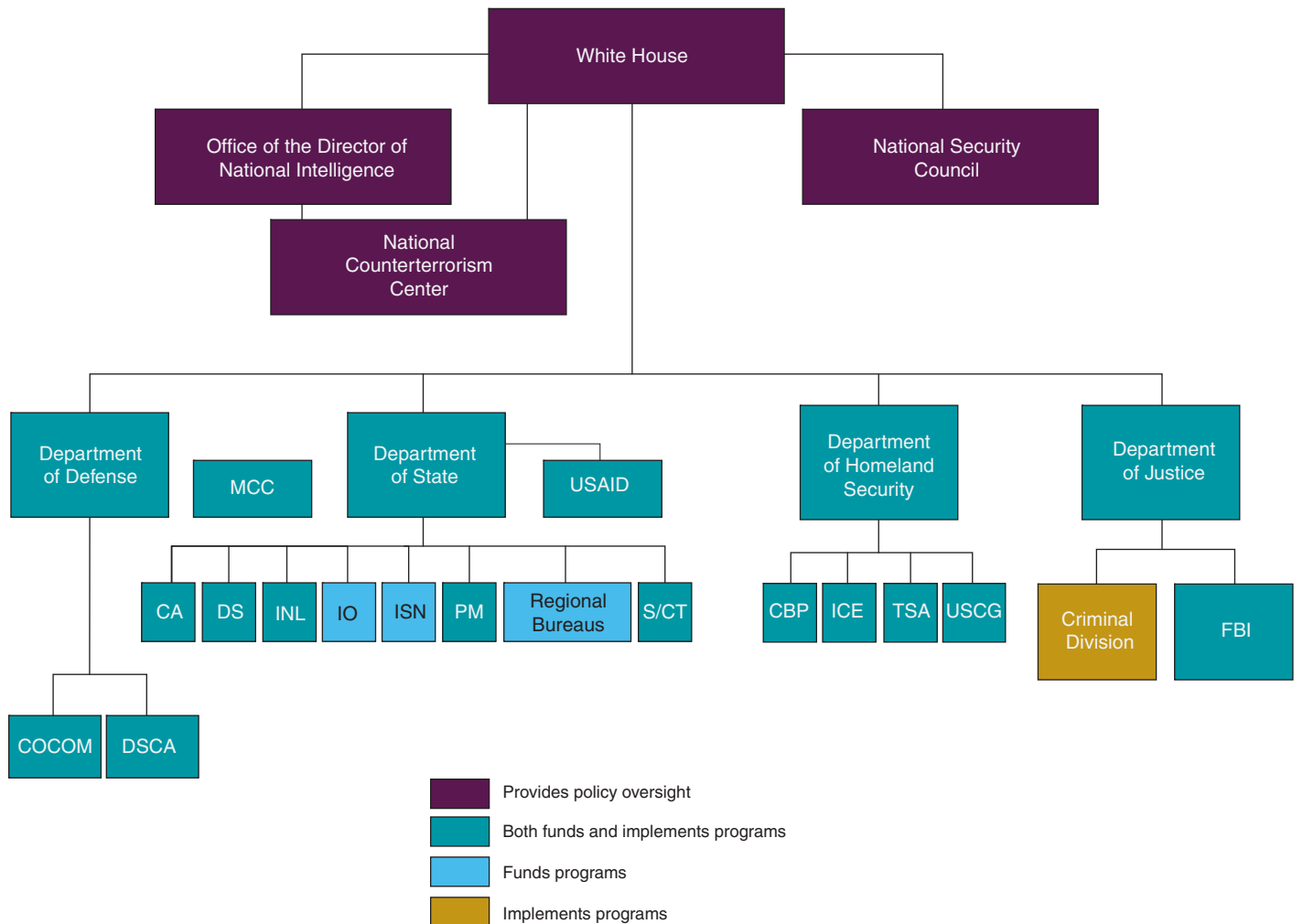
⁴Pub. L. 110-53, 121 Stat. 346.

⁵As of January 2011, HSTC had 18 full-time and 2 part-time staff, mostly detailees from DHS.

NCTC and HSTC jointly issued the first terrorist travel vulnerability assessment in 2005, and HSTC issued additional terrorist travel vulnerability assessments in 2008 and 2009. The assessments synthesize information and analyses from key stakeholders throughout the U.S. government. Specifically, HSTC officials review intelligence and other information from all relevant agencies; attend interagency working groups, interagency intelligence meetings, and other coordination meetings related to terrorist travel; review open source information from banks, nongovernmental organizations, and multinational organizations; and consult with agencies responsible for implementing programs. All relevant agencies are given the opportunity to review and comment on the drafts.

Various U.S. agencies and subagencies are involved in providing capacity building related to enhancing countries' ability to prevent terrorist travel abroad. As shown in figure 1, counterterrorism as a whole, including preventing terrorist travel, is overseen at the policy level by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and by the National Security Council. The Director of NCTC reports both to the President regarding executive branch-wide counterterrorism planning, and to the Director of National Intelligence regarding intelligence matters. NCTC follows the policy direction of the President and the National Security Council. State, DHS, DOD, and DOJ fund and/or implement the majority of the capacity-building programs. Within the Department of State, the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism (S/CT), in addition to funding and implementing capacity-building programs, has a leading role in developing coordinated strategies to defeat terrorists abroad and securing the cooperation of international partners. S/CT works with all appropriate elements of the U.S. government to ensure integrated and effective counterterrorism efforts, and coordinates and supports the development and implementation of all U.S. government policies and programs aimed at countering terrorism overseas.

Figure 1: Key Agencies Providing Policy Oversight and Funding and/or Implementing Capacity-Building Programs Related to Preventing Terrorist Travel Overseas



Source: GAO analysis of agency data and information.

Note: MCC is the Millennium Challenge Corporation; USAID is the U.S. Agency for International Development; CA is Bureau of Consular Affairs; DS is Bureau of Diplomatic Security; INL is Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs; IO is Bureau of International Organization Affairs; ISN is Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation; PM is Bureau of Political- Military Affairs; S/CT is Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism; CBP is U.S. Customs and Border Administration; ICE is U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; TSA is Transportation Security Administration; USCG is United States Coast Guard; FBI is Federal Bureau of Investigation; COCOM is Combatant Command; and DSCA is Defense Security Cooperation Agency. In addition, the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center serves as the focal point for interagency efforts to integrate and disseminate intelligence and information related to terrorist travel.

U.S. Government Assessments Have Identified Four Key Gaps in Foreign Countries' Capacity to Prevent Terrorist Travel Overseas

As shown in table 1, the U.S. government has identified four key gaps in foreign countries' capacity to prevent terrorist travel overseas.⁶

Table 1: Illustrations of Key Gaps in Foreign Partners' Capacity to Prevent Terrorist Travel Overseas

Key gaps	Illustrative examples
Sharing information about known and suspected terrorists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of a database system with terrorist screening information Lack of information sharing between countries, including of terrorist screening information Lack of access to databases with biometric information on known or suspected terrorists
Addressing the use of fraudulent travel documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manufacture and use of fraudulent travel documents Lack of universal reporting to INTERPOL of lost or stolen passports, as well as some governments' limited use of this information
Ensuring passport issuance security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easily counterfeited or doctored low-quality passports from some countries Continued validity of less secure passports for up to 10 years from issuance
Combating corruption in passport issuance and immigration agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corruption in passport issuance agencies facilitates fraudulent use of official travel documents and access to blank passports that could be used to make fraudulent passports Corruption in immigration agencies allows terrorists to pass through checkpoints without being checked or arrested

Source: GAO analysis of NCTC and HSTC documents.

Note: Terrorist screening information includes identifying or biographical information—such as name, date of birth, and passport number—on known and suspected terrorists. INTERPOL—International Criminal Police Organization—facilitates cross-border police co-operation, and supports and assists all organizations, authorities, and services whose mission is to prevent or combat international crime.

HSTC and NCTC vulnerability assessments have identified sharing information about known and suspected terrorists as one key gap in foreign partners' capacity to prevent terrorist travel. For example, some countries do not have their own database systems with terrorist screening information or access to other countries' terrorist screening information, which contains biographical or biometric information about individuals

⁶The NCTC and HSTC assessments also identified vulnerabilities in foreign countries' aviation security and border security, but to a lesser extent, so we do not include these vulnerabilities in the key gaps. However, we identify U.S. programs and activities that address vulnerabilities in aviation and border security in app. II.

who are known or suspected terrorists. Even when countries have terrorist screening information, they may not have reciprocal relationships to share such information or other travel-related information, such as airline passenger lists, with other countries, thereby limiting their ability to identify and prevent the travel of known and suspected terrorists. In addition, some countries do not have access to or fully use biometric information, which provides a unique identifier for each person, such as a fingerprint. For example, Pakistan has a centralized fingerprint database, but it is not shared across all law enforcement agencies, making the database less comprehensive and, as a result, more difficult for Pakistani government officials to prevent potential terrorists from traveling.

A second key gap in foreign partners' capacity relates to their ability to address the use of fraudulent travel documents. For instance, in many countries, fraudulent travel documents, including fraudulent passports and visas, are easy to obtain, and could thereby be used by people who want to travel under a false identity. In addition, some countries' failure to consistently report lost or stolen passports to the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) or to access INTERPOL's database that stores information on lost and stolen passports, can facilitate the use of legitimate passports by imposters. According to U.S. embassy officials in Kenya we spoke with, this is a common occurrence in Kenya, where individuals with a similar appearance to a Somali-American with a legitimate travel document will fraudulently use this travel document for illicit travel. Another common issue related to fraudulent travel documents is using fraudulent "breeder documents," such as birth certificates and drivers' licenses issued to support a person's false identity, to obtain genuine passports. The issue of fraudulent documents is further compounded by the lack of a requirement for a visa to some countries. For example, according to a former Pakistani official that had responsibilities related to immigration enforcement, fraudulent British passports are the most prevalent type of fraudulent travel document in Pakistan. Since British citizens are not required to obtain visas to travel to many countries, a terrorist could use one of these fraudulent passports to travel to many countries without further background checks that would occur through a visa adjudication process.⁷

⁷GAO, *Visa Waiver Program: DHS Has Implemented the Electronic System for Travel Authorization, but Further Steps Needed to Address Potential Program Risks*, [GAO-11-335](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 5, 2011).

The third key gap identified in the NCTC and HSTC assessments is a lack in some countries' abilities to ensure the security of their passport issuance systems. The passports from some countries are of low quality and are therefore easily stolen or counterfeited. For example, 18 countries still use passports that are not machine readable and almost half of countries use passports without biometric information stored electronically inside the passport. Such biometric information can include facial and fingerprint data, and can be used to authenticate the identity of travelers. In addition, once countries convert to biometric passports, previously issued passports may be valid for up to 10 years from their issuance dates.⁸

A fourth key gap in some foreign countries' capacity to prevent terrorist travel is in combating corruption in passport issuance and immigration agencies. Corruption in government agencies relevant to travel can facilitate the illicit travel of terrorists or other criminals. For example, corruption in passport issuance agencies can allow potential terrorists to obtain genuine passports under a false identity or blank passports that can be easily manipulated. U.S. embassy officials in Kenya told us that such false passports can be obtained for just a few hundred dollars in some cases. Further, corruption within countries' immigration agencies, such as border patrol or civil aviation officials with immigration duties, leaves a country's immigration system vulnerable to human smugglers and traffickers who often have established relationships with these corrupt officials. For example, according to U.S. embassy officials in Kenya, illicit travel facilitators are known to stand outside the airport and indicate to corrupt immigration officials through the window which individuals they should let pass without checking their passports. In addition, according to the HSTC terrorist travel vulnerability assessments, countries that are known for having corrupt immigration officials are more likely to be used by terrorists as transit countries so that the terrorists can avoid interdiction.

⁸GAO, *Border Security: Security of New Passports and Visas Enhanced, but More Needs to Be Done to Prevent Their Fraudulent Use*, [GAO-07-1006](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 31, 2007).

U.S. Agencies Conduct Foreign Capacity-Building Efforts Related to Three of the Four Key Gaps, but Coordination Could be Improved

U.S. government foreign capacity-building programs and activities address to some degree most of the key gaps identified by the U.S. government in foreign governments' ability to prevent terrorist travel overseas. As shown in table 2, three of the four key gaps—sharing information about known and suspected terrorists, addressing the use of fraudulent travel documents, and ensuring passport issuance security—have been the subject of some programs and activities. However, with regard to U.S. programs addressing the use of fraudulent travel documents, we found potential for overlap and duplication of effort, as multiple agencies that fund and implement numerous training courses do not always coordinate their activities. While the U.S. government has many efforts aimed at helping foreign countries to combat corruption, none focus on the fourth gap of corruption related to passport issuance and immigration agencies.

Table 2: U.S. Government Programs and Activities That Address the Key Gaps in Foreign Countries' Capacity to Prevent Terrorist Travel Overseas

Key gap	Funding U.S. government agencies/ bureaus	Related programs and activities
Sharing information about known and suspected terrorists	State/S/CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terrorist Interdiction Program – provides foreign immigration officials with a system to screen for potential terrorist travelers
	State/INL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICITAP– funds DOJ to provide unique database systems to countries to help them screen for potential terrorist or criminal travelers
	State/INL and State/ISN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Visitors Program – funds CBP to arrange briefings and U.S. visits by foreign officials to learn about U.S. management of terrorist screening information
	DOJ/FBI and State/S/CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiating and maintaining agreements with foreign countries to share terrorist screening information
	DHS, with State/S/CT and the State Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiations to share Passenger Name Records data to prescreen airline passengers against terrorist screening information
Addressing the use of fraudulent travel documents	State/S/CT and State/DS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-Terrorism Assistance program – provides training in fraudulent travel document recognition
	State/INL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides funding for training in fraudulent travel document recognition International Visitors Program – funds CBP to arrange briefings and U.S. visits by foreign officials to learn about fraudulent travel document recognition
	State/DS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides training in fraudulent travel document recognition
	DHS/ICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides training in fraudulent travel document recognition
	DHS/TSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides training in fraudulent travel document recognition
	DHS/CBP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides training in fraudulent travel document recognition

Key gap	Funding U.S. government agencies/ bureaus	Related programs and activities
	State/Consular Affairs and DHS/Office of Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages foreign countries to report lost or stolen passports to INTERPOL and works to enhance international standards and procedures for this reporting
Ensuring passport issuance security	State/Consular Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertakes diplomatic efforts through the International Civil Aviation Organization to encourage other countries to use machine-readable and biometric passports Provides training to delegations from foreign countries on passport issuance security With State/INL, plans to provide passport anti-fraud training
	USAID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided technical assistance to Paraguay to reform its passport issuance system
Combating corruption in passport issuance and immigration agencies	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No efforts are directly aimed at these agencies

Source: GAO analysis of agency data.

Note: State is Department of State; S/CT is Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism; INL is Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs; ICITAP is International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program; DOJ is Department of Justice; ISN is Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation; CBP is U.S. Customs and Border Protection; FBI is Federal Bureau of Investigation; DHS is Department of Homeland Security; DS is Bureau of Diplomatic Security; ICE is U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; TSA is Transportation Security Administration; USAID is U.S. Agency for International Development.

U.S. Foreign Capacity-Building Efforts Address Sharing Information about Known and Suspected Terrorists

Multiple federal efforts are aimed at improving information sharing about known and suspected terrorists. First, State/S/CT's Terrorist Interdiction Program (TIP) enables immigration officials in countries at risk of terrorist activity to identify the attempted travel of known or suspected terrorists through the provision of a computerized system called the Personal Identification, Secure Comparison, and Evaluation System (PISCES). TIP provides participating countries with the PISCES software, hardware, and equipment to operate the software; any required maintenance and expansion of the system; and training on how to use it. During fiscal year 2010, the PISCES system processed an estimated 150,000 travelers per day entering or exiting 17 participating countries through ports of entry with PISCES installations.⁹ In fiscal year 2010, State began to upgrade the PISCES software with biometric capabilities that further enhance host countries' capacity to interdict terrorists attempting to travel under a false identity.

⁹The countries participating are: Afghanistan, Cambodia, Cote D'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Iraq, Kenya, Kosovo, Macedonia, Malta, Pakistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Yemen, and Zambia.

Second, State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has funded at least two projects to provide different types of database systems to foreign law enforcement authorities to help them screen for potential terrorist or criminal travelers. These projects are implemented through the DOJ/Criminal Division's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), a broad law enforcement development program that caters its program offerings to fit the host country's needs. First, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ICITAP has provided the State Police Information Network to Bosnian border officials to allow them to link to INTERPOL databases to identify criminals who could then be denied entry to the country. Second, ICITAP has provided a separate system, the Total Information Management System, to Albania to enhance the country's capacity to screen for known terrorists. According to State, the governments of Kosovo and Albania are discussing adapting certain elements of the Total Information Management System for use in Kosovo as well.

Third, INL and State's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation have provided funding to DHS' U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to arrange trips for foreign officials to come to the United States to learn about how CBP uses and analyzes terrorist screening information. These trips are organized through the International Visitors Program, through which CBP arranges briefings and visits to CBP operations in the United States by foreign high-level customs and other law enforcement officials who perform or manage functions similar to those encompassed within CBP's area of responsibility and expertise. In fiscal year 2010, CBP organized 22 visits by foreign officials for this purpose.

Fourth, the United States enhances other countries' ability to prevent terrorist travel abroad by sharing terrorist screening information with other countries. Under Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6 (HSPD-6), the Terrorist Screening Center¹⁰ within the DOJ's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Terrorism Information Sharing Office within State/S/CT negotiate agreements with foreign countries to systematically share terrorist screening information, thereby enhancing both countries' abilities to prevent terrorist travel abroad through immediate and systematic access to information on known and suspected terrorists. Once the United States has signed an HSPD-6 agreement with a foreign country,

¹⁰Pursuant to HSPD-6, the Terrorist Screening Center was established to consolidate the U.S. government's approach to terrorist screening and to provide for the appropriate and lawful use of terrorist information in screening processes.

the Terrorist Screening Center then shares the information agreed to with the foreign partners. As of May 2011, the Terrorist Screening Center shared terrorist screening information with 23 foreign countries.¹¹ In addition to the systematic information sharing on known and suspected terrorists that occurs through HSPD-6 agreements, the Terrorist Screening Center also has had approximately six one-time arrangements for sharing terrorist screening information with countries hosting special events.

Fifth, DHS leads an interagency negotiating team, on which State/S/CT and State's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs also serve, that is involved in renegotiating a 2007 agreement between the United States and the European Union on the exchange of Passenger Name Records data. Once a country has the capacity to analyze this type of information provided by airlines on its passengers, the country is able to prescreen airline passengers against terrorist screening information, thereby helping them to prevent terrorists from traveling abroad. The European Union is now considering developing such a system and CBP has hosted officials from the European Union for briefings on how the United States analyzes Passenger Name Records data.

According to State and DOJ officials, capacity-building efforts related to information sharing about known and suspected terrorists face some challenges. Some countries have expressed concerns about the privacy and protections related to the sharing of sensitive terrorist screening information.¹² For example, European countries that have negotiated HSPD-6 agreements with the United States have been concerned about data protection, redress, and privacy policies and procedures in both utilizing terrorist screening information from the United States and sharing terrorist screening information with the United States because of differences between U.S. and European laws. According to officials from the Terrorist Screening Center, such differences can include the countries' statutes of limitations that delineate how long they can keep derogatory information. According to State officials, another related challenge is that providing information to foreign countries involves a loss of control over the information and creates the possibility that the information could be compromised through internal corruption. To address both challenges, the United States and the foreign governments negotiate on specific

¹¹For more information on HSPD-6 agreements, see [GAO-11-335](#).

¹²[GAO-11-335](#).

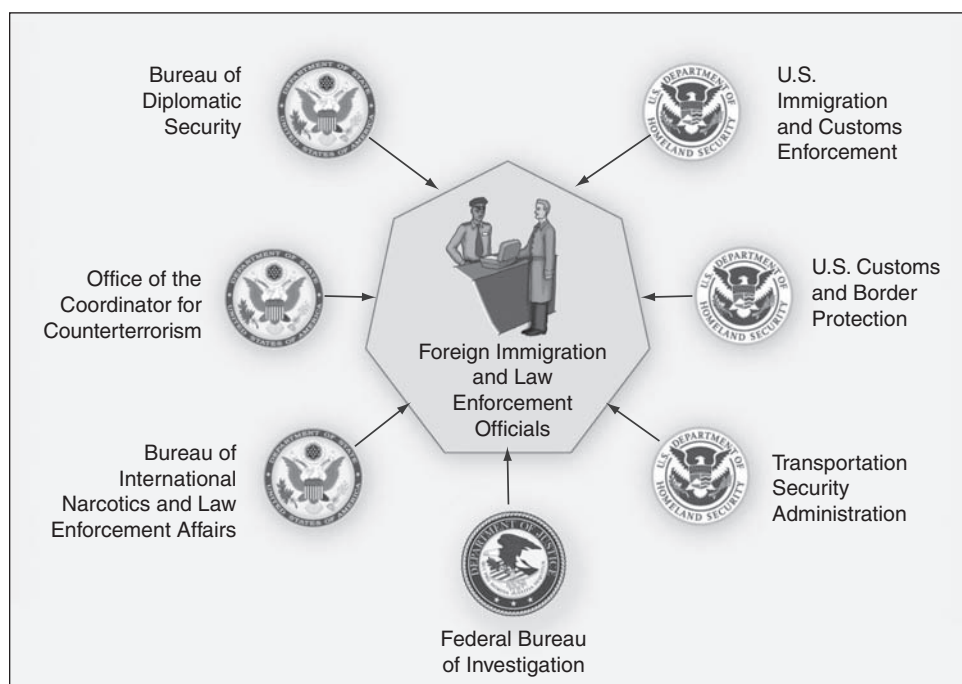
information-sharing mechanisms and protections that are feasible and acceptable to both sides.

Several U.S. Foreign Capacity-Building Efforts Address the Use of Fraudulent Travel Documents but Some Efforts Lack Coordination

Multiple Agencies Fund and Implement Training Courses in Fraudulent Travel Document Recognition

Seven different U.S. government entities across three federal agencies are involved in providing fraudulent travel document training to foreign government officials, as shown in figure 2. In delivering the training, agencies have similar objectives and often provide the training to the same populations (e.g., immigration officials and law enforcement officials) to develop their skills in recognizing the characteristics of altered, counterfeit, or other fraudulent travel documents.

Figure 2: U.S. Agencies and Bureaus Involved in Providing Fraudulent Travel Document Recognition Training to Foreign Immigration and Law Enforcement Officials



Sources: GAO analysis of agency data and information; Corel and Art Explosion (clip art).

U.S. law enforcement officials working overseas from DHS/ICE and State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) provide the bulk of training in the recognition of fraudulent travel documents to foreign immigration and law enforcement officials. Specifically, attachés from DHS/ICE and in-country representatives from State/DS provide such training under the dual objectives of preventing terrorist travel and protecting U.S. interests. For example, in fiscal year 2010, ICE attachés provided 360 training courses, briefings, and outreach sessions on fraudulent travel document recognition and State/DS staff posted overseas provided 458 related training courses.¹³

In addition, State/S/CT and State/DS implement the Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) program, which focuses on building foreign law enforcement officers' counterterrorism capabilities. ATA provides fraudulent travel document recognition training as part of achieving program goals related to preventing terrorist travel abroad.¹⁴ In fiscal year 2010, 12 of the more than 350 courses provided by ATA were fraudulent travel document recognition courses. These courses were provided to law enforcement officials from 17 of the approximately 60 countries that received ATA training in fiscal year 2010.

Other U.S. foreign capacity-building programs have implemented fraudulent travel document recognition courses, although their missions are not directly related to preventing terrorist travel abroad.

- State/INL provides funding for U.S. law enforcement agencies, including ICE, CBP, and the FBI, to implement the International Law Enforcement Academies (ILEA), which provide a general law enforcement training program that also includes some specialized training on how to combat certain criminal activities, including fraudulent travel documents. In fiscal year 2010, the ILEAs provided two courses specifically on fraudulent travel document recognition to law enforcement officials from 13 countries, as well as having training on this topic provided by ICE as part of the general law enforcement

¹³In addition to training foreign law enforcement and immigration officials, some of these training sessions provided by State/DS officers overseas also were provided to other groups, such as travel agencies, and included related training on analysis and recognition of trends and practices used by document vendors and human smugglers, such as schemes used to obtain visas for large groups of applicants.

¹⁴ATA is co-managed by State/S/CT and State/DS, with S/CT providing policy guidance and DS managing program operations. For more information about ATA, see GAO, *Combating Terrorism: State Department's Antiterrorism Program Needs Improved Guidance and More Systematic Assessments of Outcomes*, GAO-08-336 (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 29, 2008).

training offered at the ILEA in San Salvador that was delivered five times that fiscal year.¹⁵ In addition, State/INL has provided funding to multiple entities to provide training in fraudulent travel document recognition. First, State/INL provides funding to CBP for related training, such as for fraudulent travel document training provided to Moroccan officials in fiscal year 2010 and for CBP's International Visitors Program, which, in fiscal year 2010, arranged six trips to the United States for foreign officials to learn how to recognize fraudulent travel documents. Also, State/INL has provided funding to the Organization of American States to deliver training in fraudulent document recognition throughout the Western Hemisphere and to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to develop a manual on how to examine travel documents to determine their authenticity.

- The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) within DHS funds Aviation Security Sustainable International Standards Teams, which build select countries' aviation security through related training, technical assistance, and overall security assessments, in cases when these countries are having difficulty meeting International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation security standards. In fiscal year 2010, as part of this effort, TSA funded one fraudulent travel document training course in Liberia, which was taught by ICE and CBP, as part of fulfilling that country's needs to meet ICAO standards related to detecting fraudulent travel documents.¹⁶
- CBP's Office of International Affairs has funded some fraudulent travel document recognition training related to its mission to enhance international border security. In fiscal year 2010, CBP funded one course in fraudulent document recognition for Mexican law enforcement officials.¹⁷

¹⁵There are ILEAs in San Salvador, El Salvador; Gaborone, Botswana; Bangkok, Thailand; Budapest, Hungary; and Roswell, New Mexico; all of which, according to INL officials, offer unique training programs catered to the needs of their regions.

¹⁶ICAO is a United Nations organization that sets standards and recommended practices for the safety, security, environmental protection, and sustainable development of air transport. Included in ICAO's guidelines for aviation security are provisions instructing countries to guard against the misuse of their travel documents and to facilitate detection of cases where such documents have been unlawfully altered, replicated, or issued.

¹⁷CBP, through its Carrier Liaison Program, also provides fraudulent travel document recognition training to civilian airport employees at foreign airports. In fiscal year 2010, CBP provided over 150 such training sessions.

Agencies Funding and
Implementing Fraudulent
Travel Document Training
Sometimes Lack Coordination

- In addition to training provided by ICE attachés, ICE's Office of International Affairs funds some additional fraudulent travel document recognition training courses, which involve ICE officials traveling from Washington, D.C., to instruct the courses. In fiscal year 2010, ICE funded four such training sessions for representatives from at least nine countries.
- Finally, the FBI has at times been involved in the provision of fraudulent travel document recognition training to foreign law enforcement officials, although it did not fund or implement any such training in fiscal year 2010. In March 2011, the FBI organized a training session for Indonesian officials in that country's police, state intelligence, public corruption commission, customs, immigration, military, and prosecutor's offices, a portion of which involved fraudulent travel document training that was provided by ICE and State/DS.

Our past work on issues that cut across multiple agencies shows that without a coordinated approach, programs can waste scarce funds and limit the overall effectiveness of the U.S. government's efforts.¹⁸ GAO has found that, while collaboration among federal agencies can take different forms, practices that generally enhance collaboration include agreeing upon agency roles and responsibilities and identifying and addressing needs by leveraging resources.¹⁹ GAO has further suggested that program officials require sufficiently detailed information to enable them to carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively, while collaborating when necessary to increase their efficiency.²⁰

State/S/CT officials told us they were unaware of how many agencies and subagencies are involved in providing fraudulent travel document training to foreign officials, and they had not developed any mechanism to encourage coordination among all the parties involved. At the country level, we found that agency officials at two of the posts we visited did not always collaborate on the delivery of fraudulent travel document

¹⁸GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, [GAO-06-15](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 21, 2005). Also, see GAO, *Opportunities to Reduce Potential Duplication in Government Programs, Save Tax Dollars, and Enhance Revenue*, [GAO-11-318SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 1, 2011).

¹⁹[GAO-06-15](#).

²⁰GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1](#) (Washington, D.C.: November 1999).

recognition training.²¹ As a result, some planned training was duplicative and did not make an effective use of limited resources. For example, during our March 2011 visit to Pakistan, we identified two agencies planning to provide fraudulent travel document recognition training courses in April 2011 to Pakistani officials from the same agency without coordinating with one another. The ICE attaché planned one course that had a full roster of students but lacked funding, while ATA was simultaneously planning to hold two fully-funded fraudulent travel document courses in the same month although they had no students signed up for either course. Meanwhile, the ICE attaché had been certified through a train-the-trainer course provided by ICE's Forensic Document Laboratory to be an instructor for fraudulent travel document recognition courses. Since ATA program officials were unaware of the existence of this local resource, the ATA program was still attempting to find two instructors from ICE to travel to Pakistan to teach the courses they were planning. In addition to potentially adding to program costs by not using the locally available instructor, this lack of coordination also could have unnecessarily increased demand on the Forensic Document Laboratory's resources. The Forensic Document Laboratory is one of the primary sources of instructors for ATA courses in fraudulent travel documents. Officials from the Forensic Document Laboratory in Washington, D.C., told us they provide train-the-trainer courses to make up for their lack of sufficient staff to fulfill all the training requests from overseas programs like ATA.

In Kenya, we found that representatives from two U.S. agencies, State and DHS, deliver fraudulent travel document training but do not collaborate. The ATA program, which is run by a contractor hired by State/DS in Kenya, provided approximately one course per year from fiscal year 2007 to 2010 in fraudulent travel documents to police and security officers, customs and immigration officers, forensic specialists, and training officers. A representative of State/DS posted overseas also provides many training courses in fraudulent travel documents for immigration officials. The CBP attaché, who represents DHS at the post, has provided many training courses on this topic to airport and border officials, as well as speaking on the topics of fraudulent travel documents, imposter

²¹In some embassies, a Law Enforcement Working Group meets to coordinate law enforcement activities, which can include the coordination of training to foreign officials. Law Enforcement Working Groups had been meeting regularly in Pakistan and Kenya at the time of our visits to these countries in March 2011 when we learned of these instances of coordination lacking in the delivery of fraudulent travel document recognition training.

Agencies Also Address the Use of Fraudulent Travel Documents through Capacity-Building Efforts Related to Lost and Stolen Passports

recognition, and human trafficking to students in the Kenyan Immigration Service's basic training. Despite these three representatives providing this similar training, a representative from one of the agencies stated that although he coordinated with other countries providing similar training in Kenya, he did not do so with other U.S. agencies.

State's Bureau of Consular Affairs attempts to build foreign partners' capacity to address the issue of fraudulent travel documents by encouraging countries to report lost and stolen passports to INTERPOL and to access INTERPOL's database to check against travelers arriving at ports of entry to identify and interdict people misusing passports.²² According to INTERPOL, as of June 2011, the total number of countries contributing lost and stolen passport information was 158; and some of these have connected border checkpoints to INTERPOL's system for automated checking against its database. To facilitate the interdiction of people misusing lost and stolen passports, Consular Affairs also assisted in the drafting of a set of global standards for national management of lost and stolen passport data, which was provided to ICAO for adoption as a part of the global travel document standards.

DHS' Office of Policy has also played a role in enhancing other countries' capacity to report information about lost and stolen passports. First, they have participated in ongoing efforts to revise INTERPOL's procedures for the reporting of lost and stolen passport information to enhance the capabilities and compliance of such reporting by INTERPOL members. Similarly, to improve foreign partners' ability to detect fraudulent travel documents, DHS' Office of Policy has provided technical assistance towards the development of a pilot program to enhance the sharing of

²²The Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 requires that countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program enter into an agreement with the United States to report, or make available to the United States through INTERPOL or other means as designated by the Secretary of Homeland Security information about lost or stolen passports. As of January 2011, all 36 Visa Waiver Program countries were sharing lost and stolen passport information with the United States. DHS regularly monitors Visa Waiver Program countries' compliance with this requirement. For more information, see [GAO-11-335](#).

information related to fraudulent document alert data between members of the Group of Eight²³ and INTERPOL.

**State and USAID
Undertake Efforts to
Improve Foreign
Governments' Passport
Issuance Security**

Two agencies, State and USAID, have undertaken foreign capacity-building activities to improve other countries' passport issuance security. State's Bureau of Consular Affairs, with its mission of issuing secure U.S. passports to traveling Americans, is involved in some efforts to enhance foreign countries' passport issuance security.

- Consular Affairs has contributed to diplomatic efforts through ICAO to promote other countries' use of machine-readable passports and passports with biometric features. For example, it was involved in the development and promotion of ICAO's standards for machine-readable passports published in September 2006. These standards are related to a requirement that countries use machine-readable passports by April 2010, and also provided specifications for biometric enhancements that could be made to electronic passports.
- Consular Affairs has also, since 2009, provided briefings to representatives from over 50 passport issuance authorities on the elements of secure passports. For example, in 2010, Consular Affairs organized the training of a delegation from Turkey's passport office in Washington, D.C., which included briefings and organized tours of the Washington Passport Agency and the U.S. Government Printing Office.
- State/INL is funding Consular Affairs to provide passport antifraud training to officials from foreign passport issuance agencies, which will first be piloted in fall 2011. This training is designed to improve the integrity of other countries' passports and passport issuance by helping them institute organizations, processes, and procedures for detecting

²³The Group of Eight (G8) refers to the group of eight highly industrialized nations—France, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Japan, United States, Canada, and Russia—which hold a yearly meeting, the G8 Summit. Meetings are intended to foster consensus on global issues such as economic growth and crisis management, global security, energy, and terrorism.

fraudulent passport applications as part of their adjudication and issuance processes.²⁴

In addition, USAID provided technical assistance to the Paraguayan Ministry of Interior and National Police to reform Paraguay's identification system, including its national identity cards and passports.²⁵ According to USAID, the prior identification system in Paraguay was not in compliance with international security standards and was vulnerable to corruption. Implementation of the new integrated national identity card and passport system involved providing information technology improvements, as well as training on how to collect citizens' biometric data and on how to manage the new system. Entries in the new national database now include biometric identifiers, including fingerprints, photographs, and signatures, all of which are automatically verified upon entry into the database for their compliance with international standards. In addition, passports were redesigned and upgraded to ICAO requirements, resulting in more secure documents that are less susceptible to fraud.

The U.S. Government Has Anticorruption Efforts Overseas although Not Specifically Aimed at Passport Issuance and Immigration Agencies

While the U.S. government, through USAID and Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) anticorruption foreign capacity-building programs and State-led diplomatic efforts, has many efforts aimed at helping foreign countries to combat corruption, no U.S. government effort focuses directly on combating corruption in countries' passport issuance and immigration agencies.

USAID has developed a wide range of programs for fighting corruption, often fit to the needs and opportunities of the recipient country.²⁶ Some USAID anticorruption programs focus on a few specific sectors, including

²⁴According to State's Bureau of Consular Affairs, this passport antifraud training will also cover topics such as how to prevent malfeasance and account for vulnerable items such as passport issuance systems and blank passport books. As a result, this future training may in part also help to address the key gap in combating corruption in passport issuance and immigration agencies discussed in the next section.

²⁵This assistance was provided as a part of the Millennium Challenge Corporation's Paraguay Threshold Program Stage I (2007-2009). For more information on the Millennium Challenge Corporation, see GAO, *Millennium Challenge Corporation: MCC Has Addressed a Number of Implementation Challenges, but Needs to Improve Financial Controls and Infrastructure Planning*, [GAO-10-52](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 6, 2009).

²⁶See GAO, *Foreign Assistance: U.S. Anticorruption Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa Will Require Time and Commitment*, [GAO-04-506](#) (Washington D.C.: Apr. 26, 2004).

tax collection, customs collection, and the financial sector. In addition, USAID also has programs that have a broader effect on combating corruption, such as civil society programs to increase public awareness, promote citizen involvement and participation, and encourage civil society oversight of government; programs to decentralize powers to local governments; rule of law programs to improve the justice sector and thereby the ability to prosecute corruption cases; and programs to build anticorruption agencies within foreign governments. While not specifically targeting passport and immigration agencies, these broad anticorruption programs may have a beneficial, indirect effect on these countries' abilities to combat corruption in passport issuance and immigration agencies, thereby indirectly helping to prevent terrorist travel abroad.

Similarly, MCC has multiple anticorruption efforts across the 38 countries to which the MCC provides assistance. These anticorruption efforts include encouraging countries to: pass stronger anticorruption laws, strengthen oversight institutions, open up the public policy-making process to greater scrutiny, and increase corruption-related investigations and prosecutions. Such efforts, although not directly focused on passport issuance and immigration agencies, also may have a beneficial, indirect effect on these countries' abilities to combat corruption in these agencies, thereby indirectly helping to prevent terrorist travel abroad.

In addition, State has been involved in diplomatic efforts to discourage corruption in foreign countries. Multilaterally, State has advocated for the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption, which came into force in December 2005 and provides a comprehensive set of standards, measures, and rules that all countries can apply in order to strengthen their legal and regulatory regimes to fight corruption. State has encouraged and provided financial support for the development and launch this year of a peer review process through which countries will show how they are complying with their commitments under the UN Convention. In many countries, as well as through regional workshops in Africa, State engages in efforts to encourage or support countries in combating corruption, such as through encouraging the investigation and prosecution of corruption cases. While none of these efforts focus directly on passport issuance or immigration agencies, their goal is to strengthen overall the laws, institutions, and capacity to prevent and prosecute corruption, which, according to State, intend to impact the integrity and effectiveness of all government functions and agencies.

No Performance Measures to Gauge Governmentwide Progress in Closing Key Gaps in Foreign Partners' Ability to Prevent Terrorist Travel Have Been Established

The U.S. government lacks performance measures to assess governmentwide progress in closing the key gaps in foreign partners' capacity to prevent terrorist travel overseas. Performance measurement enables decision makers to make informed policy and budget decisions.²⁷ At the national level, U.S. counterterrorism strategies lack performance measures related to capacity building to prevent terrorist travel. Similarly, neither State, DOD, DHS, DOJ nor USAID has established such measures to accompany their agencywide strategies. Components of some agencies have relevant performance measures at the program level, but they cover only one of the four key gaps. Without comprehensive measures that encompass all U.S. government agency efforts, the U.S. government cannot determine governmentwide progress in building foreign partners' capacity to prevent terrorist travel.

Performance Measures Are Key Tools for Decision Makers but U.S. National Counterterrorism Strategies Lack Governmentwide Performance Measures Related to Foreign Capacity Building to Prevent Terrorist Travel

As we have previously reported, performance information is essential to enable decision makers to make informed decisions. Specifying performance metrics is one tool used in evaluating the effectiveness of government efforts.²⁸ Agencies can also use performance information to make various types of management decisions to improve programs and results. In addition, as we have also reported, many federal efforts transcend more than one agency.²⁹ Closing the gaps in foreign partners' capacity to prevent terrorist travel is an example of such an issue, since it involves efforts funded and implemented by several agencies. In such situations, we have reported that it is important to have full information on how cross-cutting goals will be achieved.

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 highlighted the importance of constraining terrorist travel and directed NCTC to submit a strategy that combined terrorist travel intelligence, operations, and law enforcement into a cohesive effort to intercept terrorists, find terrorist travel facilitators, and constrain terrorist mobility domestically and internationally. The resulting NCTC 2006 *National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel* lists some U.S. government activities related to helping

²⁷GAO, *Executive Guide: Effectively Implementing the Government Performance and Results Act*, [GAO/GGD-96-118](#) (Washington, DC: June 1996).

²⁸[GAO/GGD-96-118](#).

²⁹GAO, *Government Performance: GPRA Modernization Act Provides Opportunities to Help Address Fiscal, Performance, and Management Challenges*, [GAO-11-466T](#) (Washington, DC: Mar. 16, 2011).

partner nations build capacity to limit terrorist travel but contains no performance measures to assess governmentwide progress.

Similarly, the National Security Council, which coordinates national security and foreign policy among various U.S. government agencies, issued the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* in September 2006, which established the goal of disrupting terrorist travel internationally through various means, including building international capacity to secure travel and combat terrorist travel.³⁰ In June 2011, the President issued the *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*, which again highlighted the importance of enhancing the capacity of foreign partners to prevent terrorist travel across national borders. However, these unclassified strategies lack performance measures related to foreign capacity building to prevent terrorist travel.

Individual Agency Strategies Do Not Contain Performance Measures Related to Foreign Capacity Building to Prevent Terrorist Travel Abroad, but Some Agency Components Track Efforts Related to One Key Gap

We examined individual agency strategies for the agencies funding and/or implementing foreign capacity-building programs and activities related to preventing terrorist travel, including for State, DHS, DOD, DOJ, and USAID. We found that each agency's strategy acknowledged the important role the agency plays in combating international terrorism. However, none of the agencies' strategies contained performance indicators to measure progress related to helping countries close the key gaps in their ability to prevent terrorist travel.

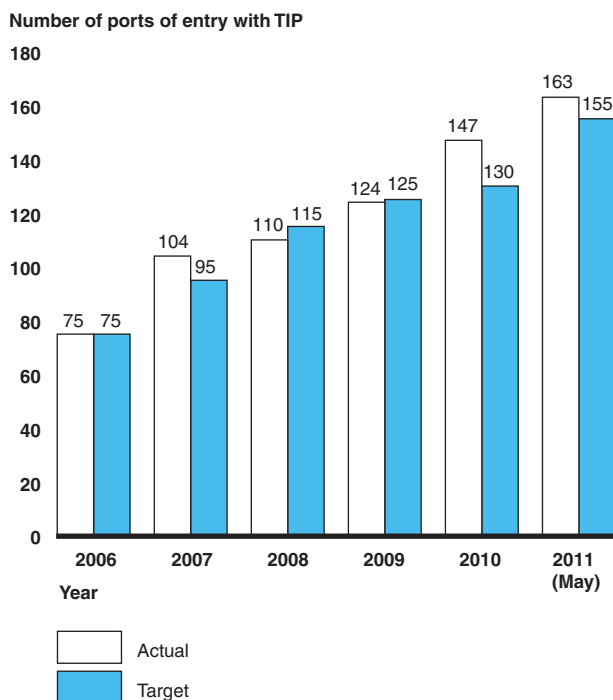
Some agency components have made efforts to track the performance of their specific program efforts aimed at improving information sharing about known and suspected terrorists—one of the four key gaps. None of the agencies have performance measures related to the other three key gaps in foreign partners' capacity to prevent terrorist travel. Related to information sharing, State's S/CT and Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance have performance indicators for TIP that address sharing information on known and suspected terrorists.³¹ In fiscal year 2009, S/CT created the

³⁰The National Security Council is the principal forum used by the President of the United States for considering national security and foreign policy matters with his senior national security advisors and cabinet officials and is part of the Executive Office of the President of the United States. The function of the Council is to advise and assist the president on national security and foreign policies. The Council also serves as the president's principal arm for coordinating these policies among various government agencies.

³¹Performance measures related to the key gap of information sharing about known and suspected terrorists are found in State/S/CT's bureau strategic plan, and in the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance's master list of standard indicators.

performance indicator—the percentage of the highest priority countries capable of screening for terrorists through TIP/PISCES that receive biometric capabilities. The target for that performance indicator for fiscal year 2010 was that 50 percent of the 17 countries currently supported by TIP would have biometric capability. No fiscal year 2010 results have yet been publicly reported for this measure. The Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance’s performance measure for TIP is the number of ports of entry supported by TIP. Figure 3 shows the increase in the number of ports of entry supported by TIP, and the annual targets, from 2006 to the present.

Figure 3: Number of Ports of Entry Supported by Terrorist Interdiction Program since 2006



Source: GAO analysis of State Department data.

State’s country-level plans also sometimes contain performance measures for U.S. counterterrorism efforts in that country. For example, State has performance measures in its 2012 mission strategic plans for Kenya and Thailand. For Kenya, the performance measure is—the government of Kenya should demonstrate capacity and resolve to prevent and respond to threats of terrorism by, among other things, expanding TIP/PISCES coverage to additional border crossings. For Thailand, the performance measure is—Thailand should develop effective export control and border

security systems that meet international standards by installing new software for TIP/PISCES at targeted airport locations and expanding the program to new ports of entry.

Finally, DOJ/FBI also has two performance measures related to the information sharing gap that assess the Terrorist Screening Center's efforts to share terrorist screening information with foreign partners.³² The FBI has not set targets for either of these measures.

Overall, these relatively narrow agency-specific measures that exist do not provide a comprehensive basis for assessing governmentwide progress in building foreign partners' capacity for two reasons. First, they necessarily focus on specific program efforts, not governmentwide progress. Second, they cover only one of the four key gaps in the capacity of foreign countries to prevent terrorist travel overseas.

Conclusions

Inhibiting the movement of terrorists across international borders is a key part of the U.S. strategy for protecting the United States and its interests abroad. Although agencies have implemented significant new domestic programs to prevent terrorists from entering the United States, events of the past few years illustrate that the international travel system is only as secure as its weakest link. As a result, the United States seeks to enhance the capacity of its foreign partners to prevent terrorist travel overseas, with agencies implementing a variety of programs and activities to close key gaps in our foreign partners' capacity. However, some of these efforts—such as improving foreign partners' capacity to prevent the use of fraudulent travel documents—are not always well coordinated and create the risk of duplication and overlap. In light of the limited resources available to address these important issues, it is critically important to ensure that such resources are used efficiently. Further, while more than 5 years have passed since the *National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel* linked our foreign partners' capacity to constrain terrorist travel to our own national security, the U.S. government still lacks an effective system for measuring and reporting progress toward the goal of enhancing our foreign partners' capacity. As agencies implement the new *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*, it is important to focus on measuring, tracking, and reporting on governmentwide progress toward the goal of

³² The FBI considers the content of these performance measures to contain sensitive information and therefore the exact measures cannot be discussed in this public report.

enhancing foreign partners' capacity to prevent terrorist travel. Without such information, the U.S. government cannot efficiently assess the effectiveness of its efforts and planners and decision makers may lack information vital to addressing foreign policy needs and leveraging U.S. resources.

Recommendations for Executive Action

In order to institute a coordinated approach for delivering fraudulent travel document recognition training overseas to ensure that U.S. agencies prevent overlap and duplication; and given State's role in working with all appropriate elements of the U.S. government to ensure integrated and effective international counterterrorism efforts, we recommend that:

- State develop a mechanism for agencies involved in funding and implementing fraudulent travel document recognition training at overseas posts to coordinate the delivery of such training to foreign partners.

To allow the U.S. government to determine the extent to which it is building foreign partners' ability to prevent terrorist travel abroad and to make adjustments to improve its programs accordingly, we recommend that:

- The National Security Council, in collaboration with relevant agencies, develop a mechanism to measure, track, and report on U.S. progress across the government toward its goal of enhancing foreign partners' capacity to prevent terrorist travel.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to State, DHS, DOD, DOJ, the Department of Transportation, USAID, NCTC, and the National Security Staff of the National Security Council. DHS and State provided written comments, which are reprinted in appendixes III and IV, respectively. State, DHS, DOJ, and NCTC provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate. DOD, the Department of Transportation, USAID, and the National Security Staff did not provide any comments on the draft.

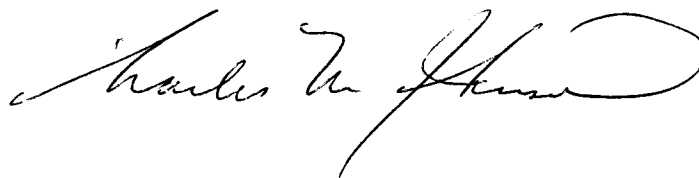
In commenting on a draft of this report, State agreed with our recommendation that it should develop a mechanism to enhance coordination among the agencies involved in funding and implementing fraudulent travel document training overseas. State noted that efforts to enhance such coordination have begun at the country level, and that coordination in this area is also needed in terms of strategic, budget, and

program planning at the agencywide and interagency levels. In addition, DHS, in its letter commenting on our report, indicated its commitment to working with other relevant agencies to stop terrorists from traveling across international borders, including through contributing to coordinated efforts to prevent any overlap and duplication.

Regarding our recommendation to the National Security Council to work with relevant agencies to develop a mechanism to measure, track, and report on governmentwide progress toward its goal of enhancing foreign partners' capacity to prevent terrorist travel, the National Security Staff did not provide any comment. However, in previous meetings with us, the National Security Staff acknowledged the need for such a mechanism.

As agreed with your offices, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution until 30 days from the report date. At that time, we will send copies of the report to the Secretaries of Defense, Homeland Security, Justice, State, and Transportation; the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development; the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center; the National Security Staff of the National Security Council; and other interested parties or interested congressional committees. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff has questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-7331 or at JohnsonCM@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff members that made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix V.



Charles Michael Johnson Jr.
Director, International Affairs and Trade

Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

In this report, we (1) identified the key gaps the U.S. government has assessed in foreign countries' capacity to prevent terrorist travel overseas, (2) evaluated how U.S. foreign capacity-building efforts address those gaps, and (3) assessed the extent to which the U.S. government is measuring progress in its efforts to close those gaps.

Our work focused on the efforts of the Departments of State (State), Homeland Security (DHS), Defense (DOD), and Justice (DOJ) to build foreign partners' capacity to prevent terrorist travel overseas. Within these agencies, we met with officials from several relevant components that are contributing to the U.S. government goal of enhancing foreign partners' ability to prevent terrorist travel, including: State's Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism (S/CT), Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS), and Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL); DHS's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and Office of International Affairs; and DOJ's Federal Bureau of Investigation and Criminal Division. We focused on these agencies and components as a result of our assessment of agency efforts noted in the *National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel*, our review of information in previous and ongoing GAO work in counterterrorism and aviation security, and discussions with U.S. agency officials regarding the agencies with which they collaborate.

To obtain examples of U.S. efforts and more in-depth understanding of specific participation in U.S. capacity-building programs designed to prevent terrorist travel overseas, we selected four countries in which to conduct field work. We selected Kenya, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand, based on criteria that included: designation as a terrorist safe haven, presence of key U.S. agency personnel at post, and coverage of key regions to counterterrorism.¹ In each location, we met with U.S. government personnel involved in capacity building to prevent terrorist travel abroad to learn about the key gaps in those countries' abilities to prevent terrorist travel overseas, the types of capacity-building activities they undertake related to preventing terrorist travel, and how they measure progress and report results. We also met with foreign government officials in three of the four countries to learn about the challenges they

¹We originally planned also to conduct fieldwork in Yemen in March 2011, but were unable to travel there due to the deteriorating security situation at the time.

face in improving their ability to prevent terrorist travel abroad and their perspectives on the effectiveness of U.S. efforts.

To identify what the U.S. government has assessed to be the key gaps in foreign partners' capacity to prevent terrorist travel overseas, we reviewed the NCTC and Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center's (HSTC) terrorist travel vulnerability assessments from 2005, 2008, and 2009. Based on interviews with the HSTC, we learned that these are the only comprehensive U.S. government assessments of vulnerabilities within the foreign travel system. We reviewed all three documents to identify the key gaps because, according to HSTC officials, each assessment is not comprehensive. Rather, they are additive, so the assessments taken together represent a full picture of the vulnerabilities. We performed our review of these assessments by noting instances when certain gaps, threats, vulnerabilities, or areas for improvement to the international travel system generally or related to specific foreign countries were discussed. For the purposes of this review, we considered gaps to be threats, vulnerabilities, and areas for improvement mentioned in the assessments. The parts of the assessments that identify vulnerabilities limited to the U.S. travel system were not included within our analysis since they did not relate to the scope of our review. To distinguish between the key gaps identified in these reports and other vulnerabilities identified that were not key gaps, we reviewed the frequency with which each gap/vulnerability was mentioned in the reports. The HSTC confirmed our summary of the key gaps and other vulnerabilities. We also consulted with agency officials at headquarters, the missions in our example countries, and the intelligence community to identify examples of the key gaps in each country and corroborate our findings.

To evaluate how U.S. foreign capacity-building programs address those gaps, we examined relevant documents including program descriptions, and agency- and program-level strategic documents, including the 2012 Mission Strategic and Resource Plans. We conducted interviews with agency officials from State, DHS, DOJ, DOD, the Department of Transportation, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in Washington, D.C., and in our example countries where officials were involved in relevant capacity-building programs. We also interviewed officials from the NCTC and National Security Staff. To show the level of different agencies' involvement in the delivery of fraudulent travel document recognition training to foreign officials, we requested data from all relevant agencies on the number of such courses that they funded and implemented in fiscal year 2010. We determined that these data were sufficiently reliable for our purposes.

To assess the extent to which the U.S. government is measuring progress in its efforts to enhance foreign partners' ability to constrain terrorist travel overseas, we analyzed relevant U.S. planning and evaluation documents including the 2006 *National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel*, the 2006 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, the 2008 *National Implementation Plan for the War on Terror*, and the 2011 *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*. We also reviewed the relevant agency strategic documents for State, DHS, DOD, DOJ, and USAID. The State documents included the fiscal year 2012 strategic and resource plans of the bureaus of S/CT, DS, INL and Consular Affairs as well as the fiscal year 2012 Mission Strategic and Resource Plans of our example countries. We determined that State's data on performance indicators for the Terrorist Interdiction Program were sufficiently reliable for our purposes.

To identify what have been the reported results of these efforts, we reviewed relevant agency reports including: State's *Annual Report on Assistance Related to International Terrorism* from fiscal year 2009, the strategic and resource plans of the bureaus of S/CT, DS, INL and Consular Affairs as well as the Mission Strategic and Resource Plans of our example countries, DOJ performance reports, and the DHS *Annual Performance Report* for fiscal years 2008–2010. We also discussed progress with agency officials at headquarters and at the missions of our example countries.

We conducted this performance audit from July 2010 to June 2011 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: U.S. Capacity-Building Efforts Related to the Vulnerabilities of Aviation and Border Security

Multiple agencies are involved in many programs and activities to build the capacity of foreign countries to address vulnerabilities in their aviation and border security, as shown in table 3. Since countries can have both land and water borders, we include both land border and maritime security programs under border security. For both aviation and border security programs, we include only programs that include elements relating to preventing illicit passenger travel. We have not included other aviation or border security programs that focus only on preventing illicit cargo shipments.

Table 3: U.S. Government Programs and Activities That Address Other Vulnerabilities Identified in Foreign Countries' Capacity to Prevent Terrorist Travel Overseas

Areas of vulnerability	Funding U.S. government agencies/ bureaus	Related programs and activities
Aviation security	State/DS and State/S/CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antiterrorism Assistance Program – provides training in airport security management and related quality control procedures
	DHS/TSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aviation Security Sustainable International Standards Teams – provide teams of subject matter experts to conduct needs assessments and follow-up visits to deliver agreed-upon assistance, such as aviation security-related training and equipment provisions
	State/Bureau of African Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides funding to the Department of Transportation to administer the Safe Skies for Africa program, which provides funding to TSA to train airport security personnel in ICAO aviation security requirements and standards
	State/INL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides some equipment for airport security, as well as some related training and technical assistance
	State/ISN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Export Control and Border Security Program – funds a CBP-implemented course on observing airline passengers' behavior to look for irregularities
	State/INL and State/ISN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Visitors Program – funds CBP to arrange briefings and U.S. visits by foreign officials to learn about aviation security
	State/S/CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Strategic Initiative – funds regional workshops in airport security technology, passenger analysis techniques, and advanced passenger screening procedures
	DOD/African Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided funding for airport interdiction training and donated airport screening equipment in Kenya
	State/Bureau of International Organization Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes nearly \$1 million each year to ICAO's technical security assistance programs
	State/Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides funding to support the Organization for American States' aviation and airport security training for personnel throughout Latin America
Border security	State/Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides funding to support Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation projects related to aviation security, including a conference in Vietnam in 2009
	DOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with State/PM, DOD implements the Section 1206 Program, which trains and equips foreign military and nonmilitary maritime forces, including in border and maritime security
	State/DS and State/S/CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antiterrorism Assistance Program – provides training in border control management and maritime port and harbor security management

**Appendix II: U.S. Capacity-Building Efforts
Related to the Vulnerabilities of Aviation and
Border Security**

Areas of vulnerability	Funding U.S. government agencies/ bureaus	Related programs and activities
	DHS/CBP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides capacity building training and technical assistance in border control practices
	State/INL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds and implements maritime and border security programs that include training and equipment provisions
	State/INL and State/ISN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Visitors Program – funds CBP to arrange briefings and U.S. visits by foreign officials to learn about border and maritime security
	State/PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Along with DOD/DSCA, State/PM implements the Foreign Military Financing program, which has provided equipment to foreign countries to strengthen their border security
	DOD/DSCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program – provides targeted, nonlethal, combating terrorism education and training, which can include courses in maritime or border security
	State/PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds DOD/DSCA to implement the International Military Education and Training program, which provides professional military training to foreign militaries. This training can help improve border and maritime forces in countries where the military controls the border.
	DHS/U.S. Coast Guard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds the maritime capacities of foreign military and security services through training and technical assistance in areas such as law enforcement boarding and searching for stowaways

Source: GAO analysis of agency data.

Note: State is Department of State; DS is Bureau of Diplomatic Security; S/CT is Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism; DHS is Department of Homeland Security; TSA is Transportation Security Administration; ICAO is International Civil Aviation Organization; INL is Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs; ISN is Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation; CBP is U.S. Customs and Border Protection; DOD is Department of Defense; PM is Bureau of Political-Military Affairs; DSCA is Defense Security Cooperation Agency.

Appendix III: Comments from the Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528



**Homeland
Security**

June 23, 2011

Charles M. Johnson, Jr.
Director, International Affairs and Trade
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Re: Draft Report GAO-11-637, "COMBATING TERRORISM: Additional Steps Needed to Enhance Foreign Partners' Capacity to Prevent Terrorist Travel"

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appreciates the U.S. Government Accountability Office's (GAO) work in planning and conducting its review and issuing this report. The Department is pleased to note the report recognizes many of the activities its Components, including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, are involved in every day to prevent terrorism and enhance U.S. security.

Although the report does not contain any recommendations specifically directed at DHS, the Department remains committed to continuing its work with the U.S. Departments of State, Justice, and Defense, and other relevant stakeholders, to more effectively stop terrorists from traveling across international borders. This includes sharing information about known and suspected terrorists and coordinating efforts to prevent overlap and duplication to obtain maximum benefit from the expenditure of increasingly scarce resources.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. Technical and sensitivity comments were submitted under separate cover. We look forward to working with you on future Homeland Security issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim H. Crumpacker".

Jim H. Crumpacker
Director
Departmental GAO/OIG Liaison Office

Appendix IV: Comments from the Department of State



United States Department of State

Chief Financial Officer

Washington, D.C. 20520

Ms. Jacquelyn Williams-Bridgers
Managing Director
International Affairs and Trade
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548-0001

JUN 21 2011

Dear Ms. Williams-Bridgers:

We appreciate the opportunity to review your draft report, "COMBATING TERRORISM: Additional Steps Needed to Enhance Foreign Partners' Capacity to Prevent Terrorist Travel," GAO Job Code 320781.

The enclosed Department of State comments are provided for incorporation with this letter as an appendix to the final report.

If you have any questions concerning this response, please contact Judd Stitzel, Program Manager, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism at (202) 647-1515.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BARBARA RETZLAFF".

Barbara Retzlaff

cc: GAO – Charles Michael Johnson
S/CT – Daniel Benjamin
State/OIG – Evelyn Klemstine

Department of State Comments to GAO Draft Report

**COMBATING TERRORISM: Additional Steps Needed to Enhance Foreign
Partners' Capacity to Prevent Terrorist Travel**
(GAO-11-637, GAO Code 320781)

The Department of State appreciates the opportunity to comment on GAO's draft report entitled "*Combating Terrorism: Additional Steps Needed to Enhance Foreign Partners' Capacity to Prevent Terrorist Travel.*"

The Department of State concurs with GAO's recommendation to strengthen mechanisms for U.S. government agencies involved in funding and implementing fraudulent travel document training at overseas posts to coordinate the delivery of such training to foreign partners. Fraudulent travel document training is also provided to U.S. and foreign airline ticket agents domestically and abroad. Each embassy's country team already performs such coordination and de-confliction at the local level in-country, and many, including Embassy Nairobi, have already put in place mechanisms such as regular meetings of an interagency law enforcement working group to ensure that even the occasional instances of lack of coordination do not occur in the future. This work also needs to be performed in terms of strategic, budget and program planning at Department and Agency headquarters in Washington.

Coordination of fraudulent travel document training is but one part of a much broader effort underway to create mechanisms to coordinate, strategically plan, and fund U.S. government efforts to build the border security capacities of foreign partners. The U.S. government must speak with one voice to our foreign partners in this area, and we agree that the Department should lead a whole-of-government response that especially includes capacity-building efforts by the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense.

Appendix V: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Charles Michael Johnson Jr., (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

Key contributors to this report include Jason Bair, Assistant Director; Nina Pfeiffer; Heather Latta; Julia Jebo; Eileen Larence; Eric Erdman; Kevin Copping; Amber Keyser; Martin De Alteriis; Mary Moutsos; and Lynn Cothorn. Additional support was provided by Thomas Lombardi, Jan Montgomery, and Justin Schnare.

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