THE G8's COUNTERTERRORISM ACTION GROUP: A STOCK-TAKING AND THE NEED FOR REFORM

The Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa, Canada.

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Acronyms

AG	Australia Group
AML	Anti-Money Laundering
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CFT	Countering the Financing of Terrorism
CTAG	Counterterrorism Action Group (G8)
CTC	Counter-Terrorism Committee (UN Security Council)
CTED	Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (UN Security Council)
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FSRB	FATF-Style Regional Bodies
G7	Group of Seven
G8	Group of Eight
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAFTI	Secure and Facilitated International Travel Initiative
SGPP	Strengthening Global Partnership Project
UN	United Nations
WA	Wassenaar Arrangement
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
ZC	Zangger Committee

Executive Summary

Terrorists have proven adept at exploiting gaps to fund, organize, equip and train their recruits, carry out attacks, and avoid arrest. Given the fast-moving nature of the global terrorist threat, the international community's ability to deal with it will only be as strong as its weakest link. Recognizing this, building the political will and capacities of all states to prevent and combat terrorism has remained a major focus of global efforts.

More than eight years after the 11 September 2001 attacks, the need for more effective multilateral coordination and cooperation among the increasing number of counterterrorism donors remains significant. The G8's Counterterrorism Action Group (CTAG) continues to offer the best available opportunity for donors to coordinate their efforts with a view to analyzing and prioritizing capacity needs in third countries and ensuring that limited donor funds and programs are targeting them. In addition, it remains the most appropriate forum for strategic thinking among major donors about engaging in different countries or regions, assessing the effectiveness of capacity-building assistance to date, and fine-tuning approaches going forward.

The CTAG experienced some success during its initial period of work, particularly in building political will and capacities related to the implementation of global anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) measures and travel document standards. However, for reasons that will be elaborated upon below, the CTAG has yet to deliver the results G8 leaders hoped it would when they established it at the 2003 Evian summit. Although some progress has been made in revitalizing the group during the past two years, particularly at the local level, additional reforms are needed for CTAG to serve as an effective counterterrorism capacity-building forum and deliver on the vision outlined by the G8 leaders in 2003.

This paper takes stock of CTAG's efforts to date and identifies a number of reforms, both short and longer-term, which CTAG members should consider adopting to enhance the group's effectiveness. In reviewing CTAG's work over the past six-plus years, this paper enumerates a number of challenges that will need to be addressed in any reform effort. These include:

- The need to increase each CTAG member's level of political and resource commitment to the group's work, with the CTAG meetings having essentially become an afterthought to those of the G8's Lyon-Roma Anti-Crime and Counterterrorism Group.
- The lack of continuity in leadership from year to year due to the CTAG's rotating presidency.
- The significant administrative and organizational burden placed on the CTAG chair delegation, which is exacerbated by the lack of a permanent secretariat.
- The lack of strategic direction from an increasingly reactive CTAG.
- The lack of any established mechanism for storing information or sharing it among the CTAG member countries.
- The absence from CTAG of a number of countries engaged in funding or delivering counterterrorism capacity-building assistance and the lack of any objective criteria for adding new members.
- The need to enhance the linkages between CTAG capitals and the field, inject more local perspectives into its work, and allow recipient countries an opportunity to present their requests for assistance directly to CTAG.
- The lack of transparency in CTAG's work.

This paper then enumerates a number of short- and long-term reforms designed to help CTAG overcome some of these challenges. Among the short-term reform proposals the paper offers are to:

- De-link the CTAG from the Lyon-Roma Group meetings and ensure that CTAG member delegations include an official with counterterrorism capacity-building program responsibilities.
- Appoint a country other than the G8 president as the CTAG chair and extend the chairmanship beyond one-year to allow the chair to devote more attention and resources to steering the CTAG.
- Identify ways in which CTAG members can alleviate the administrative and organizational burdens placed on the chair, including through secondments.
- Establish a mechanism for storing and/or sharing information among CTAG members, including in the field.
- Have the CTAG chair present strategic priorities at the beginning of the term and an assessment of efforts to address them at the end of the term.
- Have individual CTAG countries with experience working with relevant countries or regions contribute actively to CTAG discussions, with a view to helping the wider group better understand how to enter the counterterrorism capacity-building field or enhance ongoing efforts.
- Convene at least one CTAG meeting each year at the regional level. Participants in some or all aspects of the meeting would include: officials from both CTAG capitals and local embassies and officials from recipient countries in the region.
- Create a CTAG website containing information about CTAG achievements and current projects and priorities, which could be maintained on a permanent basis by a CTAG member country.
- Develop transparent criteria for CTAG enlargement and, based on those criteria, invite additional countries to join the group.

The paper argues that the current CTAG structure may not be adequate to overcome the challenges that the group faces in fulfilling its mandate over the longer term. It suggests that a different structure, including one delinked from the G8 as a whole, may be more appropriate. The paper recalls that the G8 (and its predecessors) has spawned a number of initiatives that were subsequently exported outside the narrow forum to attract broader support and enhance their impact.[1] CTAG governance reform therefore should be placed in this broader context. Such efforts should also balance the need to enhance CTAG's long-term effectiveness and viability while ensuring that it remains a nimble, informal grouping of states that is not slowed down by procedures and bureaucracy that can exist in more formal settings.

The paper then identifies three options for governance reform, drawing on other multilateral initiatives launched to enhance international coordination and cooperation in other security-related fields: the G8 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, the various multilateral export control regimes, and the Financial Action Task Force.

Although the paper does not recommend a particular option, it identifies a number of elements in one or more of them, which merit consideration in a discussion of CTAG governance reform. These include:

- Inclusion of a wide range of non-G8 countries.
- Independence from the G8.
- Transparency and public outreach, including through annual and other publicly available reports and a website, and engagement at the regional level.

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[1] This includes what became the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, the FATF, and post-11 September 2001 travel document security standards adopted by ICAO, the International Maritime Organization, and a number of regional organizations. Thus there is ample precedent for cutting the formal ties between CTAG and the G8.

- Ability to attract and sustain high-levels of interest from capitals at both the political and technical levels, including through the creation of expert working groups and information sharing mechanisms.
- Different cost-free and low-cost approaches to ease the organizational and administrative burdens required to sustain these regimes.
- Appointment of a permanent or multi-year chair to help ensure continuity from year to year.

The paper argues that CTAG should embark on a serious reform effort with the goal of showing that the group can make a difference on the ground, in particular by delivering coordinated counterterrorism capacity-building assistance. Any reform of CTAG, however, should preserve the strong relationship that currently exists between group and the United Nations as the latter's "stamp of approval" will remain critical to bestowing an added sense of legitimacy that is crucial to the long-term effectiveness of a reformed CTAG. In addition, given the range of reforms that merit consideration, and in order to maximize the likelihood of a successful reform effort, the paper concludes that CTAG members may wish to adopt a staggered approach to reform, rather than trying to tackle all of the issues at once. Thus, for example, whether and how to enlarge the membership, which is likely to be among the most controversial aspects of the reform discussion, could be addressed separately from (or after there is agreement on) how best to reorganize and revitalize the group.

I. **G8 Objectives and CTAG Mandate**

In the period following the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001), it became clear that many countries would require capacity-building and other forms of technical assistance to implement the myriad of often complex legislative and operational counterterrorism obligations imposed by the council on all UN member states. The council explicitly recognized this in November 2001 when it adopted Resolution 1377 (2001), which acknowledges that "many States will require assistance in implementing all the requirements of resolution 1373," calls on States to "assist each other" in implementing the Resolution, and furthermore "invites the Counter-Terrorism Committee to explore with international, regional and sub regional organizations the promotion of best practice, the availability of existing assistance programmes, and the promotion of possible synergies between different programmes."[2]

With the growing awareness that the international community's ability to deal effectively with terrorism is only as strong as its weakest link, the number of counterterrorism capacity-building activities across all parts of the globe increased dramatically. In addition, the field of bilateral and multilateral actors providing such assistance expanded considerably. As a result, attention focused on the need for effective coordination among donors to ensure that the limited available resources were being used to address priority needs, with a minimum of duplication and overlap.

The G8 established CTAG at the 2003 Evian summit with this goal in mind as well as the need to build political will in third countries to implement Resolution 1373 and, more broadly, to combat and prevent terrorism. The G8 had become increasingly dissatisfied with the slow progress of the UN Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), which does not have the mandate to provide assistance and is often slowed down by its cumbersome procedures and political differences among its members, in trying to stimulate and help coordinate global counterterrorism capacity-building activities during the first two years of the latter's existence.

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[2] UN Security Council Resolution 1377, UN Doc. S/RES/1377 (2001), 12 November 2001.

With CTAG, the G8 hoped to offer the CTC a donor forum in which to share information regarding priority assistance needs related to the implementation of Resolution 1373, with a view to identifying the appropriate donors to address each identified need. More specifically, as outlined at the 2003 Evian summit, CTAG was to a) provide funding, expertise, or training facilities, focusing on areas or countries where its members have expertise; b) review requests for assistance; c) analyze and prioritize needs; d) exchange information on needs assessment missions CTAG members have carried out; e) hold coordination meetings among CTAG member missions in priority countries/regions, involving host government and local officials responsible for capacity building assistance; f) identify cases of successful implementation of counterterrorism capacity-building efforts; g) share best practices and lessons learned; and h) enhance regional approaches to capacity building, including by encouraging regional assistance programs such as through regional and donor-sponsored training centers.[3] In addition, CTAG was to "provide reports bi-annually of current and planned capacity building assistance," which was to be shared with the CTC, and "facilitate[e] joint initiatives by members in some countries."[4]

The G8 agreed at Evian to invite "other states, mainly donors" and the CTC (whose seat was latter taken by its expert body, the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED)) to join the group. In addition to the members of the G8, CTAG now also includes Australia, Spain, and Switzerland, as well as the European Commission. Other UN offices and international and regional bodies have been invited to participate on an ad hoc basis. Neither the G8 nor CTAG developed any formal criteria for expanding the membership beyond the original eight countries.

II. **A CTAG Stock-Taking[5]**

With CTAG in its seventh year of existence and the recent shift from the "global war on terrorism" rhetoric and framework that defined much of the post-11 September 2001 response to the rise in global terrorism, the time is right to take stock of CTAG's efforts to implement the mandate outlined in 2003 and consider what reforms and other steps might be appropriate to enhance its effectiveness going forward.[6]

A. Accomplishments

CTAG experienced some success during the first two years of its work, although within limited aspects of its mandate. For example, in 2004 it worked with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to identify and address gaps in countries' capacities in countering the financing of terrorism. During that year, CTAG and FATF developed a list of priority countries; the FATF undertook technical assistance needs assessments of these countries, and shared them with the CTAG; and CTAG members divvied up responsibility for addressing those needs, seeking to avoid any duplication of effort.

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[3] For a full description of the CTAG mandate, as outlined at the 2003 G8 Evian summit, see "Building International Political Will and Capacity to Combat Terrorism: A G8 Action Plan," July 2003,
http://www.g8.fr/evian/english/navigation/2003_g8_summit/summit_documents/building_international_political_wi ll_and_capacity_to_combat_terrorism_-_a_g8_action_plan.html.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Research for this paper included informal discussions with officials from different CTAG member countries, as well as the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate and other relevant UN entities. In addition, one of the authors worked on CTAG issues, and was a member of the US delegation to CTAG in 2006, while serving at the US Department of State.
[6] Because it does not appear that CTAG ever prepared the bi-annual reports referred to above or any public document that would offer an accounting of CTAG's contributions and has, in fact produced few publicly available documents detailing its work, such a stock-taking risks being incomplete.
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In 2004 and 2005, CTAG facilitated the implementation of the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO's) travel document security standards and practices, some of which were initially developed by the G8 as part of the broader, U.S.-led Secure and Facilitated International Travel Initiative (SAFTI). In addition, working closely with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum's (APEC) Counter-Terrorism Task Force, CTAG focused counterterrorism donor assistance efforts on needs in the APEC region, targeting in particular port and maritime security gaps. It also coordinated donor assistance to help countries in Asia, the Western Balkans, and South America assess and improve airport security.[7]

In addition, fulfilling one of the objectives the G8 set out for CTAG at the 2003 summit, the local embassy of the G8 (and CTAG) presidency has organized coordination meetings among CTAG members' diplomatic missions in recipient countries, involving as appropriate the host government and others as agreed locally by CTAG members. During the past couple of years, these meetings have generally been linked to country visits by CTED. In 2009, for example, under the Italian presidency, some seventeen such meetings have been or will be organized. These meetings have proven to be helpful for connecting officials from the relevant CTAG member embassies and for discussing the local terrorist threat and the relevant country's counterterrorism assistance needs and priorities, the ongoing assistance programs of different CTAG members, and the donors that would take the lead in helping to fill remaining gaps. In some instances, local embassies have budgets for small-scale counterterrorism capacity-building projects, which could be deployed to address a priority need identified by CTED during their country visit.

During the past two years, the CTAG-CTC/CTED relationship has been strengthened and the local CTAG meetings reinvigorated, drawing in part on the successful CTAG-FATF experience. Thus, in advance of each CTAG meeting, CTAG now works with CTED to identify a handful of countries and a region on which to focus. The CTED then presents CTAG representatives in New York with detailed analyses as to the priority needs in those countries/region, as well as tailored, concrete project proposals for CTAG members to consider funding or otherwise supporting. Among the objectives of this New York consultation is to give CTAG member countries sufficient time to consider whether to support any of the projects identified by CTED. The goal is to transform official CTAG meetings into a forum where individual CTAG delegations are prepared to discuss concrete capacity needs in a preselected number of countries and empowered to take decisions to address those needs by committing funds to support one or more of the projects identified by CTED.

The CTAG has proven to be somewhat effective in certain instances in rationalizing the local counterterrorism capacity-building activities of CTAG member countries, reducing redundancies in these efforts, identifying a division of labor among donors to address priority local needs, and opening lines of communication among CTAG member embassies. Overall, however, for reasons that will be discussed, CTAG's overall performance has been uneven, largely failing to meet the goals the G8 set out in its 2003 summit document.

B. Shortcomings

Much of CTAG's success came during its first two years of existence when it focused on countering the financing of terrorism (in cooperation with FATF and the IMF) and travel document security (in cooperation with ICAO), building on the G8's wider SAFTI initiative. CTAG efforts stalled somewhat when it sought to move into other aspects of Resolution 1373, e.g., criminal justice and other law enforcement issues where there was no specialized international organization involved to generate

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[7] US Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2006," Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism 30 April 2007, http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2006/82728.htm.

analysis and identify priorities and projects for CTAG member countries to support. The need for such analysis and gap identification became more pressing as the level of commitment of individual CTAG member countries began to wane. Thus, despite the language in the 2003 summit document stating that CTAG would "analyze and prioritize needs" and "exchange information on needs assessment missions CTAG members have carried out," individual CTAG member countries seemed reluctant to undertake this work themselves, let alone share their analysis or exchange information within the CTAG forum. Rather, with the CTED becoming operational by the end of 2004, CTAG hoped that it would be able to fill this role. Yet, this CTAG-CTED partnership was slow to materialize due to limitations on each side.

For example, it was only in 2008 with the arrival of new leadership in, and the reorganization of, CTED that CTED began to produce rigorous analysis on which CTAG members felt comfortable relying. This, plus the rather rigid information-sharing rules the CTC imposed upon CTED, often left CTAG members without any, let alone reliable needs assessments on which to determine how to allocate assistance.

In addition, there were limitations on the CTAG side that hampered its ability to deliver concrete results over a sustained period of time. These constraints, which continue to exist, included the lack of continuity from year to year due to its rotating presidency. This has been exacerbated by the lack of a permanent secretariat and the significant organizational and administrative burden placed on the CTAG chair delegation, which is saddled with numerous other, more pressing responsibilities from also serving as the chair of the Lyon-Roma group and the President of the G8.

The CTAG experience in trying to maintain its technical assistance matrix offers a vivid example of not only the burden placed on the chair, as well as individual CTAG members, but the challenge in maintaining the necessary information flow among them in such a dynamic and technical field. The matrix was developed in late 2003 to facilitate information sharing within CTAG regarding the different capacity-building and technical assistance programs being undertaken by CTAG members in individual countries. It was organized by recipient country and divided into a handful of themes, based on the different elements in Security Council Resolution 1373. Each CTAG member was responsible for submitting updated information to the chair for inclusion in the matrix. The challenges that each CTAG member faces in gathering updated information on all of the CTAG-related capacity-building and other technical assistance activities being carried out by the different agencies and departments across the government were significant. In addition, there was the additional burden placed on the chair delegation, which needed to integrate this (often incomplete) information, submitted in different formats, with different levels of detail, into the matrix. With chair delegations seemingly unwilling to dedicate the resources required to maintain the matrix as a user-friendly document during the one year before passing it to the next chair, the matrix quickly became a several-hundred page document that suffered from lack of editing, consistency, and reliability and gradually became less and less relevant to the CTAG's work. Partly as a result it became increasingly difficult for CTAG members to exchange information on completed, ongoing, and planned counterterrorism capacity-building initiatives around the globe.

The matrix aside, major counterterrorism donors have tended to be somewhat reluctant to discuss, much less share, information about their priorities and assistance and other ongoing programs with other CTAG members, which has impeded information sharing and wider coordination efforts. This has also made it difficult for CTED to get a complete picture of ongoing and planned capacity-building activities, which has complicated its efforts to assess gaps and identify priority needs.

With G8 members seemingly unable or unwilling to invest the resources necessary to sustain CTAG's work from year to year, a number of the products that the G8 envisaged CTAG producing, in particular bi-annual reports of current and planned capacity building assistance, do not seem to have materialized. This, coupled with the broader lack of transparency in CTAG's work (even when compared to other G8-

led activities) has impeded the effectiveness of the group's work. CTAG, for example, does not have a website or a link on the G8 presidency's site containing information about current CTAG projects and priorities. Nor has it followed the useful precedent established by another G8-led group involved in transnational security-related capacity-building coordination – the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction – which produces an annual, publicly accessible report on its work. All of this has reinforced the perception that exists, in particular among countries in the global South, i.e., the very ones that group is supposed to be benefiting, that CTAG is a secretive, exclusive club.

This perception is only further reinforced by the fact that CTAG does not include all of the countries engaged in funding or delivering counterterrorism capacity-building assistance. For example, Denmark, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden are not members of the group, although some of these countries are now being invited to participate in local CTAG meetings. In addition, this perception is further exacerbated by the fact that the G8 never developed transparent criteria for enlargement of the group beyond the original eight member countries. Consideration could therefore be given to developing such criteria, of which generosity in funding or delivering counterterrorism capacity-building assistance in third countries should not be the only one. On that basis a number of additional countries could then be invited to join CTAG. The inclusion of additional donors might inject more energy and resources into CTAG activities and put CTAG in a better position to deliver more concrete results on the ground. Of course, as with the expansion of the membership in any exclusive multilateral body, there is the risk that adding new CTAG members might slow down even further the decision-making process within the group and make existing members more reluctant to share information with the larger group. The risk would be mitigated, however, if expansion were to be limited to "like-minded" countries.

Although CTAG includes many of the most active counterterrorism donors, the forum has been used almost exclusively as a place where individual countries decide to fund or otherwise support different pieces of projects proposed by CTED. It has yet to be used to "facilitate[e] joint initiatives in some countries"[8] as envisaged in the 2003 summit document and there has been no pooling of donor funds. As a result, the group has yet to serve as a force multiplier. Further, CTAG member countries have never been asked to pledge a minimum amount of funds for CTAG projects. Moreover, too often CTAG representatives have not been empowered to make funding decisions at the CTAG meetings, which have more often than not concluded with few commitments being made. As a result, CTED is gradually losing credibility within the recipient community when it promises to pass along project proposals to CTAG for funding, but rarely receives any firm commitments from CTAG when it presents them for consideration, although there have been some recent improvements in this area.[9]

Over time, partly as a result of the above shortcomings, CTAG member countries devoted less and less attention to CTAG and it increasingly became an afterthought to the G8's Lyon-Roma Anti-Crime and Counterterrorism Group meetings. As a result, starting in 2007, the annual schedule of meetings was reduced from a full-day meeting following each of the three yearly Lyon-Roma meetings to a half-day meeting twice a year, which allowed little time for substantive discussions. In addition, and perhaps more significantly, the new schedule made it more difficult to attract those officials responsible for coordinating national counterterrorism capacity-building efforts to attend the meetings. In some instances, G8 countries started designating the head of delegation to the Lyon-Roma work, i.e., officials with often few if any links with those involved in counterterrorism programming in capitals, to fill their CTAG seat. The non-G8 member countries increasingly began sending representatives from their local embassies rather than flying in someone from capital for what had now been reduced to a four-to-five hour meeting.

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[8] Ibid.
[9] This is in contrast to the European Union's Second Pillar Counter-Terrorism Working Group (COTER), which has a fund, through the European Commission's Instrument for Stability, to support projects that CTED recommends.

With decreasing levels of interest in CTAG, the group has found itself relying increasingly on CTED's analysis and assessments, which have become the main source of information for CTAG deliberations. This is in contrast with the vision for CTAG outlined in the 2003 summit document, which foresees individual CTAG members sharing information on needs assessment missions and CTAG itself analyzing needs and priorities and reviewing requests for assistance, and more generally assuming a more strategic and proactive role.

One of the keys to long-term CTAG success is further strengthening the partnership with an effective CTED, which in turn needs to continue to improve its analytical capacities and make specific, tailored recommendations regarding assistance priorities. In doing so, however, CTAG should be mindful of the need not to rely exclusively on CTED and invite other multilateral actors, in particular regional bodies, to present their analysis, assessments, and ideas on how best to fill capacity gaps. Perhaps more importantly, CTAG needs to develop into a more strategic, forward-looking forum where the group not only looks at ongoing initiatives to make sure individual CTAG members are not stepping on each others' toes and whether to fund projects developed by CTED (and other multilateral bodies, including regional organizations), but considers how best to engage in different countries or regions CTAG identifies as priorities. Thus, for example, CTAG meetings should include a serious discussion of country and regional needs to which CTED is but one contributor. Individual CTAG countries with experience working with the relevant country or region should also contribute actively to the discussion, with a view to helping the wider group better understand how to enter the counterterrorism capacity-building field or enhance ongoing efforts.

In this context, CTAG's increased focus on convening CTAG members at the country level is a promising development as these local CTAG meetings can in theory help inform discussions at the "global" level (i.e., CTAG plenary). However, these meetings suffer from many of the same problems that the CTAG plenary does, i.e., resource limitations of the current chair, lack of preparedness to share information, and limited continuity in the group. Thus, more attention should be given to enhancing their effectiveness and strengthening the links between the "local" and "global" CTAG discussions. This could involve CTAG capitals ensuring that local CTAG members have the necessary understanding of the breadth of counterterrorism assistance programs being delivered in-country, often by a range of donor government agencies, and the necessary background information in advance of in-country meetings to allow for an informed discussion. Finally, at least one of the CTAG "global" meetings could be convened at the regional level. This could presumably be in (or one of) the region(s) which CTAG determines to be its priority for the year and would introduce some strategic direction into its work, enhance the linkages between CTAG capitals and the field, inject more local perspectives, and allow the countries in the region (i.e., the recipient countries) to present their requests for assistance directly to CTAG (as envisioned in the 2003 summit document).

Although in some instances the local CTAG meetings have been chaired by a CTAG member other than the president, much of the responsibility for organizing those meetings falls on the already overburdened chair delegation. Because of the annual rotating chair, lack of any established mechanism for storing information or sharing it among the CTAG member countries, and regular turnover among local CTAG embassy officials, it has proven difficult to sustain the "local" CTAG processes from year to year, with each new president seemingly starting from scratch rather than building on the work carried out during the previous year. To help ease the burden on the chair and ensure continuity and sustained CTAG interest in the field consideration could be given to having CTAG member countries with the strongest interest in particular countries or regions organize local or regional CTAGs meetings on a permanent basis.

With the CTAG chair relieved of some of the administrative burdens that currently come with the presidency, it would have more time to invest in the strategic aspect of the group's work. This might include using CTAG as a forum to ensure that approaches to counterterrorism capacity-building evolve with the terrorist threat and strategies for addressing it. For example, despite CTAG being originally established to deal with the narrow set of "counterterrorism" issues within the scope of Security Council Resolution 1373, there is increasing recognition of the need to improve coordination of capacity-building efforts to reduce social, political, and economic marginalization as well as other conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism as enumerated in the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy of September 2006.

Furthermore, there is growing awareness of the interlocking nature of different global security threats, including terrorism, and thus the need to design capacity-building and other programs that seek to address them in a more holistic manner. There is also awareness that the same set of institutional weaknesses leave states vulnerable to a wide range of transnational illicit activity. Many of the tools needed to address these challenges are the same, whether it be properly secured borders and export controls, rigorous legislation and regulations, properly trained police, prosecutors, judges and other law enforcement and criminal justice officials, and a coordinated interagency response at the national level. Yet, still too often the international community's response has failed to adequately reflect these connections at the operational level, with bilateral and multilateral donors tending to fund separate projects to address inter-linked issues such as transnational organized crime, security sector reform, rule of law, terrorism, and WMD and small arms and light weapons proliferation.

Therefore, new thinking may be needed to move towards the development of a horizontally integrated approach to transnational security capacity-building among donor countries. An objective could be to generate more integrated assessments of the institutional capacity-building needs of weak, failing, and failed states, which reflect the priorities of those states. With all CTAG member countries funding or delivering capacity-building assistance in a number of the above-mentioned fields and needing to do more with less money as a result of the global economic crisis, CTAG would seem like a logical forum in which to begin a discussion on this subject.

III. **Options for Reform**

Despite all of CTAG's shortcomings, which have led to its uneven performance during its more than six years of operation, it still offers the best opportunity for enhanced coordination of counterterrorism assistance. The above section identified a number of issues that could usefully be addressed in considering whether and how best to reform CTAG. What follows are a number of reforms that CTAG could consider to address these issues.

A. Short-Term

   1. Enhance each CTAG member country's level of political and resource commitment to the group's work, including by:

      a. Ensuring that CTAG member delegations include an official with counterterrorism capacity-building program responsibilities and are empowered to take decisions at CTAG meetings;

      b. De-linking CTAG from the Lyon-Roma Group meetings so that CTAG no longer meets immediately following the two-day Lyon-Roma meeting;

c. Restoring CTAG meetings to their original full-day length and considering adding an extra day to allow, *inter alia,* for presentations by recipient countries, where appropriate.

d. Showing greater willingness to share pertinent information about relevant or ongoing or planned activities and to explore possible joint initiatives with CTAG colleagues;

e. Pledging a minimum amount of funds annually or bi-annually for CTAG projects;

f. Exploring the possibilities for financing and otherwise supporting joint projects with other CTAG members, as envisioned in the 2003 summit document; and

g. Considering cost-neutral ways to reinforce the secretariat capacity of the chair, including through secondments from other CTAG members; consideration could also be given to identifying one CTAG member to serve as a semi-permanent secretariat.

2. Extend the CTAG chair beyond one year and have the chair be from a country other than the one holding the G8 presidency to allow the chair to devote more attention and resources to steering CTAG, to raise the profile of and build wider support for the group, and to facilitate longer-term CTAG strategic planning.

   a. Have the incoming CTAG chair be the outgoing G8 president, i.e., after the latter has passed on its wider responsibilities and is now fully informed of the broader G8 context from the experience the previous year; and/or

   b. Appoint the next CTAG chair to serve as the CTAG vice-chair to assist the chair with organizational and administrative aspects of CTAG's work and prepare for the presidency.

3. CTAG, under the direction of the chair, should identify its priorities for the year and undertake an end-of-term assessment on progress made in addressing them.

4. Establish a mechanism for storing and/or sharing information among the CTAG members in order to improve the information flow among them and between "local" and "global" CTAG meetings.

5. CTAG member countries with the strongest interest in particular countries or regions should organize local or regional CTAG meetings on a permanent basis (or for three-to-five year periods) in order to help ensure continuity and sustained CTAG interest in the field and set up a donor coordination group involving other partners in the relevant region.

6. CTAG should become more proactive and strategic, including by focusing not only on rationalizing ongoing initiatives of its members and whether to fund projects developed by CTED, which should continue to remain actively engaged with CTAG, but on how best to engage in different countries or regions CTAG identifies as priorities.

   a. Individual CTAG countries with experience working with the relevant country or region should also contribute actively to the discussion, with a view to helping the wider group better understand how to enter the counterterrorism capacity-building field or enhance ongoing efforts.

b. Use CTAG as a forum to ensure that approaches to counterterrorism capacity-building evolve with the terrorist threat and strategies for addressing it.

7. Convene one annual meeting in the capital of the CTAG president followed by two meetings at the regional/subregional level (or one in New York). Representatives from both CTAG capitals and local embassies (or missions) could participate in the latter ones, which could also include representatives from the countries in the relevant region/subregion, as well as any relevant regional/subregional organization.

a. This could be part of an effort to inject some strategic direction and local perspectives into CTAG's work, enhance the linkages between CTAG capitals and the field, and allow the countries in the region (i.e., the recipient countries) to present their requests for assistance directly to CTAG (as envisioned in the 2003 summit document).

8. Enhance the transparency of CTAG's work, including by:

a. Creating a CTAG website or a link on the G8 presidency's site containing information about current CTAG projects and priorities. This website could also have a password-protected feature to allow for the sharing of confidential documents among CTAG members. A CTAG member country could offer to maintain this website on a permanent basis.

b. Producing an annual (or bi-annual), publicly accessible report on its work, following the model of the G8's Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

c. Reaching out to and involving regional bodies and nongovernment organizations (NGOs), which are often engaged in counterterrorism capacity-building activities.

9. Develop transparent criteria for CTAG enlargement, with generosity in funding or delivering counterterrorism capacity-building assistance in third countries, including in coordination with the CTAG process, being the primary but not exclusive criterion.

a. Invite additional countries to join CTAG based on these criteria.

B.   **Longer Term**: In the longer-term CTAG members should consider whether the current CTAG structure is the most appropriate one for fulfilling its mandate or whether a different one, including one delinked from the G8 as a whole, is more appropriate. In this context, one should recall that the G8 (or its predecessors), including through its Lyon-Roma and other working groups, has developed a number of initiatives that it subsequently exported outside the narrow G8 context to attract broader support in more inclusive fora.

The following identifies some long-term options for CTAG governance reform that draw on the numerous models created to enhance international coordination and cooperation in other security-related fields.[10] In considering these models, one should keep in mind the importance of both enhancing the CTAG's long-

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[10] These include the Global Initiative against Nuclear Terrorism, the Financial Action Task Force, the Egmont Group, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Wassenaar Arrangement, and the Proliferation Security Initiative.

term effectiveness and viability, while ensuring that it remains a nimble, informal grouping of states that is not slowed down by the procedures and bureaucracy that can exist in more formal settings.

1. **G8 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction Model:** This was launched by G8 leaders at the 2002 summit to improve coordination of the growing number of different international non-proliferation assistance and threat reduction programs that existed in the former Soviet Union. The idea was to reduce program redundancy by holding coordination meetings on the Global Partnership regularly throughout the year. Since 2002, the Global Partnership has been expanded to include fourteen non-G8 donors,[11] including the European Union, based on guidelines agreed at the 2002 summit. The original members pledged $20 billion over 10 years ($10 billion by the U.S. and $10 billion by the others).

Although not a formal organization and lacking a permanent secretariat, the coordination mechanism it has established involving senior experts from capitals has helped ensure some continuity during the rotating G8 presidency. Those experts exchange information on plans for Global Partnership projects, seek to avoid program redundancy, and discuss implementation challenges. Further, this Global Partnership Working Group produces a comprehensive report and charts that offer an account of pledges and the project areas to which they are allocated, which helps increase public awareness of its work and the threats it is seeking to address. In 2007, the working group conducted a mid-term assessment of the initiative "in order to provide a clear picture of what remains to be done…[and] help clarify how each country can best define its participation, and how each can benefit from the expertise developed,"[12] which was also made available to the public. This transparency has made it possible to avoid some of the criticism that has been leveled at other G8 initiatives.

Another feature of the Global Partnership's work that has enhanced its transparency was its outreach to nongovernment organizations through the Strengthening Global Partnership project (SGPP), a consortium of twenty-four research institutes around the world working to build political and financial support for the partnership.[13] Before concluding its work in January 2008, the SGPP produced a number of reports, including a 2003 study recommending threat reduction priorities for the future and a 2006 critical assessment of the progress being made by the Global Partnership, and also sponsored a range of outreach and awareness activities.[14] This constructive, organized engagement between governments and NGOs from different regions was critical to raising public awareness of the threat and building public support for government responses to address it.

There are a number of elements in Global Partnership model that may be relevant to a discussion of CTAG governance reform. These include:

- Its stand-alone nature within the G8 framework; although still part of the G8, the Global Partnership is not linked to another, more active G8 process like the CTAG currently is.
- The existence of guidelines for adding new members.
- The inclusion of a wide range of non-G8 donors.
- The establishment of a coordination mechanism involving senior experts to ensure regular exchange of information and best practices among members throughout the year.
- The production of a publicly available annual report.

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[11] The non G8 countries are: Australia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland.
[12] "Report on the G8 global partnership," St.Petersburg, 16 July 2006, http://en.g8russia.ru/docs/22.html
[13] For more information on the SGPP see www.sgpproject.org.
[14] Ibid.

- The preparation of a publicly available, "mid-term" report assessing its performance and identifying ways in which it could be enhanced going forward.
- The need for countries to make a financial pledge to fund projects through the group as a condition for joining.
- Its outreach to NGOs, through the SGPP, to help raise awareness about its work and the threat it was established to help address.

2. **The "Export Control Regime" Model**: A number of export control regimes, such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Australia Group (AG), the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), and the Zangger Committee (ZC) have been created to promote cooperation and develop standards among like-minded states in discrete, technical fields, and have succeeded in establishing various export control guidelines and standards. These regimes were established by a mutually agreed document of generally self-selected founding member states. This document generally established criteria for membership, provided for members to decide whether candidate countries should be admitted as new members, and outlined the mandate of the body. Membership typically ranges between 30-40 states, with the chair usually rotating among members on an annual basis. Two notable exceptions are the AG, where Australia serves as the permanent, informal chair and the ZC, where Mr. Pavel Klucký of the Czech Republic has held the chair since 2006.

Each group maintains a public website containing information about its mandate, membership, history, point of contact, outreach efforts, publications, and/or projects. These websites are often maintained on a permanent basis by one of the member countries. With the exception of the WA, which has a small permanent secretariat of 13 persons and annual budget of approximately EUR 1.6 million,[15] which is financed by assessed contributions against its members, the other regimes rely on their member states to carry out all aspects of the group's mandate. In some instances, one member has agreed to assume the lion's share of the responsibility on a permanent basis. For example, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade functions as the informal chair and secretariat of the AG, performing the administrative, coordinating, and convening functions. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the rotating chair of the MTCR perform the logistical, outreach, and coordinating functions for this regime and its annual plenary meetings.

Perhaps because it has the benefit of a small permanent secretariat in Vienna, the participating states in the WA have carried out three assessments of the functions of the regime, most recently in 2007. In addition, the WA plenary has established a number of subgroups to focus on discrete technical issues, which meet regularly in between the annual plenary. In addition to providing support to the meetings of the plenary and its subgroups, the WA secretariat assists the participating states with their information exchange process, maintains the WA's secure computer system that allows participating states to share information, and prepares for outreach activities and contacts with other relevant multilateral fora.[16]

There are a number of elements in the different permutations of the export control regime model that may be relevant to a discussion of CTAG governance reform. These include:

- The selective and self-standing nature of each of the regimes, with no link to the G8 or any other group.

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[15] E-mail correspondence with WA Secretariat, 22 October 2009.
[16] Ambassador Sune Danielsson, "Basic Information on the Wassenaar Arrangement," in *Wassanaar Arrangement: Export Control and Its Role in Strengthening International Security,* Dorothea Auer, ed., Favorita Papers 01/2005, http://www.wassenaar.org/links/Favorita_Paper.pdf, p.10

- The enhanced legitimacy when compared with a G8 group; although most regimes were established as a result of Western initiatives, many by the G8 (or its predecessors), membership has expanded to include a number of non-Western countries.
- The ability to attract sustained attention from experts in capitals, including through:
  - The establishment of technical working groups to help enhance information exchange and working-level networks among experts in capitals and sustain the momentum between the annual or semi-annual plenaries.
  - The creation and maintenance of a secure computer system that allows experts in capitals to share information.
- The existence of transparent criteria for admitting new members.
- The different low-cost or cost-free approaches used to fulfill the organizational and administrative burdens that come with sustaining such a regime; this includes having one member country serve as the secretariat on a permanent basis and creating a small permanent secretariat financed by the members of the regime.
- The different approaches used to overcome problems, such as lack of continuity, generated by having the chair rotate on an annual basis, including the appointment of an informal, permanent chair (AG) or multi-year chair (ZC).
- The maintenance of a public website with regularly updated information about different aspects of the group's work.

3.   **The Financial Action Task Force Model**: Established by the G7 Summit in 1989, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body aimed at developing and promoting policies, both at the national and global levels, to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, and, more recently, proliferation financing. Starting with its own members, FATF monitors countries' progress in implementing AML/CFT measures; reviews money laundering and terrorist financing techniques and counter-measures; and, promotes the adoption and implementation of its 40 Recommendations on Money Laundering and 9 Special Recommendations on Terrorist Financing (40+9 Recommendations).

FATF membership has expanded considerably from its original seven members, and currently comprises thirty-three member jurisdictions and two regional organizations. FATF delegations, which are generally headed by senior national finance ministry officials, often include experts in financial, regulatory, legal and law enforcement matters. FATF has developed strong partnerships with regional and international organizations, in particular the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and the eight FATF-style regional bodies (FSRBs). The latter bring together, on a regional basis, jurisdictions that have committed to implementing the 40+9 Recommendations and have agreed to undergo mutual evaluations of their AML/CFT systems. The FSRBs, which interact regularly with FATF, have succeeded in placing the FATF standards in the appropriate regional and cultural context and therefore building political support for the global standards set by FATF.

Most of FATF's work is carried out by government officials and the FATF Secretariat, but there is frequent and increasing involvement of private sector representatives. FATF has also established four working groups, which are driven by experts from capitals and which work on specific tasks from the identification of new threats to the evaluation of the implementation of AML/CFT systems.[17]

The 18-person secretariat is housed at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) headquarters in Paris, but is independent from that organization.[18] It includes experts in legal,

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[17] The working groups have also established project teams to examine relevant topics in detail.
[18] Financial Task Force Annual Report, 2008-2009, http://www.fatf-gafi.org/dataoecd/11/58/43384540.pdf.

law enforcement, and regulatory issues as well as support staff. The cost of the secretariat – its current annual budget is some $2.8 million – is met entirely by the FATF budget, which is provided by its members on an annual basis and in accordance with the scale of contributions to the OECD. Among other things, it organizes the various Plenary and Working Group meetings and provides support to the President (elected for a one-year term) and FATF delegations. The secretariat prepares and produces policy papers discussed in Working Groups and/or the Plenary, organizes and participates in mutual evaluation missions and produces the related assessment reports. It also manages the FATF website, which contains extensive information on different aspects of the group's work and, and produces the annual FATF report, which provides an overview of the work carried out and key outcomes that have been achieved by FATF during the year.

FATF has also made a new electronic information service, FATFNet, available to its delegates. This service, which became fully operational during 2008-2009, provides a more efficient and secure method of disseminating FATF documents and meeting information.

Since its establishment, FATF has operated under a fixed-term mandate, requiring a specific decision of the Task Force to continue. The current mandate of FATF (for 2004-2012) was subject to a mid-term review in 2007-2008 and was reaffirmed and revised at a Ministerial meeting in April 2008.[19]

There are a number of elements in the FATF model that may be relevant to a discussion of CTAG governance reform. These include:

- The fact that it was a G7 creation that has flourished and remained a nimble, low-cost operation since moving out from under the umbrella of the now G8.
- Its ability to remain an informal group, but benefit considerably from a low-cost, permanent secretariat housed in, but independent from, an international organization.
- Its ability to sustain high-levels of interest from capitals at both the political and technical levels.
- Its creation of working groups to focus on specific technical issues, which have served as a means of involving a wide-range of national experts in the work of FATF.
- Its emphasis on transparency and engagement at the regional level, in particular through the FSRBs, which have helped build political support from non-FATF members for the implementation of FATF standards and minimize the perception that FATF is a "Western" club. There are a number of best practices in the FATF-FSRB context that could be applied to efforts both to enhance the effectiveness of the "local" CTAGs and the relationship between them and the "global" CTAG.
- Its emphasis on outreach to the private sector.
- The existence of transparent criteria for admitting new members.
- The maintenance of a public website with regularly updated information about different aspects of the group's work.
- The creation and maintenance of a secure computer system that allows experts in capitals to share information.
- Its operation under a fixed-term mandate that is subject to a mid-term review.
- The periodic review and adjustment of its mandate to ensure the group is keeping up with the evolving threat.
- The fact that it conducts its own implementation and needs assessments, often in cooperation with the relevant FSRB, thus obviating the need to rely heavily on another body's analysis.

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[19] Ibid.

IV. Conclusion

Despite its uneven performance to date, CTAG continues to offer the best opportunity for counterterrorism donors to coordinate their efforts with a view to analyzing and prioritizing capacity needs in third countries, ensuring that limited donor funds and programs are targeting them, and thinking strategically about how best to build political will and capacities in these countries and regions. However, a number of reforms are needed to make the best use of this mechanism and deliver on the vision outlined by G8 leaders in 2003. This paper highlighted how efforts are needed to overcome the challenges that have limited CTAG's impact and to allow it to become an effective capacity-building forum over the long-term. These challenges include wavering political and resource commitment from CTAG member countries, its lack of strategic direction and continuity from year to year, its generally unhelpful linkages to the Lyon-Roma group and the wider G8, the limited local perspectives reflected in its work, the lack of an established information sharing or storage mechanism, and the absence of a number of active counterterrorism donors from the group.

None of these challenges are insurmountable and this paper has offered a number of steps that individual CTAG members and CTAG as a whole could take to help overcome them. These reforms touch upon a range of issues including the group's mandate, composition, conduct of its business, resource level, work products, engagement with external partners including in the field, and structure. This paper concludes that any serious effort at comprehensive CTAG reform needs to consider carefully whether the current CTAG structure is the most appropriate for fulfilling the group's mandate or whether a structure delinked from the Lyon-Roma group or even completely separate from the G8 as a whole may be more suitable. In addition, regardless of the extent of any reform of CTAG, the strong relationship that currently exists between group and the United Nations (principally through CTED) should be preserved, as the latter's "stamp of approval" will remain critical to bestowing the added sense of legitimacy that is critical to the long-term effectiveness of a reformed CTAG. Given the range of reforms that merit consideration, and to maximize the likelihood of a successful reform effort, the paper concludes that CTAG members may wish to adopt a staggered approach to reform, rather than trying to tackle all of the issues at once. Thus, for example, whether and how to enlarge the membership, which is likely to be among the most controversial aspects of the reform discussion, could be addressed separately from (or after there is agreement on) how best to reorganize and revitalize the group.