

Blue Sky II

Progress and Opportunities in Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy



BY NAUREEN CHOWDHURY FINK, PETER ROMANIUK, ALISTAIR MILLAR AND JASON IPE

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Blue Sky II

Progress and Opportunities in Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

THE PURPOSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS ARE:

1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace....

– Charter of the United Nations, art. 1

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The authors take full responsibility for the analyses presented here and for any errors of fact or interpretation that may exist in this report.

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ACRONYMS

CGCC	Center for Global Counterterrorism Cooperation
CTC	Counter-Terrorism Committee (UN Security Council)
CTED	Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UN Security Council)
CTITF	UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force
CVE	Countering violent extremism
DIS	Detailed implementation survey
DPA	UN Department of Political Affairs
DPI	UN Department of Public Information
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
GCTF	Global Counterterrorism Forum
I-ACT	Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIA	Overview of implementation assessment
PIA	Preliminary implementation assessment
TPB	Terrorism Prevention Branch (UN Office on Drugs and Crime)
UN	United Nations
UNCCT	UN Counter-Terrorism Centre
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Terrorism today remains a threat to international peace and security, but the threat is increasingly unpredictable, diffuse, and associated with broader criminal or conflict dynamics. In responding to this evolving threat, the signature achievement of the United Nations has been to elaborate principles and norms to inform counterterrorism measures at the international, regional, and national levels. In particular, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted by the General Assembly in 2006, offers a multidimensional response that addresses the structural conditions that are conducive to the spread of terrorism, the need to deny terrorist groups financial and political support, measures to build state capacities to prevent and suppress terrorism, and the preservation of human rights and the rule of law while countering terrorism.

The United Nations has sought to advance these norms through a range of projects facilitated or undertaken by various members of the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), which encapsulates in theory and design the “One UN” ideal. Yet, a range of persistent challenges hamper the progression from the development of norms to the implementation of those norms. Debates about the roles of the various counterterrorism actors continue, and coordination among them remains inadequate. Moreover, UN counterterrorism-related activities have evolved largely insulated from the broader work of the organization on peace, security, and development. This lack of cohesion and coordination has rendered the world body less relevant in the field than it could be.

Recent changes in the global counterterrorism landscape include an increasing normative and policy emphasis on terrorism prevention and countering violent extremism and the emergence of new institutions, including the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre. These and related changes, which include a growing appreciation of the link between security and development, underscore the United Nations’ comparative advantages as a counterterrorism actor and the advantages of the Strategy as a framework for advancing a balanced and multidimensional response. The United Nations has an opportunity to be a strategic leader on counterterrorism issues, reaffirming the foundational values of the UN Charter, acting to prevent conflict through dialogue and development, and delegitimizing extremist narratives.

With regard to upcoming milestones, including the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and the 10th anniversary of the Strategy’s adoption in 2016, we offer a series of recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the UN counterterrorism program. These include

- measures to improve internal coordination and coherence among UN headquarters, field offices, and member state capitals;
- measures to enhance strategic communication within the United Nations and with external partners;
- measures to foster more-integrated responses among members of the CTITF and their partners; and
- measures to strengthen engagement with UN field and regional offices.

1. INTRODUCTION

For most of the United Nations' history, fundamental divisions on counterterrorism issues limited cooperation among member states. By contrast, over the course of the last decade or more, UN decision-making organs and specialized agencies have developed a broad counterterrorism agenda, comprising a range of normative commitments and programmatic activities. Among these, the adoption by consensus of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly in 2006 is uniformly acknowledged as a watershed moment.

The Strategy reflects a broad consensus among UN member states and, across its four pillars, manifests a balanced approach to counterterrorism efforts. It combines robust operational measures to prevent and combat terrorism with “soft power” tools to address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism while also affirming the centrality of human rights and the rule of law in the effort to suppress terrorism. Through an innovative institutional mechanism of 31 entities across a range of UN policy areas—the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF)—the Strategy holds the promise of delivering on the “One UN” credo.

These attributes of the Strategy have led member states to reaffirm their support for it following biennial reviews in 2008, 2010, and 2012¹ and in such high-profile events as the “Secretary-General’s Symposium on International Counter-Terrorism Cooperation” in 2011 and the “International Counter-Terrorism Focal Points Conference on Addressing Conditions Conducive to the Spread of Terrorism and Regional Cooperation” in 2013. On the occasion of the most recent biennial review, the General Assembly affirmed the “importance of the integrated and balanced implementation of all pillars of the Strategy, recognizing the importance of redoubling efforts for even attention to and implementation of all the pillars of the Strategy.”² Also, it requested that the Secretary-General “submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, no later than April 2014, a report on progress made in the implementation of the Strategy, which could contain suggestions for its future implementation by the United Nations system.”³

1. What is the status of the UN counterterrorism program today?
2. What steps can be taken to advance the United Nations’ counterterrorism role, especially through implementation of the Strategy?

1 UN General Assembly, *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Activities of the United Nations System in Implementing the Strategy; Report of the Secretary-General*, A/62/898, 7 July 2008 (hereinafter Secretary-General report on 2008 Strategy review); UN General Assembly, *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Activities of the United Nations System in Implementing the Strategy; Report of the Secretary-General*, A/64/818, 17 June 2010 (hereinafter Secretary-General report on 2010 Strategy review); UN General Assembly, *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Activities of the United Nations System in Implementing the Strategy; Report of the Secretary-General*, A/66/762, 4 April 2012 (hereinafter Secretary-General report on 2012 Strategy review).

2 UN General Assembly, *The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review*, A/RES/66/282, 12 July 2012, para. 6.

3 *Ibid.*, para. 28.

Our response to these questions is based on research, stakeholder interviews, replies to a web-based survey, and detailed feedback from shared preliminary drafts of this report and two focus group sessions, in September 2013 and February 2014.

On this basis, our assessment of the UN counterterrorism program today is mixed. The normative framework for counterterrorism efforts elaborated through the United Nations is noteworthy for its content, comprising a genuinely balanced approach to prevent and counter terrorism, and for the consensus it reflects and promotes. UN counterterrorism bodies have made some progress in disseminating these norms. Their impact at regional and national levels is reflected in requests for technical assistance channeled through the United Nations and in member states' enthusiasm in supporting UN counterterrorism activities at headquarters and in the field.

Nevertheless, we identify a significant but familiar challenge for the United Nations. Generally, the United Nations has been more effective at norm development rather than norm implementation, where a range of political, bureaucratic, and operational factors tend to inhibit action. The difficulty of coordinating the activities of the various UN entities that are engaged in the broader range of counterterrorism efforts has been particularly persistent. Yet, with a renewed commitment among stakeholders, well-known barriers to effectiveness can be diminished. For example, the contemporary emphases on terrorism prevention and capacity building, which are increasingly prevalent at the national and regional levels, underscore the importance of the Strategy, which provides a vehicle to integrate counterterrorism standards with other evolving, security-related, multilateral norms pertain-

ing to the rule of law, preventive diplomacy, and the security-development link. The emergence of the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) and the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)—the latter is not part of the United Nations but is dedicated to building capacity that supports Strategy implementation—similarly reinforces the value of the United Nations' inclusive and balanced approach and underscores the important role it can play as a strategic leader and facilitator and provider of assistance for member states. For example, the GCTF has tried deliberately to acknowledge and reaffirm the norms established through the United Nations and to involve the United Nations in GCTF activities, thereby advancing the Strategy's aims.

This report argues for new working methods, rather than wholesale changes, to render the existing UN counterterrorism architecture more effective. In past reports on this topic in 2010 and 2012, the Global Center on Cooperative Security has floated ideas for significant organizational changes among UN counterterrorism bodies.⁴ The Global Center's most recent report, "Reshaping United Nations Counterterrorism Efforts: Blue-Sky Thinking for Global Counterterrorism Cooperation 10 Years After 9/11," examined UN achievements on counterterrorism issues over the last decade. Since that time, the debate has moved along. New leadership in the UN Secretariat and Security Council and new resources provide opportunities to utilize existing structures more effectively and bring UN counterterrorism work closer to its broader security and development efforts. Through their consistent support for the Strategy, member states clearly intend for the United Nations—a principle-driven, consensus-based actor founded to prevent threats to peace in a manner consistent with principles of justice—to shepherd the global counterterrorism effort. In short, the

4 James Cockayne et al., "Reshaping United Nations Counterterrorism Efforts: Blue-Sky Thinking for Global Counterterrorism Cooperation 10 Years After 9/11," Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation (CGCC), April 2012, http://www.globalct.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Reshaping_UNCTEfforts_Blue-Sky-Thinking.pdf; James Cockayne, Alistair Millar, and Jason Ipe, "An Opportunity for Renewal: Revitalizing the United Nations Counterterrorism Program," CGCC, September 2010, http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Opportunity_for_Renewal_Final.pdf. The "Blue-Sky Thinking" report was released under the previous name of our organization, the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation. We changed our name to the Global Center on Cooperative Security in March 2014. For more information about the name change, see <http://globalcenter.org>.

global counterterrorism environment has evolved in a way that is favorable to the United Nations and underscores the importance of the Strategy.

We perceive a unique opportunity for the United Nations to realize its potential as a strategic leader on counterterrorism efforts and offer some general and specific recommendations for doing so. We are mindful of upcoming milestones that may be leveraged for this purpose. For example, the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda presents a good opportunity to underscore the need for multidimensional responses to terrorism as part of the effort to promote peace and security as a basis for achieving Sustainable Development Goals.⁵ Importantly, 2016 will be the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Strategy. At that time, stakeholders will no doubt be eager to reflect on the achievements that the United Nations has gained and the challenges that it has faced in advancing the Strategy's goals, with a view to charting the future course of UN counterter-

rorism efforts. We have endeavored to anticipate these concerns in crafting our recommendations.

The next section updates the account of the United Nations' performance on counterterrorism issues in light of its comparative institutional advantages. Section 3 describes the changes in the global counterterrorism environment that provide an opportunity for the United Nations to meet the demand for strategic leadership in the global counterterrorism effort. Section 4 explores ways of enhancing the reporting process that precedes the biennial review of the Strategy and is encapsulated in the Secretary-General's report on Strategy implementation. Section 5 presents a set of recommendations for the United Nations and member states to enhance UN counterterrorism capacities and reaffirm the values of the Charter through internal coordination, responsive programming, improved reporting, and strategic communication.

5 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Sustainable Development Goals," n.d., <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1300>.

2. LOOKING BACK OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS: HOW HAS THE UNITED NATIONS FARED?

Our 2012 “Blue-Sky Thinking” report offered an expansive review of the UN counterterrorism program in the first decade after the 9/11 attacks and passage of Security Council Resolution 1373.⁶ That report identified four key comparative advantages that the United Nations possesses in the counterterrorism field: as a strategic leader, including a role as a norm-setter; as a convener; as a capacity builder and facilitator of capacity building; and as a global monitor. It included the following core recommendations:

- Create a broader movement against terrorism, involving not only states but also a range of other actors.
- Strengthen engagement in the field and at UN headquarters with human rights experts and civil society.
- Place greater emphasis on measuring its own performance.
- Enact one of three options for architectural adjustments to streamline UN counterterrorism efforts and improve monitoring, political analysis, and capacity building (a UN Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, or an Under-Secretary-General for Transnational Threats).

Among these recommendations, the architectural adjustments elicited discussion among member states, but the various options were ultimately discarded. In preparing this report, we heard again from some member state representatives that it would be helpful, particularly for external audiences, to have a single spokesperson who can represent the United Nations on counterterrorism issues. In addition, there is a demand for information and discussion about the governance and future agenda of the UNCCT. Although there remain some concerns about internal organizational issues, on the whole, stakeholders seem to prefer supporting the United Nations in making the existing structures more effective and responsive.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

How has the United Nations fared in leveraging its comparative advantages in line with the recommendations we put forward? Regarding strategic leadership, the United Nations’ success as a norm developer has already been noted and is further underscored by progress in advancing legal instruments to criminalize terrorist acts.⁷ High-level efforts to build the profile of the United Nations in the counterterrorism field, such as the “Secretary-General’s Symposium on International Counter-Terrorism Cooperation” in 2011, suggest there is an appreciation

6 UN Security Council, S/RES/1373, 28 September 2001.

7 With the addition of the Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation and the Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft in 2010, there are now 14 international legal instruments to prevent terrorism. “Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation,” 10 September 2010, http://legacy.icao.int/DCAS2010/restr/docs/beijing_convention_multi.pdf; “Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft,” 10 September 2010, http://legacy.icao.int/DCAS2010/restr/docs/beijing_protocol_multi.pdf. See UN Security Council, S/RES/1267, 15 October 1999; UN Security Council, S/RES/1373, 28 September 2001; UN Department of Public Information (DPI), “United Nations Action to Counter Terrorism: International Legal Instruments,” n.d., <http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/instruments.shtml>. Some efforts to develop new norms, however, such as the proposed comprehensive convention on international terrorism, remain stalled. See UN Office of Legal Affairs, “Ad Hoc Committee Established by General Assembly Resolution 51/210 of 17 December 1996,” 7 February 2014, <http://legal.un.org/terrorism/index.html>.

within the system for the potential of the United Nations to provide strategic leadership. The architectural changes floated were partly designed to leverage the United Nations' presence on counterterrorism issues more effectively. Reforming the Strategy review process, as our 2012 report suggested, would better demonstrate the value of the United Nations' counterterrorism role to a broader audience. As others have done, the report implored the Secretary-General to utilize the "bully pulpit" more forcefully as a way of uniting the nations and peoples of the world against terrorist violence.

These recommendations remain pertinent today. Awareness of the United Nations' role on counterterrorism issues remains limited among member states, the general public, and even within the UN system itself at headquarters and in the field.⁸ Our interviews for this report suggested that the United Nations' inability to assume a strategic leadership role on counterterrorism efforts is partly explained by the insulated way in which counterterrorism work has evolved, siloed from the United Nations' broader peace and security or development efforts. Limited awareness of the United Nations' counterterrorism role also reflects fragmentation among the UN bodies engaged in this field and the reluctance of the Secretary-General to marshal political will to this effect. On paper, the CTITF is a compelling manifestation of the One UN ideal. Experience suggests that ideal remains difficult to fulfill in practice. We are aware that the task force has endeavored to make progress in coordinating its member entities and engaging the 38th Floor. Yet, the United Nations is unlikely to meet the demand for strategic leadership on counterterrorism issues as long as these challenges persist. Consequently, throughout this report, we give a strong emphasis to the development of strategic communication as a means of anchoring this leadership role and increasing the political space and resources available for UN counterterrorism efforts.

COORDINATION

Ongoing concerns about the need for better coordination suggest enduring challenges regarding the United Nations' role as a counterterrorism convener. On the one hand, there is an abundance of convening; between the activities of UN counterterrorism bodies and the GCTF, there is probably more convening than ever before. Between the CTITF and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), a relatively effective modus operandi has emerged in which UN entities are involved singly or jointly as organizers, experts, or participants in regional or thematic meetings among relevant officials. The GCTF meeting schedule adds considerably to this burden of activity by inviting UN staff members to a significant number of meetings worldwide.

When our 2012 report was being written, the GCTF was still emerging, and we recommended that the United Nations clarify its relationship with the new body. That has happened. The work of the GCTF is widely perceived as consistent with UN mandates, and GCTF states have clearly acknowledged the value of an inclusive and cooperative relationship with the United Nations. The partnership between the United Nations and the GCTF was reinforced at a conference hosted by the government of Switzerland in February 2012, during which participating members and UN officials underscored the importance of cooperation and coordination. Although these are positive developments, we heard that the current approach to convening is taxing on resources for some smaller GCTF member states, as well as UN counterterrorism entities and nongovernmental experts. Too many meetings, we heard, may yield a focus on outputs (number of meetings attended) rather than substantive outcomes (norm dissemination and implementation). Recent efforts to rationalize attendance through the CTITF will help optimize the convening function in a sustainable fashion, but as discussed below, more can be done among the different counterterrorism-re-

8 Naureen Chowdhury Fink and Jack Barclay, "Mastering the Narrative: Counterterrorism Strategic Communication and the United Nations," CGCC, February 2013, http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Feb2013_CT_StratComm.pdf.

lated bodies to present a more coherent and unified UN counterterrorism program to external audiences.

On the other hand, within the United Nations, it appears there is too little convening among the CTITF members. Coordination and coherence remain a significant challenge, and we heard that the problem has several dimensions. In particular, the CTITF has yet to find an optimal balance between an increasing focus on capacity building and its core coordination function. More fundamentally, a shared understanding of the current and potential UN roles in addressing terrorism still appears to be lacking among member states and UN entities and staff members. Our interviews and research showed that many UN representatives and key partners in the field lack even a basic understanding or awareness of UN counterterrorism bodies and their work. Relatedly, basic information about the roles and division of labor among the various counterterrorism and counterterrorism-related entities within the UN system is absent. At present, information sharing among CTITF member entities, within the UN system, and beyond is limited.

Although some positive steps have been taken, including a redesign of the website to make it more user friendly⁹ and the publication of the *Beam*, the informational newsletter produced by the CTITF, improvements to the available communication tools are needed. Beyond the *Beam*, we heard specific calls for more resources to enhance awareness among field-based staff, particularly in key missions. To press this point further, member state representatives and UN staff alike underscored the need for enhanced information flows between the field and headquarters to ensure that the normative framework is reflected in activities on the ground and that information from the field helps to inform better analysis of threats, identification of needs, and development of more-responsive programming by officials at headquarters. This would have the effect of clarifying roles and responsibilities while improving knowledge of UN counterterrorism work in capitals and in the field.

On the whole, as a result of enduring problems of coordination and coherence, it cannot be said today that UN counterterrorism efforts are truly integrated. Further evidence here pertains to the quantity and quality of meetings. We heard that there are still too few opportunities to bring together the CTITF as a whole on a regular basis, even at the working level. Moreover, when the CTITF does convene, many of the entities are not represented by senior leaders or managers, which makes the task force seem like a low priority for the majority of its members and limits the chances of raising its visibility. As in the past, we heard anecdotally that it is difficult to “coordinate entities that do not wish to be coordinated.” Although collaboration through the CTITF has been successful on several projects, we heard there are still some obstacles to taking a truly integrated approach to the development and implementation of counterterrorism-specific and counterterrorism-relevant projects. Moreover, we heard that the CTITF working groups, which were established as a platform for informal interagency cooperation to promote greater integration on counterterrorism projects, have been utilized less in recent years. We applaud initial moves, discussed below, that are underway to reinvigorate the working groups, reform their composition, streamline their leadership, and amend their work plans to focus on substantive outcomes over process. In our recommendations, we contemplate measures to address problems of coordination and coherence directly, including a focus on developing and disseminating basic information to key stakeholders in capitals and in the field, rethinking communication, reforming the working groups, and incentivizing cooperation. Several of these initiatives, we note, would be advanced if they were to be mandated in the General Assembly resolution that will emerge as part of the Strategy review process.

Our 2012 report argued that the United Nations’ moral authority would be significantly enhanced if it was perceived more widely to be a champion of human rights and the rule of law and recommended that UN counterterrorism bodies more actively engage with civil society and human rights organizations. This rec-

9 See DPI, “United Nations Action to Counter Terrorism,” n.d., <http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/>.

ommendation, we should note, echoed such UN documents as Security Council Resolution 1963 and the Secretary-General’s 2012 report on implementation of the Strategy.¹⁰ It was further elaborated in Resolution 2129, which “recognize[s] that development, security, and human rights are mutually reinforcing and are vital to an effective and comprehensive approach to countering terrorism.”¹¹ Despite some progress, we have found that these relationships with human rights organizations and civil society remain underdeveloped.

CAPACITY BUILDING

As a capacity builder, the United Nations can point to several achievements, such as delivering technical assistance, generating political consensus around the Strategy, and developing a number of guidance documents for member state governments. Just as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) and other specialized UN agencies on the CTITF have established direct roles in assistance provision, the New York–based counterterrorism bodies have pursued their capacity-building mandates with some success. Yet, the latter occurs mostly in the context of specific projects rather than through systematic coordination within the UN counterterrorism architecture or with the broader UN system. Efforts to actively coordinate assistance, such as through the CTITF’s integrated capacity-building assistance initiative I-ACT, remain limited in scope and impact, with only three countries participating in the program to date and little awareness about the project beyond a select group at the United Nations and the limited amount of actors that have participated in I-ACT meetings.

Indeed, although the United Nations undertook counterterrorism capacity-building efforts prior to the establishment of the GCTF, the GCTF and its working groups may now outpace the United Nations in this regard. GCTF engagement on capacity building suggests that many states felt as though the United Nations was not the optimal forum for this function. Nevertheless, the United Nations still retains

an important role here, and we note that many states continue to channel counterterrorism capacity-building funding through it, particularly to geographic regions and on thematic issues that fall outside the scope of the GCTF working groups. Most prominently, in 2011 the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia provided an initial grant of \$10 million to establish the UNCCT and pledged a subsequent \$100 million in August 2013. The challenge will be to structure that funding in a way that leverages additional resources, minimizes perceptions about disproportionate influence, and catalyzes further capacity development.

MONITORING

Regarding the United Nations’ monitoring role, CTED has made progress in refining its reporting and monitoring process. In 2006, CTED developed and the Security Council approved a new analytical tool, the preliminary implementation assessment (PIA), to assess state implementation. The idea was for it to be a living document that can be updated regularly, and it allows for the prioritization of needs so that CTED can then broker assistance. In 2013, however, CTED Executive Director Mike Smith admitted to the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) that

the PIA is not a very user-friendly document. By tabulating the information in columns and boxes it was not easy to read or to draw clear conclusions from, and over time, particularly when comments from states were incorporated, some of these documents became very long and unwieldy—sometimes more than 100 pages.

Moreover the PIA did not allow for manipulation of data by [information technology] applications in ways that would enable [CTED] to present particular aspects of counter-terrorism in graphic or pictorial form, something that would enhance documents such as the [Global Implementation Survey]. In essence what we were looking to do was to make this key doc-

10 UN Security Council, S/RES/1963, 20 December 2010; Secretary-General report on 2012 Strategy review.

11 UN Security Council, S/RES/2129, 17 December 2013.

ument simpler, more transparent, and more useful in terms of what it was conveying.¹²

In light of those concerns, there have been some welcome improvements. In 2013, CTED decided to take the old PIA and divide it into two parts, an overview of implementation assessment (OIA) and the detailed implementation survey (DIS). The OIA has become the basis of the dialogue between CTED and the relevant member state, whereas the DIS contains much more detail but remains a CTED internal working document. The OIS and DIS each look at implementation of Resolutions 1373 and 1624, merging two separate reporting and analysis processes, which will hopefully reduce the workload for member states.

Our 2012 report argued that the renewal of CTED's mandate as a Special Political Mission at the end of 2013 provided the CTC an opportunity to further enhance its monitoring role, that is, the valuable information that CTED has gathered on states' implementation of Resolutions 1373 and 1624 should be leveraged to help the United Nations and others such as the GCTF inform their counterterrorism capacity-building efforts. Notably, the renewal resolution adopted in December 2013 did just that, extending CTED's mandate until 13 December 2017 and reaffirming the body's role in the facilitation of counterterrorism capacity-building assistance. It also directed CTED to "share information, as appropriate, with relevant United Nations counterterrorism bodies and relevant international, regional and subregional organizations," when concerned member states agree; identify emerging issues, trends, and developments relating to Resolutions 1373 and 1624; and provide advice to the CTC on practical implementation of the texts.¹³

We applaud these moves to leverage the data on hand, but one limitation of these initiatives to date is that

they pertain to Security Council mandates only. There remains an obvious gap in efforts to monitor Strategy implementation across all four of its pillars. In this regard, our 2012 report recommended that improvements be made to the process of reviewing and reporting on Strategy implementation. Section 4 of this report, is devoted to this discussion, revisiting the idea that member states and CTITF member entities receive guidance on Strategy implementation reporting. We offer a proposed resource guide for this purpose,¹⁴ which member states may wish to integrate into future reporting mechanisms. Further still, we perceive a need to proactively gather data on Strategy implementation as an input into decisions about capacity-building assistance. In our recommendations, we raise the idea of undertaking dedicated studies or assessments to map Strategy implementation with a view to developing recommendations about capacity-building needs among member states.

Finally, our 2012 report emphasized the need for performance measurement, noting how little attention had been given to monitoring the performance and impact of UN activities. There has been little movement on this front, but some recent signs are promising. For example, in his April 2013 briefing to member states, Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and head of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), identified three key challenges for the United Nations: enhancing coordination, facilitating capacity-building assistance more efficiently, and measures to monitor and evaluate effectiveness. He asked, "Are our activities succeeding in their objectives? Are we advancing the goals of the ... Strategy? These are questions that can only be answered through proper monitoring and evaluation."¹⁵ Nonetheless, there has been no tangible effort to develop a systematic evaluation of UN counterterrorism activities and incorporate any lessons into broader UN counterterrorism activities. Given the significant efforts expended to establish the UN coun-

12 Mike Smith, opening statement during the briefing on the CTC's revised documents and procedures for assessing member states' implementation of Security Council Resolutions 1373 and 1624, 2 May 2013, http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2013/2013-05-02-briefing_cted_ed.pdf.

13 UN Security Council, S/Res/2129, 17 December 2013.

14 See appendix.

15 Jeffrey Feltman, welcoming remarks at the CTITF briefing to member states, 26 April 2013, <http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/ctitf/pdfs/USG%20Remarks-CTITF%20MS%20Brifing%2026Apr2013.pdf>.

terrorism program, the question of evaluation has perhaps been easy to avoid, but the 10th anniversary of the Strategy's adoption in 2016 could help to focus the minds of stakeholders on the achievements and challenges of the United Nations' counterterrorism record. These will be critical inputs to the discussion about shaping UN counterterrorism work in the Strategy's second decade.

In sum, the United Nations has better leveraged its comparative advantages in the field of counterterrorism over the past two years in several ways. Our interviews and research suggest, however, that many of these developments have been ad hoc and dependent on the personalities and priorities of individual senior managers. Moreover, although several valuable project ideas have emerged from the CTITF's work, many of these

remain stuck at the initial stages because of variable support from member states and other partners, as well as constraints on CTITF capacities. Meanwhile, there is a danger that UN counterterrorism activities continue to evolve isolated from broader UN efforts to address security and development and are therefore limited in their scope and impact. Consequently, the report card is mixed, and our analysis confirms the view that the United Nations' relative effectiveness in developing norms has not been translated into norm implementation. Before suggesting next steps toward this goal, we briefly survey the global counterterrorism environment and suggest that the United Nations leverage its specific comparative advantages to address the demand for global responses to increasingly complex and multidimensional threats.

3. CHANGES IN THE GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM LANDSCAPE SINCE THE LAST REVIEW PROCESS

Since the Strategy's last review, there have been two broad sets of developments in the global counterterrorism landscape. The first has been in the area of norms and policies developed in response to the evolving threat of terrorism and violent extremism. The second pertains to institutional developments at the multilateral level. Our discussion of each suggests that these changes yield opportunities for the United Nations to better exercise strategic leadership in the global effort to address terrorism and violent extremism.

ADVANCING A PREVENTIVE APPROACH TO TERRORISM

For most people, counterterrorism is synonymous with the use of intelligence, law enforcement, and military force. Many states, however, have been responsive to the changing nature of threats, and the strategies and tactics of counterterrorism efforts have tended to evolve over time. Today, most experts acknowledge that the lines among terrorism, armed conflict, and criminality increasingly are blurred. In addition, the unpredictable threats emanating from individual “lone wolves” or groups that may have little or no formal contact with designated terrorist organizations or from the use of technology to carry out and support an attack have underscored the limited impact of military force and law enforcement measures alone. Vulnerabilities created by weak development and governance have drawn attention to the need for a more multidimensional response.

As a result, many states have given greater emphasis to preventing terrorism, with a growing focus on countering violent extremism (CVE) by addressing the conditions and grievances that provide an enabling environment for extremist groups and ideas. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted in 2013, “Terrorism festers where conflicts are endemic ... and where human rights, human dignity and human life are not protected and impunity prevails,” adding that “[w]e have to replace the terrorist narrative with messages of peace, development and human welfare.”¹⁶

In policy terms, there has been a significant uptick in efforts to challenge extremist narratives and reduce support and sympathy for them through measures to counter violent extremism. In a number of member states, this has resulted in the adoption of national strategies with a strong CVE component to address terrorism and violent extremism or the proliferation of activities designed to identify and address potential vulnerabilities. These strategies include a range of measures, often with an emphasis on counternarratives, strategic communication, and community-level engagement. Although the term “countering violent extremism” is of recent origin, significant resources are now marshaled in support of it. For example, the GCTF has dedicated a thematic working group to it. Beyond that, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu announced the establish-

16 “End Conditions That Feed Terrorism, Ban Tells Security Council at Day-Long Debate,” UN News Centre, 15 January 2013, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp/story.asp?NewsID=43925&Cr=terror&Cr1=#.Uylcn9rD-ZM>.

ment of a new Global Fund for Community Engagement and Resilience at a GCTF ministerial meeting in New York on 27 September 2013. It is anticipated that this fund will provide grants to local, grass-roots organizations for community-based projects to engage with individuals or groups that may be vulnerable to radicalization or recruitment by violent extremists.¹⁷ Although interdiction and response remain the primary goals of counterterrorism efforts, the shift to prevention is perhaps the most important normative change in this field in recent years.

The CVE evolution mirrors the security challenges confronting the United Nations regarding terrorism and the transformation of peacekeeping and political mandates into increasingly multidimensional and complex endeavors. It allows for a closer normative integration of efforts to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks with efforts to address other sources of insecurity that impact the narratives and activities of extremist groups. In addition, it has promoted engagement between security actors and practitioners in fields not traditionally associated with countering terrorism, including development, education, community activism, peace-building, conflict prevention, and security sector reform.

Broadly, we see a link here to the focus in recent years on insecurity as a challenge to development. This was highlighted in the 2011 *World Development Report*, which found that “insecurity not only remains, it has become a primary development challenge of our time. One-and-a-half billion people live in areas affected by fragility, conflict, or large-scale organized criminal violence.... New threats—organized crime and traf-

ficking, civil unrest due to global economic shocks, terrorism—have supplanted continued preoccupations with conventional war between and within countries.”¹⁸ Echoing this, the *Post-2015 Development Agenda* highlights the importance of addressing conflict to ensure development progress, noting that “[f]reedom from fear, conflict and violence is the most fundamental human right, and the essential foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies.”¹⁹

This approach is also reflected in normative advances at the United Nations on preventive diplomacy and the rule of law. Regarding the former, a report of the Secretary-General notes several methods (e.g., early-warning systems, targeted funding mechanisms for rapid response, dedicated prevention structures, deployment of special envoys) for translating norms into action.²⁰ Regarding the latter, the discussion has matured to the point where the Security Council recently requested and debated a report from the Secretary-General on measuring UN effectiveness in promoting the rule of law in conflict and postconflict situations.²¹

A final, notable policy shift is the emphasis on capacity building that has emerged from a recognition that structural conditions and weaknesses can create conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and inhibit states from fulfilling their mandated obligations under Resolution 1373. As mentioned above, the United Nations and other multilateral entities and platforms, especially the GCTF, have been increasingly active in this field in large part due to the demand from many member states to respond to identified gaps with assistance. It is difficult to measure precisely how much capacity-building assistance is being provided at an

17 Office of the Spokesperson, U.S. Department of State, “Co-Chairs’ Fact Sheet: Creating a Global Fund for Community Engagement and Resilience,” 27 September 2013, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/09/214853.htm>.

18 World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2011), p. 1.

19 High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development*, 2013, exec. summ., <http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf>.

20 UN, *Preventive Diplomacy: Securing Results; Report of the Secretary-General*, September 2011, <http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/undpa/shared/undpa/pdf/SG%20Report%20on%20Preventive%20Diplomacy.pdf>.

21 UN Security Council, *Measuring the Effectiveness of the Support Provided by the United Nations System for the Promotion of the Rule of Law in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations: Report of the Secretary-General*, S/2013/341, 11 June 2013.

aggregate level from whom and to whom, although the I-ACT project was initially designed to offer that kind of analysis in the medium to long term but has fallen short of that aim. Undoubtedly, however, the current climate is a sharp contrast to the years immediately following the passage of Resolution 1373, when the focus of multilateral counterterrorism efforts was primarily on compliance. Today, the monitoring function of multilateral bodies serves the purpose of assessing capacity-building needs rather than enforcing compliance alone.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Several institutional developments over the past two years are noteworthy when considering how to advance the United Nations' counterterrorism role. We have discussed the GCTF at several points, noting the broad perception that the GCTF's work is consistent with the implementation of UN counterterrorism mandates and that the relationship between the GCTF and the United Nations has evolved into a productive partnership. The UN influence on the GCTF's work is manifested in several GCTF strategic documents, i.e., the various "memoranda," that routinely draw on existing norms elaborated through the United Nations. Yet, as the GCTF is an informal and limited-membership body, the United Nations is always likely to add value to GCTF activities, enjoying as it does a broader base of legitimacy. In other words, if there were questions about how the GCTF and the United Nations would get along, as we raised in our 2012 report, the precedent is positive and, we foresee, sustainable into the future.

Over the last two years, there has been significant change within the United Nations' counterterrorism program. The current DPA Under-Secretary-General has taken a more active role than his predecessor in chairing the CTITF and integrating its work with that of the DPA. The appointment of a Director (D-2 level) heading the CTITF Office and a new CTED Assistant Secretary-General with prior leadership experience at the CTITF and at the UNODC TPB has been positive. Although the TPB has suffered from a lack of consistent leadership in recent years, the aforementioned changes at the CTITF and CTED offer an opportunity to improve high-level coordination on

counterterrorism issues. As noted, we are aware of an ongoing discussion and several specific proposals to further this goal. These include the creation of a steering group comprising CTED and other CTITF member entities with the intention of furthering CTITF work, thereby elevating the role of the CTED Assistant Secretary-General within the CTITF, and more-regularized interaction among the entities through briefings and planning meetings. There has also been an effort to ensure that UN counterterrorism entities represent themselves as one at international meetings, and CTED and the CTITF Office have worked together to combine their representation.

Within the CTITF, a number of commendable steps are being proposed to address the coordination and coherence problems that we raised earlier. For example, a number of reforms are under consideration to improve cooperation among CTITF members, define the future composition and agenda of the working groups, and make the most of the upcoming Strategy review. The proposal for a "Dialogue and Understanding to Counter the Appeal of Terrorism" working group creates a potential platform for the United Nations to draw on CTITF members, such as the Department of Public Information (DPI), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Development Programme, and others, to highlight positive narratives and challenge the rhetoric of extremist groups. We heard of plans to revive the Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution, which had previously focused on Central Asia but offers an ideal platform to identify and collate good practices and knowledge from conflict prevention and resolution efforts to inform counterterrorism and CVE activities. To improve coordination, the CTITF has created a matrix of relevant ongoing projects by participating entities. Unfortunately, the information contained in the matrix has been deemed too sensitive to share with the task force's participating entities or UN member states, although an edited version may ultimately be made available.

Although the Strategy does not provide the CTITF with a mandate to require different members to contribute information or time to the CTITF, having an

Under-Secretary-General who is now actively engaged in the chairmanship of the CTITF could help to encourage CTITF members from different parts of the system to share information, reduce overlapping mandates, and enhance cooperation among CTITF members and partners. The CTITF also has started to bolster its professional staff in terms of analysis, strategic communication, and other substantive areas. This new arrangement hopefully will result in a more effective CTITF that will help enhance the work of its constituent entities.

Another significant institutional change in the past two years has been the establishment of the UNCCT within the CTITF.²² The UNCCT's three core aims are to

- buttress the implementation of all four pillars of the Strategy in a comprehensive and integrated manner through the development of national and regional Strategy implementation plans;
- undertake initiatives aimed at fostering international counterterrorism cooperation and promote collaboration among national, regional, and international counterterrorism centers and organizations; and
- serve, through collaboration with CTITF working groups, in a critical role in building the capacity of member states to strengthen their counterterrorism capability.²³

The UNCCT was supported by an initial grant in 2011 of \$10 million over three years from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In August 2013, this grant was augmented by the announcement of a gift of \$100 million from King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.

The UNCCT operates under the Secretary-General and the umbrella of the DPA and aims to contribute to

Strategy implementation by promoting the exchange of expertise and capacities in nine areas identified by its Advisory Board²⁴ as strategic priorities.

1. Development of national and regional counterterrorism strategies.
2. Support for integrated capacity-building assistance (I-ACT).
3. Countering the financing of terrorism.
4. Promoting dialogue, understanding, and countering the appeal of terrorism.
5. Protecting human rights while countering terrorism.
6. Promote and protect rights of victims of terrorism.
7. Protection of vulnerable targets.
8. Border management.
9. Internet.

A number of our interlocutors have expressed some concern about the donation, including comments about the optics of such a large donation, which is larger than the entire regular DPA budget.²⁵ Some believe that such a large donation from one member state could raise questions about disproportionate influence over the UN agenda on this controversial issue. Beyond the optics and politics, a number of people questioned the United Nations' ability to absorb such a vast amount of money without a commensurate program of activities in place. To that end, a number of interviewees alluded to the difficulties that the UNCCT has faced in spending the first of three payments it received under the terms of the 2011 Saudi donation. Questions were consequently raised about how the \$100 million would be spent, how programming to implement that expenditure would be managed day to day, and what role the Advisory Board might have in determining strategic priorities and project funding. Even though the United Nations still has not received the money more than six

22 UN General Assembly, *United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre*, A/RES/66/10, 7 December 2011.

23 "UN Counter-Terrorism Centre," n.d., <http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/ctitf/uncct/index.shtml>.

24 The UNCCT Advisory Board is comprised of 22 members: Saudi Arabia (Chair), Algeria, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, China, Egypt, European Union (guest member), France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Russian Federation, Pakistan, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States. The CTITF Chair also serves as UNCCT Executive Director.

25 The DPA's regular budget for 2012–2013 was \$81 million. See DPA, "How DPA Is Funded," n.d., <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/main/about/funding>.

months after the Saudi king made the pledge, if the money does arrive, the influx of resources on this scale presents massive challenges. Nevertheless, we argue that these should be seen as opportunities to advance Strategy implementation and address the recurring operational challenges that the CTITF has faced.

Within the Security Council, the most important institutional development has been the renewal of CTED's mandate under Resolution 2129. Although the term "CVE" does not appear in the resolution, it recognized the value of preventive approaches, tasking CTED with identifying emerging issues, trends, and developments. It invited CTED to further enhance its partnerships with international, regional, and subregional organizations, civil society, academia, and other entities in conducting research and identifying good practices.²⁶ Furthermore, it also directed CTED to make available to other UN bodies, as appropriate, the information contained in national counterterrorism surveys and assessments, when concerned member states agree, and information on regional counterterrorism capacities when approved by the CTC. In line with the Strategy and with key aspects of evolving CVE principles, the new resolution reiterated the importance of human rights and the rule of law in all counterterrorism efforts, acknowledged the work of the GCTF, and highlighted three additional issues for CTED's work: the convergence of the counterterrorism and women, peace, and security agendas; the use of the Internet and new communications technologies by terrorists; and the rehabilitation and reintegration of detainees.

There appears to have been broad consensus on the value added by CTED to UN counterterrorism efforts and on its leading role in developing country assessments and analyses. Yet, there was some tension among

Security Council members on whether the mandate should be more narrowly focused on the substance of Resolution 1373 or build on the language in Resolution 1963 in encouraging further attention to emerging areas of concern, particularly regarding prevention (the roles of women, the importance of addressing incitement and communications technologies, the convergence of security and development in countering terrorism). It appears that the compromise struck is more reflective of the objectives of Resolution 1963 and current concerns among counterterrorism officials and practitioners and responsive to likely future priorities or areas of engagement identified by a number of council members.²⁷

The integration of counterterrorism efforts into the broader UN response to transnational security and development challenges remains a work in progress. Yet, a positive step was the establishment and work of the Secretary-General's interagency fact-finding mission to the Sahel in late 2011 and the resultant integrated strategy for the Sahel unveiled by the United Nations' Special Envoy to the region, Romano Prodi, in June 2013.²⁸ The report of the 2011 mission offered a comprehensive approach to identifying terrorist threats amid these complex, interconnected challenges facing states in the region. By including terrorism as part of this broader suite of pressing issues, the mission brought together practitioners from different policy areas, prompting a more integrated response and ongoing interaction among its members. The strategy reflects this approach, with the report noting that "the historic trade routes across Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Libya, Mali, Mauritania and Niger are the most vulnerable to terrorist and criminal networks." The report also "details a raft of challenges facing the region, including, among others, insufficient border management, recurring coup d'états and social strife."²⁹

26 UN Security Council, S/Res/2129, 17 December 2013, paras. 5, 19.

27 These conclusions were reiterated at a closed-door roundtable hosted by the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations and the CGCC exploring the role of the Security Council in strengthening UN efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism on 17 January 2014.

28 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Sahel Region*, S/2013/354, 14 June 2013.

29 "Sahel: UN Special Envoy Presents Integrated Strategy to Security Council," UN News Centre, 26 June 2013, <https://www.un.org/apps/news//story.asp?NewsID=45279&Cr=Sahel&Cr1>.

In the past two or three years, the mandates of the UN missions in Libya and Mali represent further institutional developments in integrating counterterrorism aspects into the United Nations' peace and security work. In Security Council Resolutions 2017 and 2022, terrorism prevention is among the functions designated for the UN Support Mission in Libya, as part of a mandate to prevent and respond to conflict while supporting the Libyan government to consolidate peace and security.³⁰ The goal of overseeing the democratic transition in Libya is the clear priority of the mission, and the reference to counterterrorism in the mission's work is modest, given concerns about the optics of a UN mission engaging in counterterrorism efforts. Still, the mandate is significant for integrating a counterterrorism dimension into UN peace and security work and for stressing a preventive approach that harnesses the expertise of a number of UN bodies in analyzing a potential threat.

The mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, although not explicitly focused on counterterrorism operations, designates certain parties to the conflict as terrorists. It urges member states to help restore the authority of the State of Mali over its entire national territory, to uphold the unity and territorial integrity of Mali, and to reduce the threat posed by terrorist organizations and associated groups. Additionally, the mandate urges Sahel and Maghreb states to enhance interregional cooperation and coordination in order to develop inclusive and effective strategies to combat the activities of terrorist groups in a comprehensive and integrated manner. It aims to prevent the expansion of those groups and limit arms proliferation and transnational organized crime. Looking beyond Mali to places such as Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia, and elsewhere, perceptions of the United Nations and the ability of its missions and country teams to deliver on their mandates is often impacted by the presence of violent extremism and ter-

rorism, which shapes the political and security environment in which the United Nations operates. At present, however, there is no systematic knowledge about the impact of these threats on UN operations in the field, and a deeper understanding is required to inform decisions about whether and how to respond. We heard of efforts by the UN Department of Safety and Security to enhance its analytical capacities by drawing on country or regional analysts, and we encourage a broader discussion on these issues with CTITF members to develop a more comprehensive assessment.

Finally, on the ability of multilateral counterterrorism bodies to engage with civil society, we argued that the United Nations could have achieved more in this regard. Yet, we watched with interest as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) began engaging civil society groups on FATF Recommendation 8, concerning terrorist abuse of nonprofit organizations.³¹ Although this interaction comprises only one meeting at this stage, it provides a precedent and shows that engagement is possible and productive under certain circumstances.

These examples illustrate that the United Nations, which is often criticized for stove-piping, can deal with a range of complex threats in an integrative fashion, which is key as the United Nations is likely to confront the challenges posed by extremist and terrorist groups in mission and nonmission settings. Already, deliberations on peacekeeping at the United Nations have begun on the implications of terrorism and violent extremism on peace operations, the shape of the conflict environment, and the security of UN personnel and programming. A December 2013 seminar on new challenges for UN peacekeeping highlighted that "terrorism and transnational organized crime in mission areas also add to the already complex environments marked by lack of state authority and illegal exploitation of natural resources among other problems, all of which require holistic responses to achieve durable

30 Naureen Chowdhury Fink, "Preventing Terrorism and Conflict in Libya: An Innovative Role for the United Nations?" *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 2 (February 2012): 16–21, <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/CTCSentinel-Vol5Iss22.pdf>.

31 FATF, "Consultation and Dialogue With Non-Profit Organisations: Chairman's Summary," 24 April 2013, <http://www.fatf-gafi.org/documents/documents/consultationanddialoguewithnon-profitorganisations.html>.

peace and stability.”³² Whether practice in the field fulfills this recommendation for integrated responses remains to be seen.

THE CASE FOR THE UN'S COUNTERTERRORISM ROLE

What are we to make of these normative and institutional developments, and how might they impact the United Nations' counterterrorism role and implementation of the Strategy? Our research and interviews suggest that these developments are positive for the United Nations' role as a counterterrorism actor and offer opportunities for it to leverage its comparative advantages derived from more than six decades of engagement in the related fields of development and conflict mitigation to contribute to terrorism prevention efforts.

The emphasis on conditions conducive to terrorism in Pillar I of the Strategy speaks to the recent normative and policy shift toward terrorism prevention, as well as developments regarding the security-development link, the rule of law, and the principles of preventive diplomacy. Both Pillar I and Security Council Resolution 1624, which prohibits incitement to terrorism, create a normative platform consistent with the emphasis on developing counternarratives to violent extremism as part of contemporary CVE policies.³³ The focus on prevention and CVE work aligns closely with past and ongoing UN efforts to prevent and resolve conflict, promote development and human rights, and support peaceful political change. From field offices, peacekeeping and political missions, political initiatives, and humanitarian interventions, the United Nations can draw on expertise and experiences to inform CVE efforts. Moreover, the moral authority and goodwill generated by the United Nations' universal membership and charter values sometimes make it a more suitable interlocutor on issues such as terrorism and violent extremism than a bilateral actor. The United Nations could make the argument that many of its core values and efforts serve the purpose of mitigating conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism in practice if not in name.

Pillar III of the Strategy identifies capacity building as a priority in the global counterterrorism effort, and Pillar IV frames counterterrorism squarely as a human rights and rule of law issue. As counterterrorism programming at the national and regional levels has become more diversified over time, the comprehensive approach of the Strategy has been reaffirmed. It is no exaggeration to say that the trajectory of counterterrorism programming has evolved in the direction of the Strategy, which, we emphasize, resonates strongly with the messaging and strategic communication initiatives being developed as part of the shift to prevention and CVE efforts. In this sense, the Strategy should be seen as a vehicle for normative integration, which remains an enduring challenge in the fragmented UN system. This should signal to member states the appeal of the United Nations and the Strategy in particular as a framework for the global counterterrorism effort.

These multilateral institutional developments bode well for the UN counterterrorism program. The relatively vigorous workload of the GCTF to some extent reflects the limitations of acting through the United Nations, but the United Nations has something that the GCTF does not—the legitimacy of being the world body with a foundational commitment to a set of universal principles inscribed in the UN Charter. As GCTF activities continue to gain momentum, the United Nations can continue to add value to GCTF work. Within the United Nations too, there is cause for optimism. The new leadership at the DPA, CTED, and the CTITF Office have committed to increase cooperation and collaboration among these bodies. It is critical that they resist the tendency to fall back into patterns of bureaucratic competition and retreat behind departmental silos.

Beyond these developments, the evolution of contemporary counterterrorism efforts in line with the Strategy situates the CTITF well. Despite the concerns we have heard regarding the UNCCT, its considerable

32 Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations and the UN Foundation, concept note for “Blue Helmets: New Frontiers” seminar, New York, 17 December 2013 (copy on file with authors).

33 UN Security Council, S/RES/1624, 14 September 2005.

resources offer opportunities for increasing the range and scale of projects and programs to support the capacities of member states. Here, an Action Agenda that outlines options for projects, endorsed by the Advisory Board and the CTITF, would ensure that all CTITF members have a shared understanding of the UNCCT's work plan and priorities and would encourage individual entities to take a role in implementing those projects most aligned with their own mandates. Moreover, UNCCT funds could be paired with resources from other donors and recipient states to dilute any perceived influence of a single donor. UNCCT funds could also be used as seed money for projects that would ultimately be taken forward by

other funders. With vision and planning, the donation ought to yield meaningful advances in Strategy implementation in the near future.

In sum, these changes lead us to conclude that there has never been a more opportune moment for member states and stakeholders to position the United Nations as a strategic leader on counterterrorism issues, one with the resources to develop more-integrated and multidimensional initiatives to prevent terrorism and violent extremism and challenge extremist narratives. Moreover, viewed from the perspective of evolving norms and institutions, we perceive a demand for the United Nations to step into this role and the capacity for it to do so.

4. MAPPING AND COMMUNICATING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

Our 2012 report noted the absence of criteria against which member states and CTITF member entities could report on their Strategy implementation activities and evaluate the impact of UN programming. Such reporting is critical in assisting the United Nations to identify gaps and capacity-building opportunities and to develop a counterterrorism program that is responsive to the needs of member states. Without a clearer understanding of Strategy implementation across all four pillars, the UN system runs the risk of developing activities that are duplicative or not aligned with national and regional needs. Moreover, a more structured set of reports from member states will assist the General Assembly in more effectively reviewing the Strategy and ensuring that the world body is responsive to the evolving threat and the norms and priorities set out by its membership in each of the Strategy's pillars.

To this end, our 2012 report recalled that there is no shortage of precedents for such reporting criteria within the broader UN system and that relevant indicators, norms, and guidelines from across the substantive areas of the Strategy could be drawn on to develop a template or other tool to provide guidance for reporting states and entities. These observations remain valid today. More generally, a brief survey of the three Secretary-General reports on the activities of the UN system in implementing the Strategy reveals three key gaps in reporting to date.³⁴

First, there is a coverage gap. Only some member states provide input; some CTITF member entities provide more input than others. Beyond this, the substance of the various inputs varies significantly across member states and entities. As a result, there is uneven coverage across the four pillars of the Strategy, as well as across states and entities. Further, without systematic guidance as to what constitutes evidence of Strategy implementation, member states and entities provide an uneven set of reports and tend to focus on activities and outputs with little or no attention to outcomes or impacts, making an assessment about the state of Strategy implementation and the identification of gaps to inform future programming difficult. Although several interlocutors mentioned the political and bureaucratic challenges many states may face in developing and sharing reports of counterterrorism activities, the reports risk being of little use to donors and UN entities looking to invest capacity-building funds on the basis of an empirical assessment of unfulfilled needs.

Second, there is a relevance gap. The Secretary-General's reports have not offered a trend analysis, regional survey, or substantive discussion of the evolution of the terrorism threat. Consequently, they have not demonstrated how the activities of CTITF entities or member states, undertaken to implement the Strategy, are an appropriate response to terrorism today. In turn, the reports do not make the case that, for symbolic and operational reasons, the Strategy is a vital part of the global response. Readers are left to connect the dots

34 Secretary-General report on 2008 Strategy review; Secretary-General report on 2010 Strategy review; Secretary-General report on 2012 Strategy review.

from the various activities described in the reports to the threat of violent extremism that many communities face.

Third, there is a gap in ambition. To date, the Strategy reports have been largely descriptive, retrospective accounts of recent activities, but the contemporary emphasis on prevention gives rise to a significant opportunity for the United Nations to be more assertive in positioning itself as a strategic leader in the field. To do so, it must engage in more strategic communication and, through that, create and preserve the political space necessary to further the United Nations' work.³⁵ We note some appreciation of this among the UN counterterrorism community. For example, the Secretary-General's 2011 symposium attracted an impressive range of speakers and yielded a valuable report. In this regard, past reports on Strategy implementation reflect a missed opportunity to reaffirm the United Nations' strategic role and comparative advantages as a counterterrorism actor and reaffirm the charter values that have shaped the Strategy. We suggest that the audience for Strategy reports is potentially vast but has not been tapped. Below, we describe how Strategy reports can be reimagined as strategic communication to demonstrate the commitment of member states and the world body and its foundational values.

Beyond the Secretary-General's reports, we have heard calls for such strategic communication to be developed for UN field offices and personnel to enhance their awareness of UN counterterrorism normative frameworks and programming resources. We heard suggestions that informational materials be developed targeting UN staff and field offices and that there be a more proactive approach to circulating the *Beam* and disseminating information about the website, one that ensures the publication reaches a key target audience. Such initiatives can help with efforts to monitor performance and information consumption and help make CTITF programming and information circulation a little more "evaluable."

Yet, the UN Secretariat and, in particular, the CTITF Office have not been adequately resourced to meet the expectation of member states and produce more-analytical reports. Many of our interlocutors recognized this shortcoming and noted the difficulties of setting expectations that are misaligned with existing resources vis-à-vis the CTITF. In retrospect, it seems that member states currently prefer Strategy implementation reports that merely document activities in a nonsystematic way. The real "losers" in this scenario are Pillars I and IV, where the overlap of the Strategy and relevant Security Council mandates is less direct. We suggest, however, that these pillars should be prominent in UN counterterrorism strategic communication to demonstrate the contribution of multilateralism to the prevention and suppression of violence in a balanced and integrative way. For all these reasons, we heard from many in the UN community that it is time to reconsider the status quo.

These concerns about reporting should be viewed in the context of the strong and consistent emphasis on Strategy implementation elaborated by stakeholders. To further this goal, we see an opportunity to rethink reporting on Strategy implementation and to transcend the rote, biennial exercise of compiling activities. An initial step is to ask how the Secretary-General's reports on Strategy implementation should look. In terms of content and presentation, what reporting approach will best advance the Strategy and, more generally, the United Nations' role as a counterterrorism actor and support for states in furthering Strategy implementation? We foresee three options for stakeholders in answering these questions.

The first option is to maintain the status quo. Perhaps member states truly prefer that Strategy implementation reports should be a matter of routine, recording the activities of member states and entities on an ad hoc, self-selected basis. This approach has the advantage of consuming minimal CTITF Office resources and requiring very little from member states, many of

35 Chowdhury Fink and Barclay, "Mastering the Narrative."

whom have long expressed concern about “reporting fatigue” in the area of counterterrorism. Although the noted shortcomings of this approach are considerable, they may not be viewed by some as significant enough to warrant a change in course. If so, we can easily predict how future reports will look. On this basis, we should ratchet down our expectations about such reports and look for other ways of advancing implementation of the Strategy.

The second option is to enhance the content of the reports while maintaining the current method of presentation. There are many precedents for eliciting information regarding Strategy implementation from member states and entities, and reporting templates, indicators, guidelines, and the like are familiar within the UN system. Some approaches are relatively intrusive whereas others seek to gather data on the basis of consensus. Given the apparent lack of enforcement capability on the part of the Secretariat and the experience of the Security Council’s counterterrorism bodies in soliciting reports on implementation from member states, a pragmatic, consensus-driven approach is most feasible here.

More generally, our research suggests that some guidance to member states and entities for reporting on the Strategy is long overdue. This report contains a proposed “Indicative Resource Guide for UN Member States and Entities Reporting on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.”³⁶ We compiled the guide using past Strategy implementation reports, related CTITF documents from the various working groups, and a survey of norms and standards elaborated by CTITF member entities. The purpose of the guide is to collate existing norms and standards that can be referenced in member state inputs for the Secretary-General’s report as a way of indicating Strategy implementation. In this way, the proposed guide resembles the technical guides to Resolutions 1373 and 1624 issued by CTED. Member states and entities would use the guide to identify

information reported elsewhere that can nonetheless be presented as evidence of Strategy implementation. This process would be minimally taxing on those reporting but would have the advantage of requiring only a minor additional investment of resources within the CTITF Office where, it is hoped, there would be more data to draw on in assembling reports. It would also help to remedy the gaps identified above, improving the comparability of reports over time.

Although the guide ought to improve the quality and coverage of information, this option has some drawbacks. For example, in the absence of any incentives, it is not clear why member states and entities would be any more willing to report than they are at present. Moreover, without fundamentally altering the presentation of the report, there is little reason to think that the potential internal and external audiences will be attracted to the report. In this sense, future reports will have the same readership and status as those in the past and similar content—just more of it.

We favor a third approach, to revise the content and presentation of the reports to leverage their value in terms of strategic communication. This would include utilizing the resource guide as a way of gathering information about implementation from member states and entities. By upgrading the report to a biennial, strategic-level document itself, this would incentivize those reporting to have their inputs included in such a high-profile publication. In addition, as detailed below, we envision resourcing the CTITF Office adequately to gather data and produce original analysis while determining a method for presenting it, so as to maximize readership and disseminate the clear message that the UN system and its member states oppose terrorism and strive for effective, proportional responses.

More ambitiously, the report might engage outside experts and devote space to thematic issues within the field of counterterrorism. An apt analogy here is the flagship publication series of the World Bank, the

³⁶ See appendix.

World Development Report, which addresses emerging issues in development economics. A *World Counterterrorism Report*, under the auspices of the United Nations, could serve a similar agenda-setting function. Ideally, the report would be the centerpiece of a broader strategic communication plan developed among CTITF entities and member states, serving to underscore the United Nations' strategic leadership on counterterrorism issues.

Clearly, this option entails some costs, especially in terms of devoting resources to researching, writing, and disseminating the report, but it is timely to con-

sider such investments. Institutionalizing Strategy reports in this way offers several benefits, as a prompt for implementation and as a means for engaging the CTITF membership and demonstrating impact, that outweigh these costs. A serious commitment to Strategy implementation necessarily entails resourcing the CTITF Office to fulfill its core coordination and programmatic functions more effectively. We see communications as a further core task of the CTITF and the reimagined biennial implementation report as the anchor of a purposeful, systematic message about the United Nations' role in preventing and responding to global terrorism.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The sections above have set out an overview of developments concerning the normative and institutional aspects of the United Nations' counterterrorism work. Below, we offer a menu of recommendations to consolidate some of the positive steps taken and new initiatives to address some of the remaining challenges confronting the UN system, including coordination within the CTITF and integrating counterterrorism efforts into the world body's broader peace and development work.

IMPROVE INTERNAL COORDINATION AND TRANSPARENCY

1. Clearly articulate the United Nations' role in addressing terrorism and clarify roles and responsibilities for UN counterterrorism entities.

The CTITF should spearhead the development of a clear vision and plan explaining the United Nations' role in supporting member states' Strategy implementation. This can be done by having a CTITF retreat chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs to focus on answering the following questions, which should be put into a document available on the UN counterterrorism website.³⁷

- a. What is the division of labor within the UN counterterrorism system? Which strategic elements most naturally and logically fit within the mandate and scope of existing entities on the CTITF? Where does the UNCCT fit in

this arrangement? How can active coordination and participation in the CTITF be incentivized among member entities to ensure effectiveness and sustainability?

- b. How can the UN counterterrorism program organize itself better to minimize overlap, save resources, and provide more-coherent and -useful information for others inside and outside the UN system? Should the United Nations set up a one-stop shop for interacting with member states, who are often overburdened with a multitude of requests from diverse sources, when requesting extra budgetary/project funding support? How should the policy of having one appointed UN Representative go to meetings, rather than having three or four from different entities, be formalized?

2. *Develop an information package about the UNCCT that sets out its agenda and a menu of project ideas.* A set of documents should be produced for the UNCCT Governing Board's input and approval and then for circulation to member states and key stakeholders.

- **Document 1: An organogram showing how the UNCCT relates to the overall UN counterterrorism program.**
- **Document 2: An explanation of the governance and management of the UNCCT beyond what has been briefly described in the**

37 DPI, "United Nations Action to Counter Terrorism," n.d., <http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/>.

General Assembly resolution establishing the UNCCT and on its website.³⁸ This should include an explanation of what kinds of projects the UNCCT will undertake and how these are to be selected and implemented.

- **Document 3: A clear vision of how the UNCCT will add value to the existing UN counterterrorism program by enhancing efforts to implement the Strategy.** This should include how the UNCCT will help by ensuring more hands-on work in the field rather than in New York and Vienna. The UNCCT should lay out a plan for implementing activities in the field with local buy-in and in cooperation with other CTITF entities and for ensuring that capacity-building initiatives stem from evidence-based needs assessments. The UNCCT should draw on the data collected by the United Nations, for example, from CTED, UNODC, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other CTITF entities that produce regular, public reports, as well as think tanks and other credible sources. This data should be accompanied by engagement with governments and their citizens at the community level, as appropriate, to get a sense of local needs, priorities, and perceptions.
- **Document 4: A menu of project options guided by the Strategy and the strategic priority areas** determined by the Advisory Board, to be implemented by CTITF entities. This document could be utilized to highlight a thematic or functional specialization for the UNCCT in one or more of the pillars of the Strategy or, for example, in supporting project proposals submitted by CTITF members or civil society partners.

ENHANCE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

3. Enhance the substantive and analytical dimensions of the Strategy review process. There

needs to be a strategy to implement the Strategy, which begins with a clear analysis of the United Nations' role and comparative advantages as a counterterrorism actor. The Secretary-General's biennial report on counterterrorism activities provides an optimal vehicle for setting out this framework and for offering an analysis of the contemporary terrorist threat and the UN response. Subject-matter experts and consultants may be invited to contribute specific segments, modeled on the World Bank's *World Development Report* series. A "chapeau chapter" offering analysis of current threats, UN responses, and future priorities could precede the report's update on the activities of CTITF entities and the appendix of member state inputs. Efforts to implement these proposals in the forthcoming report should be lauded, and the CTITF should be supported in transforming the report into a more analytical product. The CTITF could offer member states a resource guide on reporting on Strategy implementation across all four pillars.³⁹ This would make the biennial review a more substantive process and ensure that the UN system remains responsive to the current iteration of the terrorism threat.

- 4. Engage senior UN leadership in a system-wide messaging effort.** The CTITF should enhance its strategic counterterrorism communication efforts by mobilizing the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General as spokespersons reaffirming the United Nations' role and values on counterterrorism issues. As part of this effort, the CTITF should underscore that a more integrated approach to implementing the Strategy is not only a counterterrorism function but in consonance with the values and mandate enshrined in the UN Charter.
- 5. Enhance circulation of the Beam and utilize it as a tool to engage broader audiences and**

³⁸ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre*; "UN Counter-Terrorism Centre."

³⁹ See appendix.

evaluate impact. In order to be a more effective information and communication tool, the *Beam* needs to be better resourced and circulated to clearly identified target audiences, including internal UN staff at headquarters and in the field. Beyond this, like the biennial reports on Strategy implementation, the *Beam* should include more analytical pieces and support a strategic communication approach developed by the CTITF. Implementing partners of CTITF entities could be invited to contribute overviews or reports on projects being undertaken with support from the CTITF or member states that support Strategy implementation. Additionally, more-regular brief updates on CTITF activities should be circulated to member states and key partners to provide more timely information that member state representatives can share with their capitals.

6. *Develop a publicly shared calendar of events.*

The CTITF should publish a publicly shared work plan and calendar for the year, including events, conferences, and publications, that can be made available to member states and key stakeholders. Such a calendar could be coordinated with organizations such as the GCTF, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and others convening on related issues to reduce the burden of travel on stakeholders and improve synergies between the meetings. Additionally, it would allow other organizations to proactively engage with the United Nations on relevant topics.

7. *Create information resources for broader UN staff on counterterrorism and the Strategy.*

The CTITF could work with the DPI to develop a proactive approach to information sharing to help a broader range of UN staff become familiar with the Strategy and the relationship of many of the organization's existing activities to it.

8. *Compile and disseminate information that will inform and guide capacity-building priorities and donor coordination.* CTED should use its new mandate and the information it has gathered

to produce and disseminate annually a document that goes beyond its existing "Global Survey" document by indicating trends that would give donors an evidence-based assessment of priority areas where capacity building may still be lacking in certain regions, as well as an indication of where there is an overabundance of capacity building. For example, in some regions considerable attention has been given to training police and prosecutors and less to supporting the capacity of judges or corrections officials. This "trends" document need not provide details from site visits or member state reporting to CTED, but it would help to ensure that the United Nations and donors, including the GCTF, have more-uniform and -comprehensive guidance to inform and better coordinate their counterterrorism capacity-building efforts.

FOSTER MORE-INTEGRATED RESPONSES

9. *Develop a strategic approach to prevention and early warning.*

The CTITF, CTED, other task force members, and field offices and missions should work together to develop a mechanism for identifying potential threats or priority areas of engagement for the United Nations. CTED's new mandate creates an opportunity for it to make a strong contribution to this effort. This includes encouraging greater interagency cooperation and collaboration on project development and implementation. To do this, it will be important to work more closely with CTITF entities with extensive field expertise and presence, including development, education, and humanitarian actors, to ensure their perspectives inform the conceptualization and implementation of prevention projects aimed at addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. CTED country visits and outcomes could inform opportunities for developing preventive engagement and supporting member states in developing CVE and other prevention measures. Regional and subregional bodies, including civil society actors, should be consulted, where appropriate, to identify potential challenges and support the development of preventive responses.

10. Strengthen the Working Group on Preventing and Resolving Conflict. This group has been dormant for some time following completion of its project with the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia and could be rebranded as a Working Group on Preventing Terrorism and Violent Extremism and focus on CVE issues. It is an ideal platform for considering the relationship of terrorism, violent extremism, and conflict and offers CTITF entities a platform for integrated assessments of critical regions. Ongoing efforts to revitalize the working groups provide a valuable opportunity to foster more-integrated and -preventive approaches that leverage existing UN expertise and comparative advantages.

11. Deepen engagement with UN peace and security actors and development entities. The CTITF is uniquely positioned to convene the range of actors within the UN system needed to implement the Strategy across all four pillars. The CTITF should convene more regular meetings of member entities at the expert level and offer thematic briefings that can help focus the attention of member state experts and capitals. Given the UN presence in complex security environments such as Afghanistan, Mali, Nigeria, and Somalia, for example, the CTITF should work more closely with the DPA and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to identify good practices and guidelines for the UN system as it is asked more frequently to address such multidimensional transnational threats. Desk officers for regions or countries and missions that address terrorism or violent extremism should be consulted in the early stages of project development to inform proposals for capacity-building and counterterrorism efforts.

STRENGTHEN ENGAGEMENT WITH THE FIELD

12. Encourage the transmission and exchange of knowledge at headquarters and in the field. This could include staff rotations from CTED into the CTITF Office and seconding more experts into the field to help sustain efforts to assess capacity needs and fill those gaps in cooperation with local actors. UN regional offices can serve as a hub for more-integrated approaches to counterterrorism issues, sharing information with CTED and the CTITF and vice versa. The CTITF should engage more proactively with regional offices and peace operations and special political missions to develop an informed threat analysis that can provide some early warning or identification of potential threats posed by violent extremism to sociopolitical development and their contribution to conflict dynamics. In addition, CTED staff may rotate for short or medium-length periods of time to the CTITF, lending their regional or subject-matter expertise; staff may be rotated for short periods to regional offices where feasible.

13. Create counterterrorism liaisons in field offices. Field missions and offices should designate a political affairs officer as a liaison for the CTITF and CTED where this has not already been done; they should be regularly engaged during expert-level CTITF meetings where feasible.

14. Deliver a series of training workshops for UN staff in the field to raise awareness of the Strategy and UN counterterrorism and CVE activities. The CTITF should facilitate a series of training workshops and modules that can be used to raise the awareness of UN officials at headquarters and in the field regarding UN counterterrorism and CVE resources and activities and increase their familiarity with them. These might be adapted and distributed to UN staff in less-accessible areas in the form of webinars made available through the UN intranet.

APPENDIX

Indicative Resource Guide for UN Member States and Entities Reporting on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

This guide collates existing norms and standards from across the UN system that may be referenced by member states and entities in providing inputs for the Secretary-General's reports on implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Beyond providing some initial indicators of Strategy implementation, the objective of this guide is to make it easier for states and entities to provide substantive reports, including by leveraging information that has been reported elsewhere.

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