

STATEMENT BY  
BRIAN SHERIDAN  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR  
SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES  
OF THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE  
106TH CONGRESS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND COMBATING TERRORISM  
MARCH 24, 2000

## INTRODUCTION

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am pleased to have the opportunity to update you, from a policy and operational perspective, on the way that the Department of Defense has organized itself to support the US Government's combating terrorism mission. Since I spoke with you a year ago the Department has continued to assess and improve the way that we organize and structure ourselves to combat the threat of terrorism both at home and abroad. The Department of Defense has made substantial progress, but terrorism will remain a continuing challenge in a volatile and violent world. The battle against terrorism requires effective coordination within our own government and between our government and law-abiding nations around the globe. At home it requires a close coordination between Federal, State and local authorities and even more importantly a strong partnership between the Executive and Legislative branches. I would like to commend the Senate Armed Services Committee for recognizing the increasing importance that non-traditional forms of warfare like terrorism increasingly play in our national security. I look forward to the opportunity today to build on our partnership.

As you are aware, DoD's combating terrorism program is part of a coordinated United States Government (USG) interagency team response. No single agency possesses the authorities, response mechanisms and capabilities to effectively deter or resolve terrorist incidents. The President has designated the Department of State as the lead agency for coordination of our counterterrorism policy and operations abroad, while the Department of Justice (DoJ), through the FBI, is the lead agency for countering terrorism in the United States. The Department of Defense, as authorized by law, plays a supporting role in assisting these lead federal agencies in their response to terrorist incidents. Certainly, as a major supporting agency, DoD brings a wealth of resources to the effort, unique and highly sophisticated in many instances. Domestically, DoD supports the law enforcement efforts of the DoJ, including the FBI, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for consequence management. For consequence management, specific technical expertise exists within the Public Health Service (PHS), Department of Energy (DoE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the FBI and others, all of which FEMA must bring together in a team effort to respond to a domestic terrorist incident. Simply put, all federal agencies are working together as an interagency team to combat the terrorism threat.

## THE THREAT

Our country faces a dynamic and uncertain security environment. We are in a period of strategic opportunity as the changing global economy and the proliferation of technology and international information systems transform culture, commerce, and global interaction. We also find ourselves in a period of uncertainty, surrounded by increasingly complex, dangerous, and unpredictable threats.

Our potential adversaries have learned to attack us with indirect and insidious means rather than open confrontation. Our adversaries will conduct their activities in the seam between war and crime, crossing agency lines of responsibility, where opportunities for confusion are more likely to arise. Accordingly, our adversaries will likely avoid traditional battlefield situations because, there, American dominance is well established. However, the increasing sophistication of terrorist organizations also makes them far more dangerous. Oklahoma City and Khobar Towers show the devastating effects of "conventional" explosives in the hands of terrorists. Experts have predicted that over time terrorists will gain access to information and technology that will enable them to create effective chemical and biological devices. It is not a question of "if" such devices will be used anymore. Rather, it is a question of "when," as exhibited by the Aum Shimrikyo subway attack in Tokyo in 1995. Therefore, we must prepare for the eventuality that weapons of mass destruction may fall into the hands of terrorists. We must be vigilant in protecting against the terrorist threat posed, first, by the handful of countries that actively sponsor terrorism; second, by the long-active terrorist organizations; third, by loosely affiliated extremists such as Osama bin Laden, who has urged his followers to kill Americans when and wherever they can, and, fourth, by terrorist threats triggered by U.S. actions and presence overseas.

Thus, the line between nation state and non-state actors can be a blurred one, as some rogue states make terrorism through surrogates a key instrument of national policy and as criminal groups seek power over nations. Terrorists seek to exploit our weaknesses – challenging our political, economic, technological, cultural, and other interests, both overseas and at home. At the same time we must not panic. We need a deliberate strategy; faithful to our 200-year tradition of close cooperation between the American people and their armed forces. Our strategy must be long term. It must address both the vulnerabilities of our nation while remaining consistent with our long-standing tradition of respect for civil liberties.

## **NATIONAL COMBATING TERRORISM POLICY**

The US Government has developed robust *interagency* programs, policies, strategies and capabilities which integrate US Government resources to effectively counter this increasingly ambiguous and complex operational environment. As you are aware, the US has developed nine fundamental principles of US government combating terrorism policy: first: address terrorism as both a crime and a national security threat; second: protect US personnel, facilities, and interests; third: preempt threats and respond to attacks; fourth: bring terrorists to justice for their crimes; fifth: support nations that cooperate in combating terrorism; sixth: isolate and apply pressure on states that sponsor and support terrorism to force them to change their behavior; seventh: make no concessions to terrorists and strike no deals; eighth: prepare now to manage and mitigate the effects of a terrorist incident and finally: focus on both state sponsors and also non-state actors in our analyses and information gathering.

## **DOD SUPPORT & ACTIVITY IN COMBATING TERRORISM**

The United States has an excellent response capability, the finest in the world; but we cannot say with absolute certainty that we can prevent all terrorist attacks. Many federal agencies have a role to play in the federal response to a terrorist incident. The Department does play an important role in accordance with legal constraints in providing unique resources and capabilities not found in other federal agencies, while remaining sensitive to societal concerns regarding a perceived increase in a military role in domestic law enforcement issues.

Combating terrorism activities within the Department are divided into four components: antiterrorism, counterterrorism, terrorism consequence management, and intelligence support to combating terrorism. Antiterrorism involves all defensive measures employed to protect personnel and facilities against a terrorist incident. Conversely, counterterrorism refers to offensive response measures to deter, preempt and resolve a terrorist act. Terrorism consequence management includes a range of activities required to provide emergency assistance to mitigate the effects of an act in order to alleviate damage, loss, hardship, or suffering caused by terrorist attacks and to protect the public health and safety and restore essential government services. The accumulation and dissemination of intelligence is critical to our success across all these components.

## **FUNDING FOR COMBATING TERRORISM**

As you are aware, Section 932 of the FY 2000 National Defense Authorization Act and the Statement of Managers accompanying the FY 2000 Defense Appropriations Act required the Department of Defense to submit to Congress a consolidated budget justification display that includes all DoD combating terrorism activities. You will find the Combating Terrorism Justification material extensive and thorough. We have provided full description of the activities and efforts of each of the Military Departments and Defense Agencies to combat terrorism.

## **INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS**

The Department employs a wide variety of resources within each of the four combating terrorism components – antiterrorism, counterterrorism, terrorism consequence management, and intelligence support. During the past few years, the Department has developed numerous initiatives, and refined various existing programs, to accomplish the combating terrorism mission. Projects have included organizing doctrine, tactics, and procedures; manning; training; education; assessments; intelligence and engagement; construction and other standards; technology; and chemical/biological technical support.

## **ANTITERRORISM**

It is DoD policy to protect its personnel, their families, facilities and equipment from terrorism. Toward that end, DoD specifically funds and executes programs for security at military installations and other DoD facilities around the world for a widespread training and awareness program and for upgraded antiterrorism measures for military commands abroad and at home. We are protecting our troops by providing them with state-of-the art protective gear against chemical and biological agents; by researching new vaccines against biological agents; and by developing longer range, improved detection equipment to give them more advanced warning of any danger. Moreover, DoD specifically budgets for security at military installations a widespread training and awareness program and upgraded anti-terrorism measures for military commands. Despite the threat arrayed against us worldwide, we as a country have refused to yield. We will not simply pack our bags and go home. Sacrificing our strategic interests in response to terrorist acts is an unacceptable alternative.

DoD has come a long way in its ability to protect U.S. forces from terrorist attacks while still ensuring mission accomplishment. Force protection has high-level attention and the highest priority in the organization at all levels. There are new standards, new policies, new doctrine, new assessments, improved training, a new technology push and greater resources devoted to force protection. Nevertheless, it is only a matter of time before terrorists again attempt an attack on our forces and perhaps even succeed. As long as terrorism remains a threat to our forces, we must ensure that protecting the force enjoys the same priority as projecting it.

## **COUNTERTERRORISM**

When looking at counterterrorism efforts, DoD has a number of rapid response elements and expert capabilities which have been refined over a number of years, intensely exercised with our interagency partners, and used on several occasions to assist our FBI counterparts – primarily in a technical role to date. These capabilities include a 24-hour command center watch every day of the year to respond to any terrorist incident; a number of specialized military units on alert, ready to respond within a few hours; a command and control element well versed in all terrorist scenarios; support to FBI-led renditions; deployment of Foreign Emergency Support Teams (FEST); support to National Special Security Events (NSSE); and technical support such as linguists, logistics, blast analysis, medical, chem/bio detection, diagnostics, personnel protection, decontamination, treatment and threat evaluation. These forces have been augmented with integral technical expertise, and can rapidly access our national laboratory expertise to assist them in rendering safe a WMD.

For counterterrorism, we have a well-functioning interagency mechanism for responding to a terrorist incident. For terrorist attacks which occur overseas, the Department of State is the lead agency. Responses to domestic incidents are led by the Department of Justice, through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). DoD is always a supporting agency for terrorist incidents. As part of this mechanism, there is a standing core working group headed by the National Security Council that works on combating terrorism issues. In the event of a terrorist incident, this group provides critical recommendations to our principals. Based on this advice the principals in turn make recommendations to the President on actions to take in a crisis. The interagency working group has been in existence for many years, is well organized, exercised, and is on-call every day to address terrorist incidents.

## **TERRORISM CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT**

Unlike crisis management of terrorist incidents, the federal government does not have primary responsibility for consequence management, but rather it supports state and local governments in domestic incidents and host governments in international incidents. As you know, the Secretary of Defense recently appointed an Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Civil Support) to coordinate the Department's consequence management initiatives. She will be prepared to address the Department's approach in greater detail today. The Department of Defense responds to requests from DoJ, FEMA, and the State Department to ensure that appropriate DoD support is provided as needed. It is important to remember however, that first responder, State, and local

medical worker awareness and preparedness is the best line of defense. Bottom line, in consequence management, response time equals lives.

## TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH/DEVELOPMENT

Now I would like to take a few moments to tell you about the Department's research and development (R&D) activities in combating terrorism with particular emphasis on our efforts to support the interagency process. I believe the Department's research and development activities, including the work conducted in the science and technology base, respond to the full spectrum of the terrorist threat from the Defense perspective--a threat that includes terrorism by transnational groups acting independently, state-sponsored terrorists, unconventional operations by hostile military forces, and home grown ad hoc terrorists.

In order that the nation better understands the evolution of technology to military capabilities in this area, the Department has purposefully organized and reported on combating terrorism as a vital part of its overall Science and Technology Plans and Objectives. The Office of the Director, Defense Research and Engineering guides the development of the Defense Technology Area Plan on Combating Terrorism and uses specific Defense Technology Objectives to support both the interests of the scientific community and program decision makers. These plans and objectives are collaborative products of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, the Military Departments, and the Defense Agencies. The plans and strategies are fully responsive to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's *Joint Vision 2010* and the National Science and Technology Councils (NSTC) *National Security Science and Technology Strategy*.

Research and Development Programs: The Department is executing several research and development (R&D) programs that specifically address combating terrorism needs. The Department also is using other R&D efforts that are focused on war fighter needs to support combating terrorism needs. Department R&D programs targeted specifically at combating terrorism are the USSOCOM efforts that are focused on preventing, deterring, and responding to terrorism, the Joint-Service Physical Security Equipment Program that tests commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) equipment for physical security and force protection needs, and the DoD Counterterror Technical Support (CTTS) Program that addresses both counterterrorism and antiterrorism needs of the interagency.

Technical Support Working Group: The CTTS Program is executed through a long-standing interagency forum known as the Technical Support Working Group (TSWG). The TSWG is the U.S. national forum that identifies, prioritizes, and coordinates interagency and international R&D requirements for combating terrorism. Through CTTS Program funds and funds supplied by State, Justice, and Energy, and DoD the TSWG rapidly develops equipment and technologies to meet the high-priority needs of the combating terrorism community, and addresses joint international operational requirements through cooperative research and development with Israel, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

The TSWG continues to develop important capabilities across the spectrum of combating terrorism. These include: specialized equipment to support counterterrorism assault teams and hostage rescue forces; equipment to support the law enforcement investigative, technical, and forensic capabilities for terrorist incidents, particularly those involving nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons; equipment to detect explosives and explosive devices and perform render safe operations; equipment to deal with chemical and biological threats in urban areas; equipment to protect high ranking officials, including the President; and equipment to prevent terrorist entry into facilities, detect attacks or threat materials, and mitigate injury to personnel and damage to facilities should an attack occur.

Weapons of Mass Destruction Preparedness Group: The Department also participates in the National Security Council led Weapons of Mass Destruction Preparedness Group (WMDP), which coordinates U.S. government activity towards preventing, detecting, responding, and managing the health, environmental, and law enforcement consequences of a terrorist attack utilizing weapons of mass destruction. DoD's technology development efforts that can contribute directly to the domestic preparedness are coordinated with efforts in other agencies through the WMDP's R&D subgroup, chaired by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

## CONCLUSION

The Department is fully committed, through the broad spectrum of our combating terrorism activities, to deter attacks against our personnel and facilities; and to respond rapidly and decisively, when directed by the National Command authorities, during incidents involving acts or threats of terrorism. As always, the Department has a supporting role to the applicable lead federal agency, when providing military assistance to civil authorities to mitigate the consequences of terrorist attacks. Although the Department has made substantial progress, effective response to terrorism will remain a challenge, as the array of individuals and organizations (independent and state sponsored) that can affect US security and international stability continue to grow in number and competence. Their attacks, when they come, may be directed not only against US citizens and facilities abroad, but also here in the US. Our long-term strategy must address the vulnerabilities of our nation, while ensuring the military preparedness of our armed forces and our long-standing tradition of respect for civil liberties. The Department is well aware of the complexity of our task, and has devoted significant resources to protect our forces, our military installations, and our national interests.