

Anne Witkowsky
Deputy Coordinator for Homeland Security and Multilateral Affairs
Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism
U.S. Department of State

Chair, APEC Counter-Terrorism Task Force

Remarks to the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee
Thursday, December 15, 2011
3:00 pm

I want to thank Ambassador Puri and the members of this committee for inviting me to speak about recent developments and accomplishments within the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Counter-Terrorism Task Force (CTTF). I am a Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the U.S. Department of State. I have also served as Chair of the CTTF for the past year, and I will continue to do so through 2012.

I am joined today by the CTTF Vice-Chair, Mr. Dmitry Feoktistov. We are both very pleased to have the opportunity to share information with the Committee on the CTTF's work.

I will begin by touching briefly on the role of APEC and the CTTF, and highlight some of our key activities. APEC is the premier forum for economic cooperation across the Asia-Pacific region. Established in 1989, APEC is composed of 21 member economies from both sides of the Pacific Ocean that account for 55 percent of global Gross Domestic Product and nearly half of global trade. APEC member economies collaborate on a wide range of issues, including trade, finance, transportation, telecommunications, and energy. APEC is a consensus-driven and

action-oriented organization, and it strives to engage all relevant stakeholders – including the private sector – in its work.

The APEC Counter-Terrorism Task Force was established in May 2003, in response to the increased terrorist threat to the Asia/Pacific region’s people and its economic, trade, investment and financial systems. The CTTF is specifically charged with coordinating the implementation of APEC members’ commitments related to counterterrorism. A key aspect of its role is to help member economies identify, assess, and address capacity building and technical assistance needs in this area. Collaborating with a diverse set of APEC working groups and stakeholders, the CTTF develops, supports, and coordinates activities in a wide range of areas, such as counter-terrorism finance, critical infrastructure protection, supply chain security, defense of the food supply, transportation security, and cyber security. We implement this work through regular meetings of the CTTF, capacity building projects, and joint initiatives with other APEC working groups.

We see APEC and the CTTF as a unique and valuable venue for cooperation on counterterrorism in the Asia-Pacific region for several reasons:

- First, because of its primary economic mission, APEC concentrates its efforts on issues at the intersection of security and commerce, where terrorists continue to target important transportation and trade infrastructure, as well as abuse the financial system to fund their activities. Our goal is to safeguard these vital economic systems that support economic development in the Asia-Pacific region, ensure the secure and efficient flow of legitimate commerce, and promote a safe business environment.
- Second, APEC brings together a diverse set of regional officials under one roof, allowing us to leverage their collective expertise to address terrorist

threats in a comprehensive and integrated manner. APEC has working groups dedicated not only to counter-terrorism, but also transportation, customs, immigration, finance, and telecommunications, which all play critical roles in protecting our borders and economic infrastructure. In the process, APEC engages a range of relevant multilateral organizations.

- Third, APEC facilitates cooperation between governments and the private sector, whose help is vital to securing commerce against terrorists and other threats. One example of how we foster public-private dialogue is the Secure Trade in the APEC Region (STAR) Conference, which I recently chaired in September in San Francisco. The STAR Conference brought together a wide range of officials from APEC economies – including those responsible for transportation security, customs, immigration, border protection, and counterterrorism – to have a broad-based dialogue with participants from the private sector and international organizations about how APEC can help build risk-based approaches to securing trade and travel in the region.
- Fourth, APEC is a proven mechanism for implementing and reinforcing international commitments, as well as experimenting with new ideas and concepts that shape efforts at the global level. APEC has done this in close cooperation with other multilateral organizations.

Today, I'll focus on three specific areas in which we have been working in the CTTF: the new APEC Counter-Terrorism and Secure Trade Strategy; APEC's capacity building work; and our efforts to enhance coordination and transparency, both within APEC and between APEC and other organizations, including the United Nations.

Counter-Terrorism and Secure Trade Strategy

Last month, APEC Ministers approved the consolidated APEC Counter-Terrorism and Secure Trade Strategy, which was developed over the course of this year by the CTTF in close cooperation with a number of expert working groups within APEC. The document outlines the strategic principles and cross-cutting activity areas that will guide APEC security efforts over at least the next five years. The Strategy is APEC's first attempt to articulate a comprehensive, forward-looking vision for our counterterrorism and secure trade body of work.

The Strategy identifies three fundamental pillars that underpin APEC's approach to countering terrorism and securing commerce.

- The first and most basic is **Security**, which means safeguarding the Asia-Pacific region's supply chains, travel network, financial systems, and infrastructure from attack, disruption, or misuse.
- The second pillar, consistent with APEC's core economic mission, is **Efficiency**. This means ensuring that security measures have as minimal an impact as possible on the flow of legitimate trade and travel. In fact, the Strategy seeks to promote the development of security measures that both protect and facilitate commerce.
- The third pillar is **Resilience** – the recognition that, despite our dedication to efficiency and security, man-made and natural events will inevitably disrupt trade and travel. Through our strategy, we are explicitly committed to fostering systems that are able to absorb the impacts of disruptions, maximize continued operations, and recover as rapidly as possible.

These three fundamental pillars serve as a strategic foundation for APEC’s work in four main activity areas – secure supply chains, secure travel, secure finance, and secure infrastructure. Each of these activity areas is cross-cutting in nature, and require us to harness the expertise and activities of a wide range of officials working within various sub-groups within APEC.

Let’s take the issue of Secure Travel as an example. We know that the aviation system continues to be a terrorist target. So the Strategy lays out an integrated approach to addressing security issues in each major aspect of the travel process – departure, arrival, and time spent at the destination.

To strengthen the security of the departure process, aviation security experts in the APEC Transportation Working Group have been leading the way in building cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region on aviation screening technologies and techniques. The CTTF has co-sponsored several workshops with our transportation colleagues on aviation screening, which is vital to both the security and efficiency of air travel. For example, in June we held a training workshop on the development and effective maintenance of canine screening programs for the aviation environment. In many airports, we have found canine screening to be a valuable additional layer of security, in part as it relates to explosives detection.

In addition, effective immigration and border controls are key to preventing dangerous people and goods from entering our borders without unnecessarily hindering legitimate trade and travel. That’s why the Strategy calls for, and APEC customs and immigration officials are already undertaking, efforts to strengthen border security capabilities through initiatives like the APEC Border Capabilities Model. The Border Capabilities Model is an effort to identify “ideal” modern border management capacities with respect to the movement of people. The

initiative will also help APEC member economies obtain those capacities in ways that are tailored to their particular circumstances, strengthening their ability to process arriving passengers and goods.

Travelers can continue to be targets when they've arrived at their travel destinations, as evidenced by terrorist attempts against tourist infrastructure and areas of mass gathering. The deplorable attack on Domodedovo Airport earlier this year is one notable example. To address this threat, the Strategy calls for, and the CTTF launched this past year, capacity building in such areas as major event security and protection of areas frequented by tourists. This area of work integrates all three of the Strategy's fundamental pillars – securing tourists and citizens from terrorist attacks, ensuring the tourism industry can continue to function in a safe and efficient manner, and strengthening tourist infrastructure so it can recover from disruptions as quickly as possible. We recently strengthened our cooperation with APEC tourism officials to explore how we can expand this body of work in the future.

In all of these aspects of the travel process, we know that the efforts of a multitude of agencies – including border, law enforcement, transportation security, customs, tourism officials, and non-governmental stakeholders – need to be coordinated to ensure the effectiveness of overall travel security efforts. That's why the Strategy sets forth a tightly integrated approach to countering terrorism and securing commerce, including close cooperation with the private sector and multilateral organizations. It also defines a central role for the CTTF in facilitating this cross-cutting collaboration.

Capacity Building

Furthermore, the Strategy seeks to strengthen APEC efforts in the second area I want to highlight today: capacity building.

To give you an idea of the range of capacity building work we do, in 2011 the CTTF sponsored or co-sponsored workshops, conferences, and seminars on Major Event Security, the use of canine screening in Aviation Security, Cybersecurity, Secure Trade, and Food Defense. We have projects planned for 2012 devoted to counterterrorism finance and anti-money laundering, air cargo security, bus security, post-incident trade recovery, and other issues. We partner with many international expert bodies, including the UN CTED, FATF, ICAO and IMO, to help develop regional approaches to implementing international standards and norms.

CTTF capacity building initiatives (and APEC projects in general) are proposed by one or more member economies, which then organize and implement the project. These projects are either self-funded by member economies or funded by APEC.

Given the quantity and breadth of these programs, the CTTF is continuously working to improve our ability to identify capacity building gaps, set priorities for future initiatives, and evaluate the effectiveness of our capacity building projects.

A primary tool we use to identify gaps in APEC members' counterterrorism capabilities is the Counter-Terrorism Action Plan (or CTAP). The CTAP is completed annually by each APEC economy, and helps the CTTF and other APEC sub-groups to plan capacity building activities, while avoiding unnecessary duplication. In function, the CTAP complements and reinforces the CTED

Preliminary Implementation Assessment (PIA), which assesses implementation of Security Council Resolution 1373 by UN member states.

Like the PIA, the CTAP asks APEC members to report on the actions they have taken to implement counterterrorism commitments, though in this case we assess progress on commitments made at the regional level by APEC Leaders and Ministers. It also asks APEC members to self-report gaps in counterterrorism capacity and to request capacity building assistance, or highlight capacity building assistance they could offer others. Each year, the APEC Secretariat produces a Summary Report of these capacity building needs.

In 2012 and beyond, we will work to strengthen our capacity building efforts by improving the Summary Report and integrating it more closely into our capacity building planning process. As part of that effort, we are also seeking to augment our ability to evaluate the capacity building initiatives our members carry out, including through the development of a standardized evaluation process for CTTF capacity building programs. We also seek to promote multi-year projects in order to foster more strategically oriented capacity building and encourage innovative approaches for deeper, more effective, and more sustained capacity building cooperation. These measures will strengthen our capacity building and help us get maximum return on resources.

Coordination and Transparency

The last area I want to touch on is our commitment to coordinating the CTTF's work with other regional and international organizations.

APEC is only one organization in a web of multilateral actors in the counterterrorism arena. As a result, the CTTF has reinvigorated efforts to build

closer working relationships with other organizations, make our work more transparent to other multilateral counterterrorism bodies, and ensure our programs complement existing initiatives in other fora and that they leverage APEC's comparative advantages. Working closely with other organizations also gives the CTTF and related APEC working groups a chance to learn from efforts being pursued by others elsewhere in the world and to draw on outside expertise as we set our own plans and priorities.

We were fortunate to have representatives from the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) join us for all three of our CTTF meetings in 2011. CTED's participation added a great deal of value to our discussions by sharing information on CTED initiatives with APEC members, and by providing its perspectives and expertise on issues being considered by the CTTF and other APEC sub-groups. This is particularly important because CTED and the CTTF often work in the same programmatic space. I hope we can continue CTED's participation in CTTF meetings going forward.

In addition to CTED, representatives from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), World Customs Organization (WCO), and OAS/CICTE participated in CTTF meetings this year, with ICAO and WCO also working closely with APEC's transportation and customs sub-groups. The CTTF is interested in inviting the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) to future meetings to discuss counterterrorism finance initiatives.

I would highlight that APEC has also proven to be a valuable mechanism for implementing and reinforcing international standards and commitments developed in other international fora. This is why organizations like the WCO and ICAO

have actively engaged with APEC and are looking to strengthen their working relationships with us.

At the same time, APEC has served as a laboratory for new ideas and concepts that have shaped efforts at the global level. An example of this is the APEC Trade Recovery Program, which the CTTF launched in cooperation with APEC customs officials in 2006. The Trade Recovery Program was a pioneering effort to strengthen the resilience of regional trade. It explored how APEC members could quickly and effectively restore regional commerce in the event of a successful terrorist attack. The outcomes of the program shaped the WCO's own trade recovery guidelines, and now APEC is working together with the WCO to develop an operational plan to allow for quick response to major disruptions. This is a great example of APEC's successful partnership with other organizations.

Cooperation with other organizations is something we take quite seriously, and the CTTF is looking to expand and deepen this collaboration going forward. I hope not only to share APEC's work with other organizations through briefings such as this one, but also to pursue joint initiatives that enable us to advance our common goals.

Those are just a few of the areas the CTTF has focused on in 2011 and will continue working toward in 2012. Let me thank you again for inviting me to address the committee.