United States Government Accountability Office

Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate

GAO

June 2014

COMBATING TERRORISM

U.S. Efforts in Northwest Africa Would Be Strengthened by Enhanced Program Management

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Why GAO Did This Study

Events in northwest Africa—such as al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb's seizure of territory in Mali in 2012 and Boko Haram's near-daily attacks in Nigeria—have underscored concerns that the region is vulnerable to the spread of violent extremism. TSCTP, a U.S. multiagency counterterrorism effort begun in 2005, led by State, and primarily coordinated with USAID and DOD, focuses on strengthening partner countries' counterterrorism capabilities and inhibiting the spread of terrorist ideology through diplomacy, development, and security assistance.

This report examines (1) the status of TSCTP-related funding and U.S. agencies' ability to track such funding; (2) the extent to which U.S. agency implementation of TSCTP is consistent with key practices of interagency collaboration; and (3) whether U.S. agencies considered partner country needs, absorptive capacities, and other donor efforts when selecting TSCTP activities. GAO reviewed agency documents, met with key officials in Washington, D.C., and conducted fieldwork at the U.S. Africa Command in Germany and in Algeria, Mauritania, and Niger.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of State and the Administrator of USAID ensure that TSCTP program managers take steps to routinely collect and assess information on the status of funds for TSCTP. GAO also recommends that the Secretary of State take steps to better integrate the Department of Justice into TSCTP coordination efforts. State and USAID both concurred with GAO's recommendations.

View GAO-14-518. For more information, contact Charles Michael Johnson, Jr., at (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

Nearly half of the funds allocated for the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) since fiscal year 2009 have been disbursed, but TSCTP program managers are unable to readily provide data on the status of these funds. As of late 2013, U.S. agencies reported disbursing nearly $140 million of the approximately $288 million allocated for TSCTP between fiscal years 2009 and 2013. Mali, Mauritania, and Niger were the top three recipients of bilateral funding. Although the Department of State's (State) *Foreign Affairs Manual* and federal standards for internal control note that effective internal management requires financial information for planning, programming, and performance evaluation, TSCTP's program managers do not routinely collect and assess data on the status of funding for TSCTP, such as the amount of funds unobligated. Consequently, TSCTP's program managers may lack the day-to-day access to financial information that federal standards for internal control state is required to make operating decisions, monitor performance, and allocate resources.

TSCTP Allocations by Country and Regional Programs, Fiscal Years 2009-2013
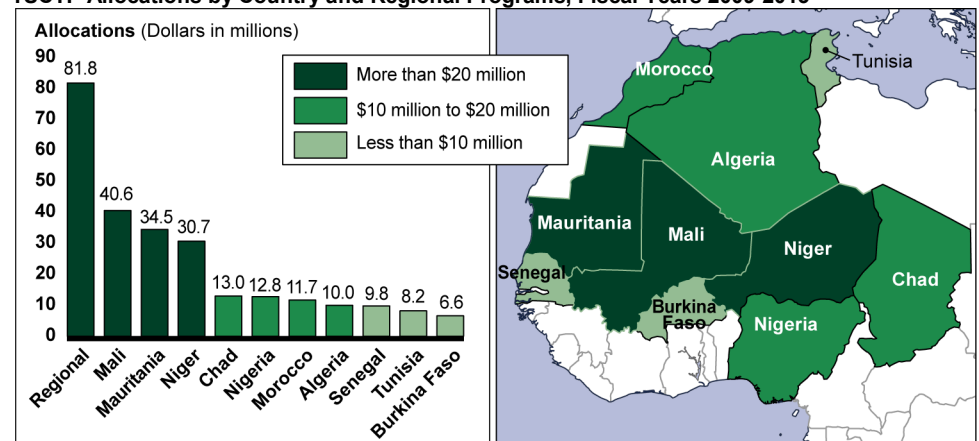
Source: GAO analysis of State and USAID data; Map Resources (map). | GAO-14-518

State, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and Department of Defense (DOD) actions to implement TSCTP are generally consistent with most but not all of the key practices of interagency collaboration that GAO has identified as important to enhancing collaborative agency efforts. For example, agencies have agreed on their roles and responsibilities, established a joint strategy, and defined a common outcome for TSCTP. However, although agencies have taken steps to leverage their resources and establish compatible procedures to operate across agency boundaries, the Department of Justice has not been fully integrated into TSCTP coordination efforts despite its expertise in building law enforcement capacity—one of TSCTP's five lines of effort.

U.S. agencies have used various means to consider partner country needs, absorptive capacities, and other donor efforts when selecting TSCTP activities. These include assessment reports, meetings with host governments, and bilateral and multilateral outreach to other donors. For example, the United States participates in the Global Counterterrorism Forum, a multilateral venue for sharing information on the counterterrorism activities of other donor nations.

_____ **United States Government Accountability Office**

Contents

Figures

June 24, 2014

The Honorable Robert Menendez
Chairman
The Honorable Bob Corker
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

Several recent events in northwest Africa have underscored concerns that the region's vast ungoverned spaces, smuggling routes, porous borders, poverty, and fragile states offer a conducive environment for the spread of violent extremist ideology. In 2012, the terrorist group al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its allies started seizing territory in Mali, prompting a French-led military intervention and ongoing international military involvement in northern Mali to disrupt terrorist activity. AQIM continues to plan and encourage kidnappings for ransom of U.S. citizens and other Westerners as its primary means of raising funds for operations. In January 2013, an offshoot of AQIM attacked a natural gas facility in Algeria, killing dozens of people, including three U.S. citizens. In Nigeria, the terrorist group Boko Haram has carried out near-daily attacks since conducting a suicide car bombing at a United Nations facility in 2011, to include an April 2014 bus station bombing in Nigeria's capital that killed at least 75 people and the kidnapping of more than 230 female students in northeast Nigeria later that same day, highlighting the continuing threat that terrorist groups in the region pose.

Since 2005, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) has been the primary U.S. counterterrorism initiative in northwest Africa. TSCTP is a Department of State (State)-led effort primarily coordinated with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of Defense (DOD) that focuses on strengthening partner country and regional counterterrorism capabilities and inhibiting the spread of terrorist ideology in the region through diplomacy, development, and security assistance activities in 11 countries—Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia.

In response to your request that we conduct a follow-on review of TSCTP,[1] this report examines (1) the status of TSCTP-related funding and U.S. agencies' ability to track such funding; (2) the extent to which U.S. agency implementation of TSCTP is consistent with key practices of interagency collaboration; and (3) whether U.S. agencies considered partner country needs, absorptive capacities, and other donor efforts when selecting TSCTP activities.[2]

To address these objectives, we reviewed agency documents related to TSCTP—including strategy and planning documents, progress reporting, and funding information—as well as relevant documents from U.S. implementing partners, other international donors, and related multilateral entities, such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum.[3] We also assessed the extent to which agency actions have been consistent with key practices GAO has identified for enhancing interagency collaboration and discussed U.S. assistance efforts with State, USAID, and DOD; the Departments of Justice (Justice), Homeland Security (DHS), and the Treasury (Treasury); and intelligence community officials in the Washington, D.C., area.[4] Additionally, we conducted fieldwork at the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) in Germany in November 2013. We also conducted fieldwork in Algeria, Mauritania, and Niger in December 2013, during which we met with State, DOD, and USAID officials; U.S. implementing partners; representatives of partner country security forces and ministries; and international donors. See appendix I for a complete description of our scope and methodology.

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[1]We previously reported on TSCTP funding and implementation in 2008. See GAO, *Combating Terrorism: Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership*, GAO-08-860 (Washington, D.C.: July 31, 2008).

[2]We reported separately on similar issues in our report on the U.S. Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism. See GAO, *Combating Terrorism: State Department Can Improve Management of East Africa Program*, GAO-14-502 (Washington, D.C.: June 17, 2014).

[3]The Global Counterterrorism Forum was created in 2011 and, in addition to the United States, consists of 28 member countries and the European Union. The goal of the forum is to facilitate global cooperation in identifying and addressing critical civilian counterterrorism needs around the world.

[4]GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, GAO-06-15 (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 21, 2005).

We conducted this performance audit from June 2013 to June 2014 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

The United States established TSCTP in 2005 as a result of growing concerns about terrorist groups in the region affiliated with al Qaeda and the increased efforts of those groups to attract young recruits, among other reasons. Since 2005, terrorist activity in the region has increased significantly. Figure 1 illustrates the number of terrorist events conducted by select terrorist groups in the 11 TSCTP countries from 2009 to 2012.

Figure 1: Terrorist Events Conducted by Select Terrorist Groups in TSCTP Countries, 2009-2012
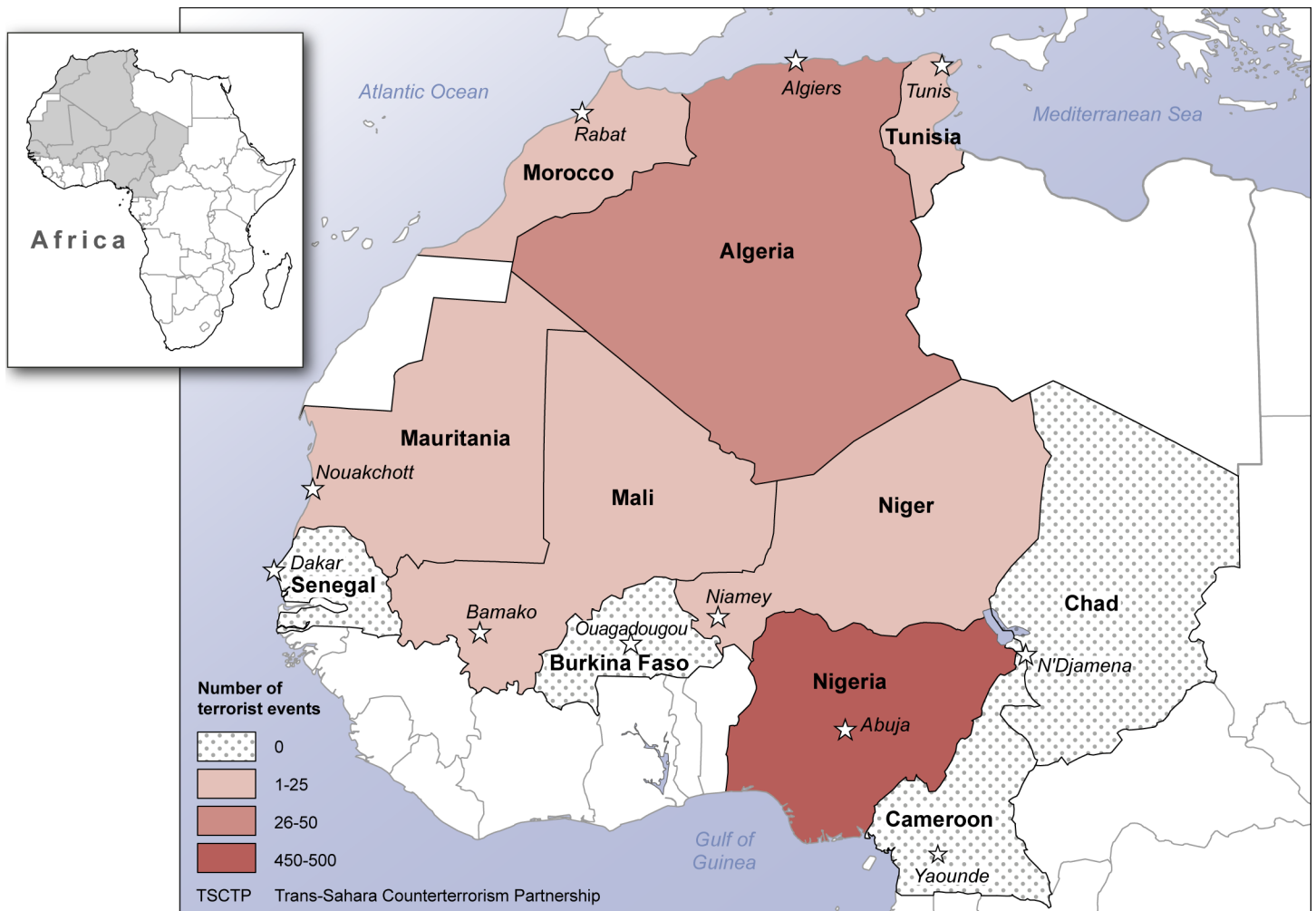
Source: GAO analysis of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism's Global Terrorism Database; Map Resources (map). | GAO-14-518

Notes: Terrorist events conducted by the following terrorist groups are included in this figure: al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Ansaru, Boko Haram, and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (which merged with another group in 2013 to form al-Murabitoun).

This figure only includes events that the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism identified as events (1) aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal; (2) where there was evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey a message beyond the immediate victims; (3) falling outside legitimate warfare activities that are outside the parameters of international humanitarian law; and (4) that are not ambiguous as to their nature as terrorist incidents. Successful and unsuccessful attacks are included.

Terrorist event information is drawn entirely from publicly available materials and reflects what is reported in those sources. (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. (2012). Global Terrorism Database (data file). Retrieved from http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd on May 5, 2014.)

While Cameroon did not become a member of TSCTP until January 2014, we include it in the figure above for illustrative purposes.

Key terrorist groups in northwest Africa and their regions of operation since 2009 are illustrated in figure 2.

Figure 2: Key Terrorist Groups in Northwest Africa and Their Regions of Operation, 2009-2014
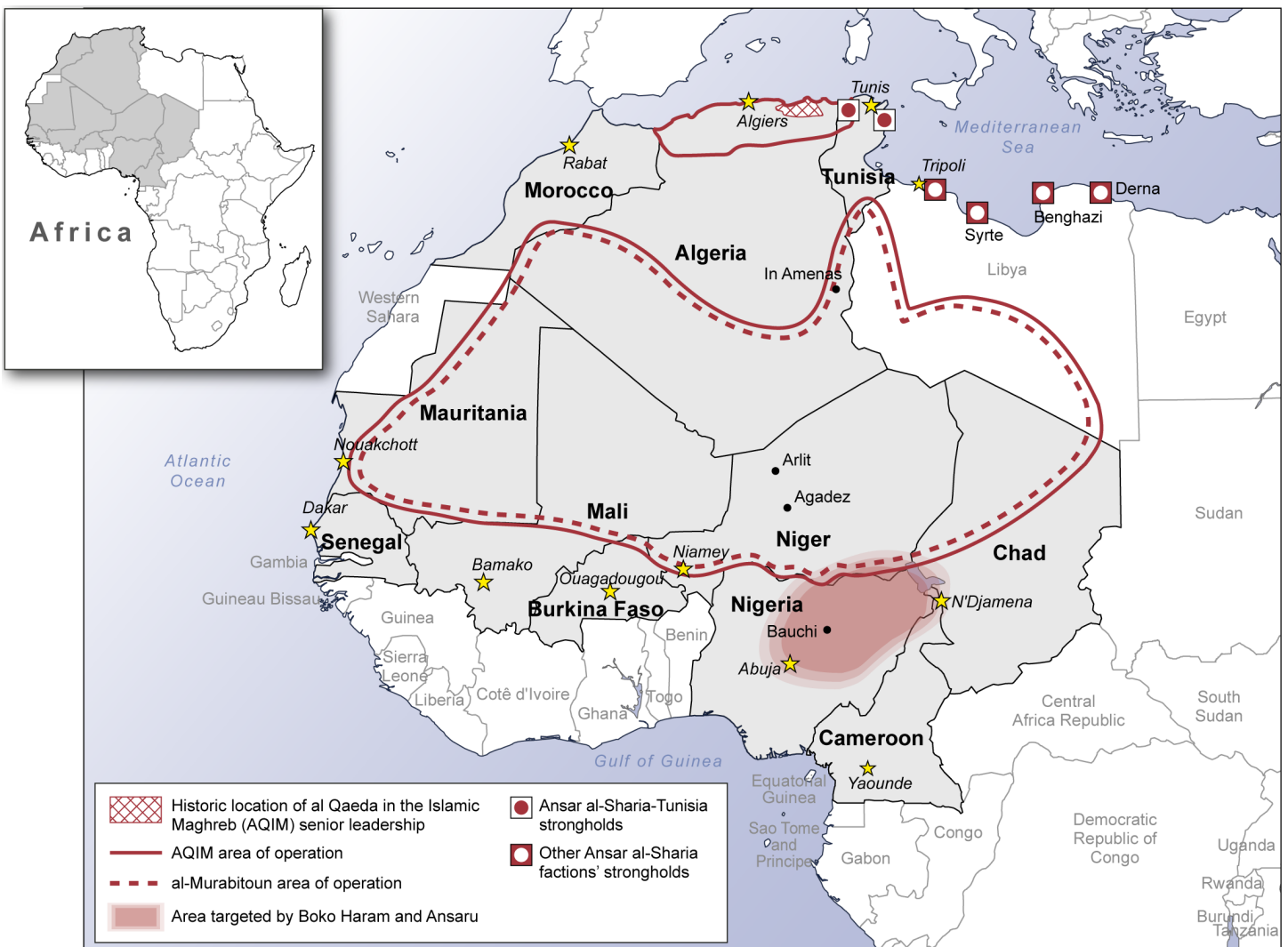
Source: GAO analysis of State information; Map Resources (map). | GAO-14-518

Note: This figure is current as of June 2014. Countries shaded in gray are Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership countries.

Figure 3 further illustrates some of the political and security events in TSCTP countries since 2009, including coups in Niger, Mauritania, and Mali, as well as significant terrorist events, such as Boko Haram's August 2011 attack in Nigeria outside the United Nations office in Abuja.[5] It does not include the numerous kidnappings for ransom that have taken place since 2009 or other significant regional events that have affected TSCTP countries, such as the collapse of the Libyan government in 2011, which resulted in the spread of unsecured military-grade weapons and experienced fighters throughout the region.

[5]Coups, human rights violations, and government abuses of power in partner countries, among other factors, can affect U.S. ability to provide assistance to such countries, including through TSCTP.

Figure 3: Select Political, Security, and Terrorist Events in TSCTP Countries, 2009-2014

Political and security events

December 2009
Niger: most nonhumanitarian U.S. assistance is suspended because of President's attempt to unlawfully extend presidential term

February 2009
Burkina Faso becomes a member of TSCTP

July 2009
Mauritania: presidential elections held after August 2008 coup

February 2010
Niger: a military coup overthrows the democratically elected government

December 2010
Tunisia: protests begin that result in the overthrow of the government

January 2011
Niger: presidential elections held after 2010 coup

March 2011
Niger: restrictions on U.S. assistance are lifted

October 2011
Tunisia: elections for the constituent assembly held after 2010 unrest

January 2012
Mali: separatists in northern Mali rebel against the central government

March 2012
Mali: a military coup overthrows the democratically elected government; U.S. assistance is suspended

April 2012
Mali: AQIM and its allies seize territory in northern Mali

January 2013
Mali: French-led military intervention initiated to combat territorial gains of AQIM

July 2013
Mali: presidential elections held after 2012 coup

September 2013
Mali: restrictions on U.S. assistance are lifted

January 2014
Cameroon becomes a member of TSCTP

| 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |

July 2009
Nigeria: Boko Haram attacks a police station in Bauchi state, initiating a standoff that results in nearly 700 deaths, the public execution of a Boko Haram leader, and a turning point in the radicalization of Boko Haram

June 2009
Mauritania: al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) kills an American citizen in Nouakchott

August 2011
Nigeria: Boko Haram conducts suicide car bombing of United Nations office in Abuja, killing 23

January 2013
Algeria: AQIM-linked terrorists attack a gas facility near the Libyan border, taking hundreds hostage and killing 40, including 3 Americans

May 2013
Niger: AQIM-linked terrorists conduct coordinated attacks against a military academy in Agadez and a French-owned mine in Arlit, killing 25 people

April 2014
Nigeria: Boko Haram bombs a bus station in Abuja, killing at least 75 people, the deadliest attack to date in Nigeria's capital

Select terrorist events

TSCTP   Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership

Source: GAO analysis of State and other public information. | GAO-14-518

Note: This figure does not include the numerous kidnappings by terrorist groups in this region since 2009, including the April 2014 Boko Haram kidnapping of more than 230 female students in northeast Nigeria.

To assist partner country efforts to tackle the terrorist threat in the region, State, USAID, and DOD have conducted a variety of activities using TSCTP-dedicated funding. State's TSCTP activities include public diplomacy efforts as well as law enforcement training and equipping and criminal justice sector reform. USAID's TSCTP activities include efforts to support youth employment, strengthen local governance capacity, and improve access to education. DOD's TSCTP activities, which are funded by State, include counterterrorism training and equipping. See appendix II for additional details as well as illustrations of TSCTP activities.

Funding for TSCTP comes from various appropriation accounts and is administered by State or USAID, with DOD assisting in State's implementation of one of these accounts.[6] These accounts include the following:

- *Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)*—authorizes the President to furnish assistance to friendly countries and international organizations for peacekeeping operations and other programs carried out in furtherance of the national security interest of the United States. PKO funds are State- and DOD-implemented and are used, in part, to train and equip military units tasked with monitoring and controlling border areas and territory exploited by terrorist elements.

- *Development Assistance (DA)*—authorizes the President to provide assistance for various purposes, including agricultural development, education and human resources development, grant assistance for microenterprises, and a development fund for Africa, among other purposes. DA funds are USAID-implemented and are used to support host nation efforts to counter radicalization, recruitment, and violent extremist organizations.

- *Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR)*—authorizes the President to provide antiterrorism assistance, nonproliferation and export control assistance, and other assistance to foreign countries for various purposes. NADR funds are typically State-implemented and are used to support activities designed to enhance the law enforcement capacity and antiterrorism skills of partner countries by providing training, equipment, and mentoring to deter, detect, and respond to terrorism.

- *Economic Support Fund (ESF)*—authorizes the President to assist countries and organizations in order to promote economic or political stability. ESF funds are State- and USAID-implemented and are used, in part, to counter violent extremism.

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[6]While DOD does not directly fund TSCTP activities, its Operation Enduring Freedom–Trans-Sahara program provides operational support for U.S. military personnel who conduct efforts to build partner nation counterterrorism capacity and synchronize security cooperation activities across the region, including those undertaken through TSCTP. DOD obligated approximately $205 million for Operation Enduring Freedom–Trans-Sahara between fiscal years 2009 and 2013.

- *International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE)*—authorizes the President to assist foreign countries and international organizations to control narcotics and other controlled substances, or for other anticrime purposes. INCLE funds are typically State-implemented and are used to develop and implement policies and programs that maintain the rule of law and strengthen institutional law enforcement and judicial capabilities, including combating transnational crime.

The five accounts funding TSCTP also fund other, non-TSCTP counterterrorism assistance to TSCTP countries, such as NADR funds that have been used to post Department of Justice legal advisers in some TSCTP countries. In addition, State, DOD, and other U.S. agencies such as Justice, Treasury, and DHS use other accounts to fund non-TSCTP counterterrorism-related assistance in the TSCTP region. One such effort is DOD's Section 1206 program, which provides counterterrorism training and equipment globally, including to TSCTP countries.[7] See appendix III for more information about select accounts and programs that support U.S. counterterrorism efforts outside of TSCTP.

Within State, the lead U.S. agency for TSCTP, the Office of Regional and Security Affairs within the Bureau of African Affairs is the lead coordinator for TSCTP activities across several State bureaus and is responsible for managing activities in Burkina Faso, Chad, Cameroon, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal, while the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs is responsible for managing activities in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.[8] At the country level, the U.S. embassy in each member country has a country team that facilitates interagency coordination as well as

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[7]Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, as amended, established this program, also known as the Global Train and Equip Program, which is used to build the capacity of foreign military forces and foreign security forces to conduct counterterrorism operations, and to enable foreign military forces to participate in or support military and stability operations in which the U.S. armed forces are a participant. Through this program, DOD may provide foreign military forces with equipment, supplies, training, and small-scale military construction activities. Programs funded with this assistance must be jointly formulated and implemented by the Secretaries of Defense and State, and the law authorizes DOD to provide the assistance with the Secretary of State's concurrence.

[8]The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs is responsible for coordinating TSCTP activities funded through INCLE. The Bureau of Counterterrorism coordinates TSCTP activities funded through NADR. The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs coordinates TSCTP activities funded through PKO.

implementation of programs such as TSCTP, as shown in figure 4. Each country team is led by and falls under the authority of the U.S. ambassador to that country and is generally made up of key officials from State, USAID, DOD, and other relevant agencies.[9]

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[9]If an agency is not present in a country, it may not be represented on that country team. For example, USAID is not present in Algeria, so USAID is not part of the country team at that embassy.

Figure 4: Overview of the Primary Agencies Participating in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP)
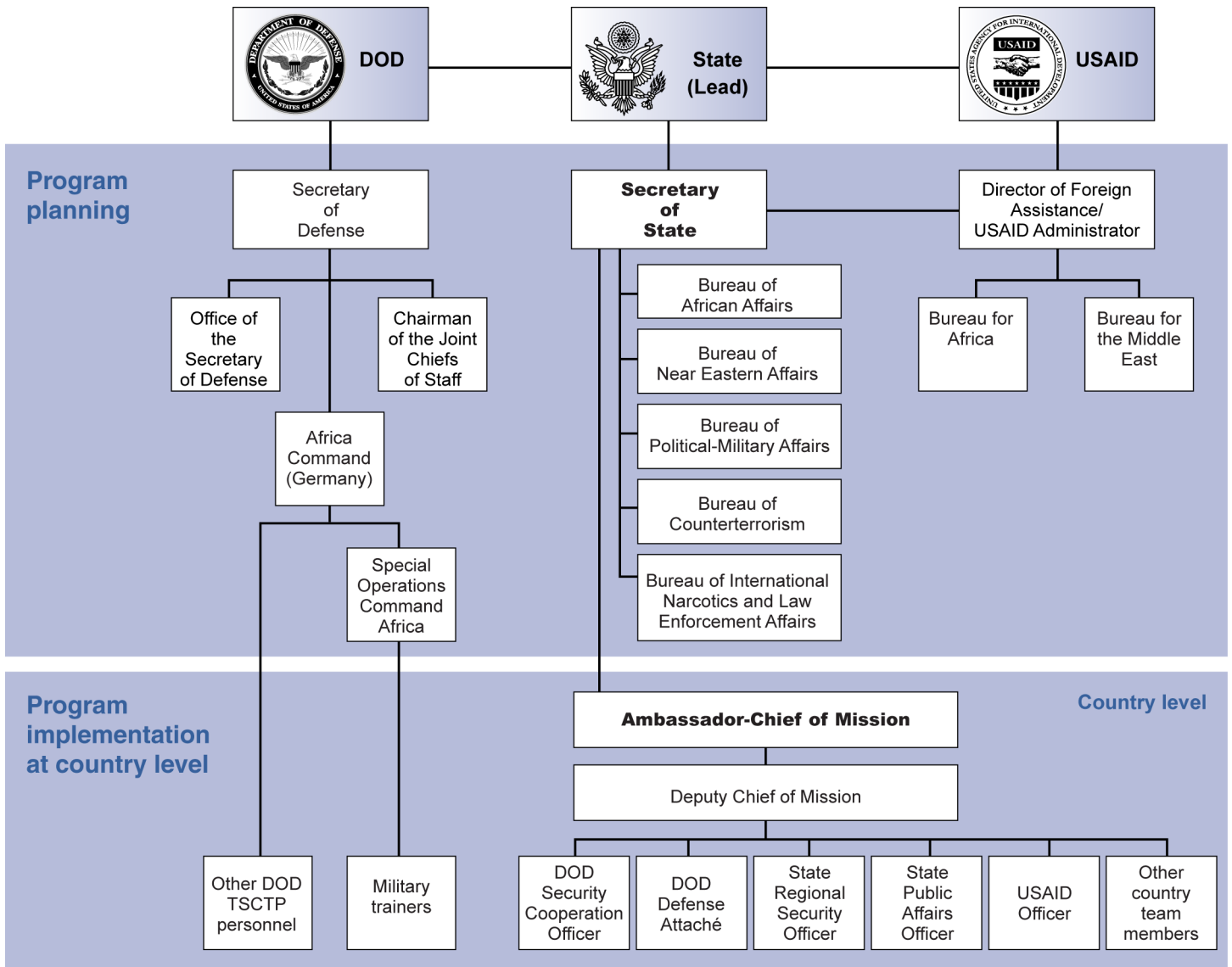
Source: GAO analysis of State, USAID, and DOD information. | GAO-14-518

USAID's regional office in Accra, Ghana, and its bilateral office in Bamako, Mali, manage the agency's TSCTP activities with support from

USAID bureaus in Washington, D.C.[10] DOD's Office of the Secretary of Defense is responsible for coordinating the agency's TSCTP activities that are undertaken using State's PKO funding.[11] In addition, DOD representatives under the authority of AFRICOM work with country teams in coordinating and implementing TSCTP's security assistance activities, as well as other counterterrorism-related activities in the region.

Nearly Half of Funds Allocated for TSCTP since 2009 Have Been Disbursed, but TSCTP Program Managers Are Unable to Readily Provide Data on the Status of Funding

U.S. agencies allocated about $288 million for TSCTP between fiscal years 2009 and 2013, of which they have disbursed slightly less than half. Although State's *Foreign Affairs Manual* and federal standards for internal control note that effective internal management requires financial information, TSCTP's managers at State and USAID do not routinely collect and assess data on the status of funds for TSCTP activities, such as the amounts of funds unobligated or disbursed—key data that could help inform their management of the program.[12] As a result, the process of providing us with a complete, sufficiently reliable set of information on the status of funds allocated for TSCTP took several months and, according to State and USAID officials, was very time-consuming and labor-intensive. Consequently, TSCTP's program managers may lack the day-to-day access to financial information that federal standards for internal control state is required to make operating decisions, monitor performance, and allocate resources.[13]

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[10]USAID's Bureau for the Middle East coordinates TSCTP activities in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, and the Bureau for Africa coordinates activities in Burkina Faso, Chad, Cameroon, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal.

[11]Within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Office of African Affairs oversees DOD's TSCTP activities, provides policy and guidance to AFRICOM, and interfaces with other U.S. agencies in TSCTP implementation.

[12]State, *Foreign Affairs Manual*, 4 FAM 013, and GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 1, 1999).

[13]GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1.

Agencies Have Allocated Almost $288 Million and Disbursed Nearly $140 Million for TSCTP since 2009

While State and USAID could not readily provide data on the status of funding for TSCTP (as discussed in more detail later in this report), the data they eventually provided to us indicate that about $288 million was allocated for TSCTP between fiscal years 2009 and 2013. As table 1 illustrates, the amount of funds allocated for TSCTP declined each year between fiscal years 2010 and 2013, dropping from a high of about $80 million in fiscal year 2010 to about $53 million in fiscal year 2013. As of late 2013, State and USAID had disbursed about $139 million, or 48 percent, of the funds allocated for TSCTP between fiscal years 2009 and 2013.[14]

Table 1: Status of Funding for TSCTP, by Fiscal Year Appropriations (2009-2013)

Dollars in thousands

	Fiscal years					
	2009	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**Total**
Allocated	39,650	79,796	59,622	55,617	53,021	287,706
Unobligated balance	2,108[a]	3,331[a]	829[a]	587[a]	22,658[b]	29,513
Unliquidated obligations	7,038	20,408	31,385	30,574	30,002	119,407
Disbursed	30,504	56,057	27,408	24,456	361	138,786

Source: GAO analysis of State and USAID data. | GAO-14-518

TSCTP   Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership
PKO   Peacekeeping Operations
DA   Development Assistance
NADR   Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs
ESF   Economic Support Fund
INCLE   International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement

Notes: The amounts above reflect totals from PKO, DA, NADR, ESF, and INCLE funds dedicated for TSCTP activities. Data on PKO, NADR, ESF, and INCLE funds are current as of November 2013, and data on DA funds are current as of December 2013. For the status of each account's balances by fiscal year, see tables 4-10 in appendix IV.

[a]The unobligated balances from fiscal years 2009 through 2012, totaling about $6.9 million, reflect NADR, ESF, and INCLE funds that, according to State officials, were not obligated or were deobligated and may no longer be available to incur new obligations. Of the approximately $6.9 million, nearly $6.7 million is NADR funding, the execution of which State officials noted has sometimes been delayed or canceled because of political strife and other conditions on the ground in partner countries. Once the period of availability for obligation has expired, unobligated balances remain available for an additional 5 fiscal years for recording and adjusting obligations properly chargeable to the appropriations period of availability. For example, these funds may remain available for contract modifications properly within the scope of the original contract.

[14]As we note throughout this report, the funding data we received from State are current as of November 2013, while the funding data we received from USAID are current as of December 2013.

Of the approximately $288 million allocated in total for TSCTP between fiscal years 2009 and 2013, about 62 percent (about $178 million) came from the PKO and DA accounts. Table 2 shows the status of funding for TSCTP broken down by funding account. See appendix IV for further details on funding for TSCTP by funding account.

Table 2: Status of Funding for TSCTP by Funding Account, Fiscal Years 2009-2013

Dollars in thousands

Account	Allocated	Unobligated balance	Unliquidated obligations	Disbursed
PKO	92,040	-	34,784	57,256
DA	86,414	1,907[a]	48,963	35,544
NADR	57,511	18,322[a]	9,498	29,691
ESF	29,305	5,241[a]	10,846	13,218
INCLE	22,436	4,043[a]	15,316	3,077
Total	**287,706**	**29,513[a]**	**119,407**	**138,786**

Source: GAO analysis of State and USAID data. | GAO-14-518

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Notes: Data on PKO, NADR, ESF, and INCLE funds are current as of November 2013. Data on DA funds are current as of December 2013.

[a]Of the total unobligated balances shown, approximately $22.7 million (about $11.6 million of the NADR amount, about $5.2 million of the ESF amount, about $4 million of the INCLE amount, and about $1.9 million of the DA amount) is fiscal year 2013 funding that remains available for obligation and that State and USAID are in the process of obligating. The remaining approximately $6.9 million in total unobligated balances shown (about $6.7 million of the NADR amount, about $35,000 of the ESF amount, and about $81,000 of the INCLE amount) is funding from fiscal years 2009 through 2012 that, according to State officials, was not obligated or was deobligated and may no longer be available to incur new obligations. Once the period of availability for obligation has expired, unobligated balances remain available for an additional 5 fiscal years for recording and adjusting obligations properly chargeable to the appropriations period of availability. For example, these funds may remain available for contract modifications properly within the scope of the original contract.

Of the approximately $288 million in total allocations for TSCTP between fiscal years 2009 and 2013, about $260 million has been allocated to

country-specific and regional programs.[15] Figure 5 shows the geographic distribution of allocations for TSCTP between fiscal years 2009 and 2013. As the figure demonstrates, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger were the top three recipients of bilateral funding, collectively accounting for approximately $106 million of the funds allocated. In addition, State and USAID allocated about $82 million for regionally focused programs.

Figure 5: Funding Allocations for TSCTP Country-Specific and Regional Programs, Fiscal Years 2009-2013

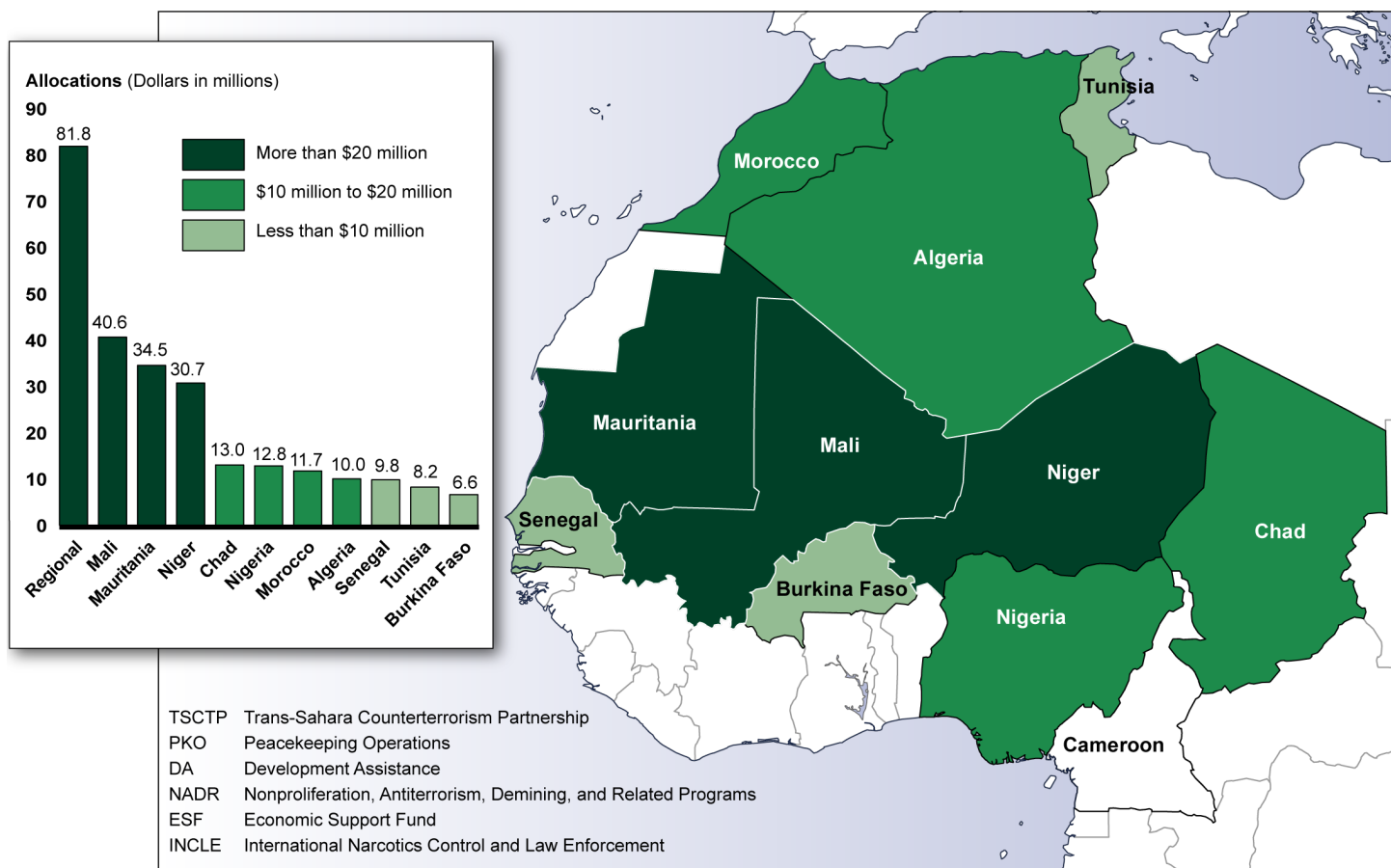|	
TSCTP	Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership
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INCLE	International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement

Source: GAO analysis of State and USAID data; Map Resources (map). | GAO-14-518

[15]The remaining approximately $28 million consists of about $10.5 million in fiscal year 2013 funding that State and USAID are in the process of allocating and obligating to country-specific and regional programs and about $17.6 million in program management costs.

Notes: The amounts above reflect totals from PKO, DA, NADR, ESF, and INCLE funds dedicated for TSCTP activities. Data on PKO, NADR, ESF, and INCLE funds are current as of November 2013, and data on DA funds are current as of December 2013.

While the precise allocation amount for Algeria is slightly less than $10 million, we rounded the amount to $10 million for the purposes of the figure above.

Cameroon did not become a member of TSCTP until January 2014. Consequently, it did not receive any funds allocated for TSCTP between fiscal years 2009 and 2013.

As shown in table 3, about $133 million, or 51 percent, of the approximately $260 million allocated for country-specific and regional programs has been disbursed.[16]

Table 3: Status of Funding for TSCTP Country-Specific and Regional Programs, Fiscal Years 2009-2013

Dollars in thousands

Country/regional	Allocated	Unobligated balance	Unliquidated obligations	Disbursed
Regional activities	81,762	1,605	40,865	39,292
Mali	40,580	1,391	14,780	24,409
Mauritania	34,464	3,453	9,635	21,376
Niger	30,749	3,052	15,174	12,523
Chad	13,026	2,116	5,474	5,436
Nigeria	12,831	2,587	5,380	4,864
Morocco	11,693	1,066	4,492	6,135
Algeria	9,981	752	4,785	4,444
Senegal	9,835	1,009	1,543	7,283
Tunisia	8,190	673	3,322	4,195
Burkina Faso	6,583	1,349	1,725	3,509
Total	**259,694**[a]	**19,053**[b]	**107,175**[c]	**133,466**[d]

Source: GAO analysis of State and USAID data. | GAO-14-518

TSCTP   Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership
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[16]As noted earlier, the remaining approximately $28 million allocated for TSCTP between fiscal years 2009 and 2013 consists of about $10.5 million in fiscal year 2013 funding that State and USAID are in the process of allocating and obligating to country-specific and regional programs and about $17.6 million in program management costs.

Notes: The amounts above reflect totals from PKO, DA, NADR, ESF, and INCLE funds dedicated for TSCTP activities. Data on PKO, NADR, ESF, and INCLE funds are current as of November 2013, and data on DA funds are current as of December 2013.

Because Cameroon did not become a member of TSCTP until January 2014, it did not receive any funds allocated for TSCTP between fiscal years 2009 and 2013.

[a]Total allocations shown above exclude approximately $10.5 million in fiscal year 2013 funding that remains available for obligation and that State and USAID are in the process of allocating and obligating to country-specific and regional programs and about $17.6 million in program management costs. The total amount allocated for TSCTP from fiscal years 2009 to 2013 was about $288 million.

[b]Total unobligated balances shown above exclude approximately $10.5 million in fiscal year 2013 funding that remains available for obligation and that State and USAID are in the process of allocating and obligating to country-specific and regional programs. Of the total unobligated balances shown, approximately $12.2 million is fiscal year 2013 funding that remains available for obligation and that State and USAID are in the process of obligating. The remaining approximately $6.9 million in total unobligated balances is funding from fiscal years 2009 through 2012 that, according to State officials, was not obligated or was deobligated and may no longer be available to incur new obligations. Once the period of availability for obligation has expired, unobligated balances remain available for an additional 5 fiscal years for recording and adjusting obligations properly chargeable to the appropriations period of availability. For example, these funds may remain available for contract modifications properly within the scope of the original contract.

[c]Total unliquidated obligations shown above exclude approximately $12.2 million in program management costs.

[d]Total disbursements shown above exclude approximately $5.3 million in program management costs.

State and USAID Program Managers Do Not Routinely Collect and Assess Data on the Status of Funds Allocated for TSCTP

State's *Foreign Affairs Manual* notes that effective internal management requires financial information for planning, programming, budgeting, performance evaluation, and reporting.[17] Further, federal internal control standards state that financial information is required on a day-to-day basis to make operating decisions, monitor performance, and allocate resources.[18] Various entities involved in TSCTP implementation, such as embassies and State's functional bureaus, track data on the status of funding for TSCTP—such as the amounts unobligated and disbursed—from the respective accounts that they manage. However, TSCTP's program managers in State's Bureaus of African Affairs and Near Eastern Affairs and at USAID do not routinely collect and assess such data to develop a complete picture of the status of TSCTP-dedicated funding. Program managers in both State bureaus said that their efforts to compile the status of funding for TSCTP to fulfill our request was the first time they had done so. One program manager explained that State currently lacks a system for routinely requesting and collecting such data from the various embassies and State bureaus involved in TSCTP implementation.

[17]State, *Foreign Affairs Manual*, 4 FAM 013.

[18]GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1.

Program managers in both regional bureaus added that, given other priorities, State currently lacks the manpower to develop such a system. Furthermore, officials from State's Bureaus of Counterterrorism and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs stated that although they track data on the status of TSCTP-dedicated funding from the accounts that they manage, they typically do not provide and have generally not been asked to provide such data to TSCTP program managers. Regarding USAID, officials there stated that the agency does not routinely track the status of its funding for TSCTP and therefore is not in a position to readily generate such data. Overall, the process of providing us with a complete, sufficiently reliable set of information on the status of funds allocated for TSCTP took several months and, according to State and USAID officials, was very time-consuming and labor-intensive. Consequently, TSCTP's program managers may lack the day-to-day access to financial information that federal standards for internal control state is needed to make operating decisions, monitor performance, and allocate resources.[19]

Program Managers See Value in Routinely Collecting TSCTP-Related Funding Data

Notwithstanding these difficulties, TSCTP program managers outlined several ways in which having such data readily available would be useful for their management of TSCTP. For example, one program manager stated that the status of funding would be a valuable tool to have on hand at TSCTP's quarterly senior-level meetings for the purpose of providing agency leadership with progress reports on the execution of TSCTP-dedicated funds, including details on the extent to which funds from different accounts are being executed. Program managers in both regional bureaus also stated that through their efforts to compile the status of funding at our request, they identified millions of dollars in unobligated balances of which they were previously unaware. Specifically, as noted earlier, nearly $7 million in NADR, INCLE, and ESF funding from fiscal years 2009 through 2012 was not obligated or was deobligated[20] and, according to State officials, may no longer be available to incur new obligations. One program manager explained that having routine access to such data would help him to identify funds for which the

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[19]GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1.

[20]Annual appropriations laws routinely include a provision stating that if NADR, INCLE, and ESF funds are initially obligated within the period of availability, they may be deobligated and remain available for obligation for an additional 4 years. For the most recent provision, see Pub. L. No. 113-76, § 7011, Jan. 17, 2014.

period of availability for obligation would soon expire, which would then prompt him to work with the respective bureaus to develop other, more expedited options for using the funds in support of TSCTP. This official added that the Bureau of African Affairs is exploring the possibility of hiring additional staff to assist with TSCTP program data collection and analysis. Similarly, another program manager stated that he believes the data could be useful for program management purposes in ways that State has not yet anticipated, and that he plans to recruit staff to further analyze the data collected at our request to identify how else the data can inform TSCTP program management.

TSCTP Implementation Is Generally Consistent with Most Key Practices of Interagency Collaboration, but the Department of Justice Can Be Better Integrated

In implementing TSCTP, State, USAID, and DOD actions are generally consistent with most but not all the key practices of interagency collaboration that we previously reported as important to enhancing and sustaining collaborative agency efforts.[21] Specifically, in regard to these key practices, agencies have (1) agreed on their roles and responsibilities, (2) established a joint strategy, (3) defined a common outcome, (4) developed consistent goals to reinforce agency accountability, and (5) taken steps to evaluate their results. However, although agencies have taken steps to (6) leverage their resources and (7) establish compatible procedures to operate across agency boundaries, State could do more to integrate Justice into TSCTP coordination efforts.[22]

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[21]GAO-06-15.

[22]We did not evaluate the eighth key practice of interagency collaboration—that agencies reinforce individual accountability for collaborative efforts through performance management systems—because it is outside the scope of our review.

Agencies Agree on Roles and Responsibilities and Have a Joint TSCTP Strategy That Defines a Common Outcome Consistent with Agency Goals

Officials at State, USAID, and DOD said that they understand and agree on their respective roles and responsibilities related to TSCTP implementation—a key practice that facilitates decision making and assists agencies in organizing their efforts. Officials noted that State is the lead U.S. agency for TSCTP and that the National Security Council articulated TSCTP agency roles and responsibilities in 2005. In part to assist in implementation of TSCTP and to facilitate decision making, officials said that in 2013 they established a quarterly meeting at the deputy assistant secretary level. Through these meetings, senior leaders have approved an interagency guiding strategy for TSCTP, agreed on expanding TSCTP membership, and discussed coordination opportunities with other international donors.[23] We confirmed these practices during our review of agency documents and in our discussions with agency officials.

Agencies have also taken action to address the key practice of establishing a joint strategy, as demonstrated by the January 2014 State-, USAID-, and DOD-approved TSCTP Guiding Strategy. Because this is a joint strategic document that also defines a common outcome and is consistent with agency goals, it addresses three key practices that we have previously reported assist in agency efforts to overcome differences in missions, cultures, and established ways of doing business; help agencies align activities and resources; and can reinforce agency accountability.[24] Figure 6 depicts the five lines of effort articulated in the joint 2014 TSCTP strategy, which also provides a common outcome for U.S. agencies participating in TSCTP. Additionally, the TSCTP strategy is consistent with agency goals articulated in other strategic documents, such as State and USAID's Mission Resource Requests and DOD's Northwest Africa Campaign Plan, which outline complementary counterterrorism goals.

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[23]For example, one such quarterly meeting led to the recommendation to invite Cameroon to become a member of TSCTP. Subsequently, Cameroon became a member of TSCTP in January 2014.

[24]GAO-06-15.

Figure 6: Primary Agencies Supporting Each TSCTP Line of Effort
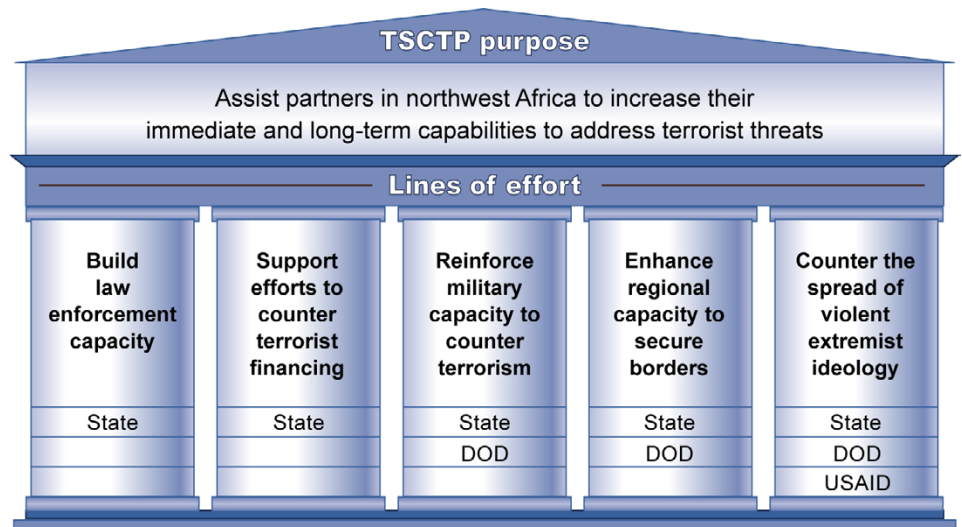
TSCTP   Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership

Source: GAO analysis of State, USAID, and DOD information. | GAO-14-518

Agencies Have Taken Steps to Evaluate the Progress of Some TSCTP Efforts and Plan to Conduct a Holistic Evaluation

State, USAID, and DOD have taken steps to evaluate the progress of their TSCTP efforts and plan to conduct a holistic evaluation of TSCTP within a year. We have previously reported that evaluating and reporting on results is a key practice that can assist interagency efforts to identify areas for policy and operational improvement.[25] To date, agencies have taken various steps to evaluate the progress of some TSCTP efforts. Examples of these steps include the following:

1. Agency efforts to measure progress of specific programs that are a part of TSCTP:

   - State conducts assessments of its NADR-funded Antiterrorism Assistance program in TSCTP countries. Such assessments are conducted prior to providing assistance to a country and every 2-3 years thereafter to measure progress. According to State officials, Antiterrorism Assistance assessments have been conducted in every TSCTP country and assist State in tailoring assistance. For example, State officials noted that the 2013 assessment in one

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[25]GAO-06-15.

TSCTP country found that the partner country forces were not effectively using the U.S. equipment provided. As a result, the officials stated that future assistance to that country will focus more on training and less on equipping.

- USAID periodically conducts evaluations and assessments of its Peace through Development program, which is primarily DA-funded and accounts for the majority of USAID's TSCTP activities. Such reviews have been either regional or country-specific in nature and have identified areas of progress as well as areas for improvement. One impact evaluation completed in 2011 concluded that USAID activities in Niger, Chad, and Mali had some positive effects on program participants. For example, the evaluation identified that media and messaging programs have made moderate progress in reaching vulnerable populations and are more effective in combination with other USAID activities. Recommendations from the evaluation included expanding assistance to insecure areas and considering whether program suspension could undermine U.S. objectives when designing activities.[26]

2. Agency and interagency efforts to measure progress toward counterterrorism goals that are not specific to TSCTP efforts:

- State conducts public opinion polls annually in most TSCTP countries. While these polls may be influenced by factors beyond U.S. counterterrorism assistance, they have shown that since 2008 favorable opinions toward the United States have generally increased in TSCTP countries and that the United States has made progress in reducing perceptions that it is fighting Islam rather than terrorism.

- State and USAID track counterterrorism measures in their annual Foreign Operations Performance Reports and, prior to fiscal year

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[26]USAID's recommendation to consider effects of project suspension was made after a military coup in Niger resulted in the suspension of a USAID activity, which adversely affected progress toward program goals, as demonstrated by both quantitative and qualitative data. Adverse effects noted in the evaluation included a reduction of trust in the United States as a result of the activity's suspension. See *Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID's Counter-Extremism Programming in Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Feb.1, 2011).

2015, some country-specific Mission Resource Requests.[27] For example, the fiscal year 2014 Foreign Operations Performance Report showed that State and USAID had met or exceeded their 2012 performance targets related to countering threats to the United States. Such performance targets include goals for the number of new groups or initiatives created to resolve conflict or drivers of conflict and the number of students trained through the Antiterrorism Assistance program, neither of which is specific to TSCTP countries, but both of which State and USAID exceeded in fiscal year 2012.

- DOD conducts periodic classified assessments of DOD assistance efforts in northwest Africa to determine progress made toward the objectives outlined in DOD's Northwest Africa Campaign Plan.[28]

- The National Counterterrorism Center conducts an interagency assessment, generally annually, of progress made through U.S. counterterrorism efforts toward achieving the strategic goals of the *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*. This assessment also identifies areas where adjustments or changes are needed to ensure that U.S. goals are achieved.

Although agencies have taken some steps to evaluate their TSCTP efforts, they have not completed a comprehensive evaluation of the program. Additionally, agencies have not conducted and documented evaluations of all TSCTP activities that are funded from two of the five accounts that support TSCTP: PKO and ESF. For these accounts, agency officials said they primarily rely on informal feedback from posts to determine progress. Agency officials recognize that a more holistic evaluation of TSCTP-specific assistance is needed, noting that they plan

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[27]The annual Foreign Operations Performance Report is submitted to Congress as part of the congressional budget justification process. The Mission Resource Request is the first step in the State and USAID budget formulation process, where each U.S. mission, under chief of mission authority, annually justifies the resources required to achieve its foreign policy and management objectives. State and USAID bureaus evaluate the Mission Resource Requests to inform the Bureau Resource Requests, which are included in State's annual presidential budget request submission to the Office of Management and Budget.

[28]Theater campaign plans, such as the Northwest Africa Campaign Plan, encompass the activities of a geographic combatant command—in this case, AFRICOM—and translate national or theater strategy into operational concepts and those concepts into unified action.

to develop progress benchmarks for TSCTP within the next year to facilitate such an evaluation, consistent with a requirement in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014.[29]

Agencies Have Established Ways to Leverage Resources and Operate across Boundaries but Can Do More to Integrate the Department of Justice

State, USAID, and DOD have taken several actions consistent with the key practices of leveraging resources and facilitating operations across agency boundaries, but can do more to integrate the Department of Justice. We have previously reported that leveraging resources and operating across agency boundaries can assist agencies with identifying opportunities to obtain additional benefits that would not be available if they were working separately and to prevent misunderstandings between the agencies.[30] Agencies have taken numerous actions consistent with these key practices. For example, State, USAID, and DOD rotate the hosting of an annual TSCTP conference, where U.S. embassy officials implementing TSCTP in partner countries and in Washington, D.C., meet and coordinate with their interagency and headquarters counterparts and with representatives from other international donors, such as France. U.S. embassy officials who have participated noted that this conference was particularly useful for identifying important points of contact and gaining a better understanding of TSCTP. We observed the interagency interaction during the most recent TSCTP conference, held in Washington, D.C., in October 2013.

Agencies have also developed interagency working groups that meet regularly in Washington, D.C., as well as at U.S. embassies in partner countries.[31] These working groups provide an opportunity for agency officials to discuss potential activities as well as activities that will be initiated, thereby facilitating activity coordination and helping agencies to avoid conflicting or duplicative efforts. Other interagency efforts include

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[29]National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014, Pub. L. No. 113-66, § 1206(a), Dec. 26, 2013. This provision requires the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, to develop a strategic framework for U.S. counterterrorism assistance and cooperation in the Sahel and Maghreb regions, including for TSCTP programs, and to report on that strategic framework to Congress.

[30]GAO-06-15.

[31]We recently reported on effective approaches to enhancing interagency collaboration through mechanisms such as interagency working groups. See GAO, *Managing for Results: Implementation Approaches Used to Enhance Collaboration in Interagency Groups*, GAO-14-220 (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 14, 2014).

the joint State and DOD process for selecting TSCTP security assistance activities to implement using PKO funds. To coordinate, State and DOD conduct regular meetings to jointly identify and prioritize which counterterrorism-focused security assistance activities to implement in Africa.

While the agency actions described can enhance interagency collaboration, Justice—a key agency for building law enforcement capacity, with expertise in combating transnational crime and building the capacity of foreign prosecutors, investigators, and judges—is not currently included in the quarterly deputy assistant secretary meetings on TSCTP. As a result, TSCTP may not be fully leveraging the resources and expertise of one of the U.S. government's lead agencies for building partner nation law enforcement capacity in support of the TSCTP strategy. According to a State official, the quarterly senior-level meeting has traditionally involved higher-level strategic discussions among the three primary TSCTP agencies—State, USAID, and DOD—that would not have necessarily benefited from the participation of other agencies that play a supporting role in TSCTP. However, after we spoke with this official about the potential future participation of other agencies in the quarterly meetings, State invited DHS and Treasury officials to participate, and TSCTP program managers at State have expressed their willingness to invite Justice representatives in the future. Justice officials have also expressed an interest in participating in these meetings, given their involvement in counterterrorism activities in TSCTP countries and their potential growing role in assisting State with implementing some TSCTP assistance.

U.S. Agencies Take Steps to Consider Partner Country Needs, Absorptive Capacities, and Other Donor Efforts when Selecting TSCTP Activities

In selecting TSCTP activities, and consistent with the presidential policy directive on security sector assistance, U.S. agencies conduct a variety of assessments and meetings to consider partner country needs and absorptive capacities.[32] They also rely on bilateral and multilateral outreach to consider efforts undertaken by other donors, although some donor nations are reluctant to share information on their activities.

Agencies Conduct Assessments and Meetings to Identify Partner Country Needs and Absorptive Capacities

State, USAID, and DOD have all conducted assessments to identify the needs and absorptive capacities of TSCTP partner countries.[33]

- As noted earlier, State has conducted assessments in support of its NADR-funded Antiterrorism Assistance program, which include discussions of country needs and absorptive capacities. For example, regarding partner country needs, one assessment noted that the country assessed needed to become more capable in securing and managing land and sea ports of entry, while the assessment of another country called for strengthened communication and coordination among units that jointly patrol the country's borders. With respect to absorptive capacity, an assessment of one country found it to be capable of absorbing additional training, whereas an assessment of another country identified infrastructural, personnel, and technological limitations to absorbing training.

- USAID has conducted country assessments that include consideration of partner country needs and absorptive capacities in

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[32]*Presidential Policy Directive 23 on Security Sector Assistance*, issued April 5, 2013, calls for assessments that identify partner country needs, highlights absorptive capacity as necessary to sustaining U.S. investments, and notes the importance of coordination with other donors.

[33]Officials in several countries noted the challenges of providing TSCTP assistance to partner countries because of the limited capacity of some members to absorb assistance. For example, one implementing partner official noted that in order for some partner country officials to be able to operate the radio equipment provided (similar to that pictured in fig. 9 later in this report), U.S. officials first had to teach them how to type on the computer.

support of its TSCTP activities. For example, its 2009 *Niger Counter Extremism Assessment* notes that it had previously identified Niger's youth as the group most at risk for recruitment by violent extremists, and had accordingly recommended that TSCTP programming address the need for youth to find employment and participate in governance. A 2010 assessment entitled *Strengthening Stability through Development in Burkina Faso* comments on absorptive capacity, noting that vocational training programs must be appropriately tailored so that the local economy can absorb the graduates of these programs and provide them with sustainable economic opportunities.

• DOD has developed assessments of country needs and absorptive capacities as part of AFRICOM's annual process for selecting counterterrorism activities in Africa, including those funded by State from the PKO account. Specifically, AFRICOM has created multiyear plans for developing the counterterrorism capabilities of several TSCTP countries. These plans identify various partner country needs. For example, the plan for one country states the need for airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance to cover the country's long borders and provide operational support. The plan for another country notes that enabling it to transport forces to threatened areas will necessitate enhancements to aviation assets and the development of usable airfields. AFRICOM's plans also comment on absorptive capacity, as the plan for each country includes a military estimate of the maximum monetary amount of counterterrorism assistance the country can absorb per year. We discussed several of these plans during our November 2013 meetings with DOD and interagency officials at AFRICOM.

Some agency and implementing partner officials also reported using meetings with host nation officials to identify partner country needs and absorptive capacities. For instance, a DOD official in Mauritania noted that after DOD responds to the Mauritanian military's requests for assistance with detailed proposals of what the United States can provide, she meets with Mauritanian military officials again to ensure that the detailed proposals are in line with their needs and capacity. Using this method, she said, has enabled her to identify opportunities for more targeted assistance. For example, meetings with the Mauritanian military led her and other DOD colleagues to modify a preexisting proposal to provide the Mauritanians with two technically sophisticated video cameras costing about $10,000 each and to instead purchase $1,100 cameras that were more rugged, easier to use, and better suited to the Mauritanians' needs. In another case, she learned from her meetings that the

Mauritanian military has limited access to the Internet, after which she developed a project proposal to instead use satellite communications to transmit real-time intelligence to the Mauritanian military's national command center. In Niger, USAID and implementing partner officials stated that as part of the Peace through Development program, they meet regularly with community action committees—entities composed of representative members of the communities where the program is conducted.[34] As USAID and implementing partner officials explained, the community action committees play a vital role in gauging the needs of the communities they represent, proposing activities to address the needs, and using firsthand knowledge of their communities to nominate participants for the activities who they believe to be at risk of becoming involved in violent extremism. A USAID official stated that the committees also assist in identifying absorptive capacity, as they help to ensure that the skills individuals learn through their participation in Peace through Development activities, such as vocational training, are ones for which a market exists in their home communities.

Agencies Use Bilateral and Multilateral Outreach to Identify Other Donor Efforts, but Some Donors Are Reluctant to Share Information

U.S. agencies rely on various forms of bilateral and multilateral outreach to identify and consider the counterterrorism efforts other donors are conducting in TSCTP countries. With respect to bilateral outreach, agency officials in all three TSCTP countries we visited reported using meetings to coordinate efforts. For example, the regional security officer in Algeria stated that through discussions with her French counterparts, she had gained an awareness of the types of law enforcement training the French were providing to Algeria. Similarly, a DOD official in Mauritania cited a briefing she received from her Spanish counterparts that provided her insight into the security assistance activities Spain is conducting in Mauritania. Additionally, the regional security officer in Niger stated that he has contacted security officers at several other donor nations' embassies in Niger about their capacity-building efforts.

[34]For instance, a community action committee that we met with in Niamey included, among others, youth and religious leaders, a tribal elder, a representative of a women's group, and a radio station media specialist. Its president was a former mayor of the district of Niamey represented by the committee. USAID and implementing partner officials stated that they established community action committees as part of the second Peace through Development program and that each committee is intended to represent the community as a whole.

With respect to multilateral outreach, U.S. and other donor officials identified a variety of multilateral efforts that have facilitated donor coordination and informed U.S. assistance decisions. For instance, several officials named the Global Counterterrorism Forum and its Sahel Working Group as key multilateral venues for sharing information and insights on the counterterrorism activities of other donor nations. In July 2013, for example, State officials noted that a recent meeting of the Sahel Working Group had been used to take inventory of the participant nations' civilian assistance efforts in the Sahel to ensure that U.S. efforts are not duplicative. In addition, a European Union civilian mission in Niger has assisted with international coordination. For example, through the assistance of this mission, the U.S. embassy in Niger was able to coordinate with the French on efforts to provide Niger with radios.

These efforts notwithstanding, officials identified several donor nations that typically do not share information on their efforts with the United States. For example, the official who chairs the counterterrorism working group at the U.S. embassy in Niger stated that China does not participate in international donor coordination meetings. As a result, he said, neither the United States nor other donor countries have visibility into China's activities in Niger. In addition, officials at the European Union's civilian mission in Niger stated that Turkey and some of the wealthier TSCTP partner countries, including Algeria and Morocco, have provided counterterrorism aid to Niger but do not customarily share information on such activities with other donors.

Conclusions

Terrorist groups in northwest Africa continue to pose a national security threat to the United States. To address this threat, U.S. agencies have allocated nearly $290 million since 2009 to provide a wide range of diplomacy, development, and security assistance to partner countries through TSCTP. However, because TSCTP program managers at State and USAID do not routinely collect and assess data on the status of funds for TSCTP—including unobligated balances, unliquidated obligations, and disbursements—they may lack key information that could help inform current and future TSCTP program management decisions. Further, while State, USAID, and DOD are generally consistent with most key practices of interagency collaboration in their efforts to implement a whole-of-government approach to TSCTP, the Department of Justice has not been fully integrated into TSCTP coordination efforts although it has expertise in building law enforcement capacity—one of TSCTP's five lines of effort. We believe opportunities exist to enhance program management and interagency collaboration that would help program managers as well as

decision makers better plan future TSCTP activities and leverage the expertise of all relevant U.S. agencies.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To enhance TSCTP program management and interagency collaboration, we make the following two recommendations.

First, we recommend that the Secretary of State and the Administrator of USAID ensure that TSCTP program managers take steps to routinely collect and assess information that will better enable them to efficiently determine and report on the status of funds allocated for TSCTP.

Second, we recommend that the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of USAID and the Secretary of Defense, take steps to ensure that the Department of Justice is better integrated into TSCTP coordination efforts. This could include inviting Justice to quarterly meetings on TSCTP held at the deputy assistant secretary level.

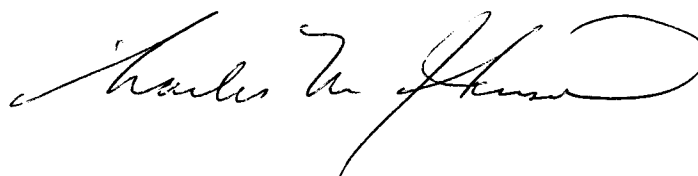# Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to State, USAID, DOD, DHS, Justice, Treasury, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the Central Intelligence Agency for their review and comment. State and USAID provided written comments, which we have reprinted in appendixes V and VI, respectively. State, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the Central Intelligence Agency also provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate. DOD, DHS, Justice, and Treasury did not provide comments.

State concurred with our recommendations to take steps to routinely collect and assess information on the status of funds allocated for TSCTP and to better integrate the Department of Justice into TSCTP coordination efforts. Specifically, State said it is seeking to identify better mechanisms and processes for collecting and maintaining financial data on TSCTP activities and will engage Justice to explore formalized participation in the TSCTP working group as well as higher-level policy coordination mechanisms. USAID also concurred with GAO's recommendation to routinely collect and assess information on the status of funds allocated for TSCTP and stated that it is seeking to identify better processes for collecting and maintaining financial data on TSCTP.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, State, USAID, DOD, DHS, Justice, Treasury, the Office of

the Director of National Intelligence, and the Central Intelligence Agency. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at http://www.gao.gov.

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

Charles Michael Johnson, Jr.
Director, International Affairs and Trade

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

To examine the status of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP)–related funding and U.S. agencies' ability to track such funding, we reviewed relevant laws and other funding documents and asked officials from the Department of State (State) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide data on allocations, unobligated balances, unliquidated obligations, and disbursements for TSCTP by country and account for fiscal years 2009 through 2013. As neither State nor USAID routinely collects or maintains these funding elements in a central source, the agencies had to gather the data from various databases. The process of gathering the data took several months and, according to State and USAID officials, was very time-consuming and labor-intensive. To determine the reliability of the funding data we received from State and USAID, we compared and corroborated information from the sources the agencies relied upon, requested information from State and USAID officials regarding the processes they use to collect and verify each data source, and checked the complete agency data sets for reasonableness and completeness. As we note throughout this report, the funding data we received from State are current as of November 2013, while the funding data we received from USAID are current as of December 2013. We did not conduct a financial audit of the funding data and are not expressing a financial opinion on them. Based on the checks we performed, we determined that the funding data we collected from State and USAID were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this engagement.

To examine the extent to which U.S. agency implementation of TSCTP is consistent with key practices of interagency collaboration, we collected and reviewed U.S. government strategy documents, agency reports, and evaluations to identify and compare agency actions with key practices GAO has identified for enhancing interagency collaboration.[1] We reviewed the *National Security Strategy, the National Strategy for Counterterrorism,* State and USAID's strategic plans for fiscal years 2007-2012 and 2014-2017, the Department of Defense's (DOD) 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, and the Guiding Strategy for TSCTP, approved in 2014. In addition, we reviewed State's Foreign Operations Performance Reports, Mission Resource Requests, Bureau Resource Requests, Integrated Country Strategies, and Antiterrorism Assistance

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[1]GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, GAO-06-15 (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 21, 2005).

GAO-14-518 Combating Terrorism

assessments. For DOD, we reviewed the Northwest Africa Campaign
Plan and assessments of the Northwest Africa Campaign Plan, among
other documents. For USAID, we reviewed the mid-term and final
evaluations of the first phase of the Peace through Development
program; country assessments for Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania,
and Niger; and a report on factors contributing to violent extremism.

To identify whether U.S. agencies considered partner country needs,
absorptive capacities, and other donor efforts when selecting TSCTP
activities, we reviewed State and DOD guidance for agency officials
proposing TSCTP activities. In addition, we reviewed agency
assessments, to include several State Antiterrorism Assessments; USAID
assessments for Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger; and
the U.S. Africa Command's (AFRICOM) multiyear plans for developing
the counterterrorism capabilities of TSCTP countries. We also reviewed
documentation from the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the
European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy civilian mission
in Niger.

Additionally, we discussed our objectives with State, USAID, and DOD;
the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and the Treasury; and
intelligence community officials in the Washington, D.C., area. At State,
we interviewed officials from the Bureaus of African Affairs, Near Eastern
Affairs, Political-Military Affairs, Counterterrorism, and International
Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. At USAID, we met with officials
from the Bureau for Africa and the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and
Learning. At DOD, we interviewed officials from the Office of the
Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff. Additionally, we met with
participants of the 2013 annual TSCTP conference that USAID hosted in
Washington, D.C., in October 2013, including U.S. embassy officials from
Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal.

To obtain a more in-depth understanding of TSCTP, we conducted
fieldwork in November 2013 at AFRICOM in Stuttgart, Germany, during
which we met with DOD representatives as well as a State political
adviser and a USAID adviser. Subsequently, in December 2013, we
conducted fieldwork in Algiers, Algeria; Nouakchott, Mauritania; and
Niamey, Niger, to observe TSCTP assistance and meet with U.S.
embassy and partner country officials implementing TSCTP as well as
international donors conducting similar counterterrorism activities,
including officials from the Canadian Embassy and African Union in
Algeria and officials from the European Union in Algeria and Niger. We
also interviewed U.S. implementing partners, including officials

implementing USAID's Peace through Development program in Niger and
State-funded training and equipping efforts in Mauritania, as well as local
participants in TSCTP activities, including a community action committee
in Niamey, Niger. In addition, we visited a U.S.-funded military facility in
Mauritania and met with Algerian, Mauritanian, and Nigerien government
officials and Algerian and Mauritanian security forces officials. In selecting
the countries to visit, we considered several criteria, including but not
limited to the level of funding received by each country for TSCTP
activities, geographic distribution, the number and duration of TSCTP
activities in each country, and agency recommendations.

To identify terrorist events in TSCTP countries between 2009 and 2012,
we used the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and
Responses to Terrorism's Global Terrorism Database. To determine the
reliability of these data on terrorist events, we reviewed documentation
outlining the database's scope and methodology, checked the data for
reasonableness, and interviewed a knowledgeable official at the
consortium regarding the database. On the basis of these checks, we
determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this
engagement. Regarding key terrorist groups in northwest Africa and their
regions of operation, we received and incorporated input from officials in
State's Bureaus of African Affairs, Counterterrorism, and Intelligence and
Research on how best to depict the geographic presence of groups that
State identified as primary concerns to U.S. interests.

We conducted this performance audit from June 2013 to June 2014 in
accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.
Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain
sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our
findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that
the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and
conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: Examples of Activities Conducted Using Funds Allocated for the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership

Between fiscal years 2009 and 2013, State, USAID, and DOD conducted a variety of activities using TSCTP-dedicated funding. As previously noted, State has conducted diplomacy and law enforcement activities, while USAID and DOD have focused on development and security assistance activities, respectively.

- State's TSCTP activities include public diplomacy efforts as well as law enforcement training and equipping and criminal justice sector reform. Through its public diplomacy efforts, State provides messaging that is intended to represent an alternative to violent extremist propaganda, including support for mainstream media and other forums that promote interfaith dialogue and peaceful political participation. For example, figure 7 shows an imam training and interfaith dialogue workshop in Chad. State's law enforcement training and equipping efforts focus on building partner nations' capacity to prevent, respond to, investigate, and prosecute acts of terrorism. According to State, providing border security training and equipment to secure porous land, air, and maritime borders makes up a significant component of these activities.

Figure 7: State TSCTP-Funded Imam Training and Interfaith Dialogue Workshop in Chad

TSCTP   Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership
Source: Department of State. | GAO-14-518

- USAID's TSCTP activities include efforts to support youth employment, strengthen local governance capacity, and improve access to education. USAID's TSCTP activities are primarily conducted through the Peace through Development program in Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso, which succeeds a prior Peace through

Development program that mainly targeted Niger and Chad.[1] USAID envisions the current Peace through Development program as a 5-year effort that, according to USAID officials, includes various "layers" of activities, such as support for messages of tolerance and moderation, livelihood support, and education, among others. Figure 8 shows one example of USAID assistance efforts—a radio studio built in Niger to support messaging efforts as part of the Peace through Development program.

Figure 8: USAID TSCTP-Funded Radio Studio in Niger

TSCTP   Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership
Source: GAO. | GAO-14-518

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[1]The $31.8 million first phase of the program, from 2008 to 2011, was designed to cover Mauritania, but USAID suspended its country program there following Mauritania's August 2008 coup. According to State and USAID officials, Mauritania was also invited to participate in the $62 million second phase of the program, from 2011 to 2016, but opted out because of its preference for bilateral assistance over participation in a multicountry program.

- DOD's TSCTP activities, funded from State's Peacekeeping Operations account, include counterterrorism training and equipping.[2] Examples of DOD's activities include multicountry training in logistics, military intelligence, combat medical skills, and civil-military operations; bilateral training and equipping of counterterrorism and military intelligence units; and providing spare parts and maintenance for vehicles. Other Peacekeeping Operations–funded activities have been implemented directly by State contractors. For instance, figure 9 shows radio equipment provided for the Mauritanian military's national command center and body armor and night vision goggles for Mauritanian special forces.

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[2]As noted earlier in this report, DOD does not directly fund TSCTP but implements some TSCTP assistance funded from State's Peacekeeping Operations account.

**Figure 9: State TSCTP-Funded Radio Equipment for Mauritanian Military National
Command Center and Body Armor and Night Vision Goggles for Mauritanian
Special Forces**

TSCTP   Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership

Source: GAO. | GAO-14-518

Examples of accounts used by State and USAID to support counterterrorism activities outside of TSCTP include the following:

- *Foreign Military Financing*—authorizes the President to finance the procurement of defense articles and services for foreign countries and international organizations. This assistance supports, among other things, building and sustaining military counterterrorism capabilities globally. In Africa, State created a Regional Africa Counterterrorism program specifically to help sustain activities built through counterterrorism capacity-building programs in Africa. These funds are approved by State and implemented by DOD.

- *International Military Education and Training*—authorizes the President to furnish military education and training to military and related civilian personnel of foreign countries. This assistance supports the professionalization of militaries globally through training and education activities, primarily in the United States. Courses in Africa are not focused on counterterrorism but may include counterterrorism topics as part of efforts to professionalize and establish relationships with foreign militaries. These funds are State-approved and DOD-implemented.

- *Peacekeeping Operations*—authorizes the President to furnish assistance to friendly countries and international organizations for peacekeeping operations and other programs carried out in furtherance of the national security interests of the United States. Outside of funds dedicated for TSCTP programs, Peacekeeping Operations funds have been used to support security sector reform in the region, such as in Mali for fiscal year 2014. In fiscal year 2013, Peacekeeping Operations funds not dedicated for TSCTP were used to train and equip African troops deploying to the African Union mission in Mali, which has since transitioned into a United Nations mission.

- *Development Assistance*—authorizes the President to provide assistance for various purposes, including agricultural development, education and human resources development, grant assistance for microenterprises, and a development fund for Africa, among other purposes. Outside of funds dedicated for TSCTP programs, USAID has used Development Assistance funds to transfer financial resources to developing countries as well as to help countries solve development problems.

Appendix III: Examples of Accounts and
Programs That Support Counterterrorism
Activities outside of the Trans-Sahara
Counterterrorism Partnership

- *Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs*—
  authorizes the President to provide antiterrorism assistance,
  nonproliferation and export control assistance, and other assistance to
  foreign countries for various purposes. Outside of funds dedicated for
  TSCTP programs, State has provided Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism,
  Demining, and Related Programs–funded assistance to support
  additional activities designed to enhance the antiterrorism skills of
  friendly countries by providing training and equipment and other
  programs run by State's Bureau of Counterterrorism, including its
  Counterterrorism Engagement, Counterterrorism Finance, Countering
  Violent Extremism, and Regional Strategic Initiative programs. State
  has provided some funding from this account to the Department of
  Justice to implement activities, such as providing resident legal
  advisers and training in criminal investigative techniques to select
  TSCTP countries.

- *Economic Support Fund*—authorizes the President to assist countries
  and organizations in order to promote economic or political stability.
  Outside of funds dedicated for TSCTP programs, State has used the
  Economic Support Fund to support its Countering Violent Extremism
  Program and the interagency Center for Strategic Counterterrorism
  Communications, while USAID has used it for programs and activities
  to counter violent extremism in the Sahel region.

- *International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement*—authorizes the
  President to assist foreign countries and international organizations to
  control narcotics and other controlled substances, or for other
  anticrime purposes. Outside of funds dedicated for TSCTP programs,
  State has provided International Narcotics Control and Law
  Enforcement funds to assist foreign countries and international
  organizations in developing and implementing policies and programs
  that maintain the rule of law and strengthen institutional law
  enforcement and judicial capabilities, including combating
  transnational crime. State has provided some funding from this
  account to the Department of Justice to provide resident and
  intermittent legal advisers in TSCTP countries.

Examples of DOD accounts or programs supporting counterterrorism
activities outside of TSCTP include the following:

- *Section 1206 funds*—These funds may be used by DOD to build the
  capacity of a foreign country's military forces and security forces to (1)
  conduct counterterrorist operations and (2) enable foreign military
  forces to participate in or support military and stability operations with

the U.S. armed forces. Programs funded with this assistance must be jointly formulated and implemented by the Secretaries of Defense and State, and the law authorizes DOD to provide the assistance with the Secretary of State's concurrence.

- *Various Title X programs*—DOD's primary source of funding to support activities conducted by the armed forces, including its counternarcotics program, Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts.

- *Operation Enduring Freedom–Trans-Sahara*—DOD's mission-oriented regional program that supports personnel activities related to implementation of TSCTP and other related DOD counterterrorism efforts.

Appendix IV: Status of Funds Allocated for Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Activities

Between fiscal years 2009 and 2013, State and USAID allocated about $288 million for TSCTP activities. Tables 4 through 10 show the status of funding for TSCTP activities between fiscal years 2009 and 2013 and the total by account. Specifically, the table for each account shows allocations, unobligated balances, unliquidated obligations, and disbursements.

Table 4: Status of Peacekeeping Operations Funding for TSCTP Activities, by Fiscal Year Appropriations (2009-2013), as of November 2013

Dollars in thousands

| | Fiscal years | | | | | |
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Allocated	15,000	21,000	19,939	20,001	16,100	**92,040**
Unobligated balance	-	-	-	-	-	**-**
Unliquidated obligations	4,310	4,612	5,667	4,456	15,739	**34,784**
Disbursed	10,690	16,388	14,272	15,545	361	**57,256**

Source: GAO analysis of State data. | GAO-14-518

Table 5: Status of Development Assistance Funding for TSCTP Activities, by Fiscal Year Appropriations (2009-2013), as of December 2013

Dollars in thousands

| | Fiscal years | | | | | |
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Allocated	10,700	27,450	22,750	12,825	12,689	**86,414**
Unobligated balance	-	-	-	-	1,907[a]	**1,907**
Unliquidated obligations	-	6,699	20,198	11,284	10,782	**48,963**
Disbursed	10,700	20,751	2,552	1,541	-	**35,544**

Source: GAO analysis of USAID data. | GAO-14-518

[a]The unobligated balance in fiscal year 2013 reflects funds that remain available for obligation until September 30, 2014 and that USAID is in the process of obligating.

Table 6: Status of Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs Antiterrorism Assistance Funding for TSCTP Activities, by Fiscal Year Appropriations (2009-2013), as of November 2013

Dollars in thousands

	Fiscal years					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Allocated	6,950	14,124	9,403	12,071	9,947	**52,495**
Unobligated balance	2,108[a]	3,259[a]	827[a]	545[a]	9,947[b]	**16,686**
Unliquidated obligations	93	646	1,602	5,913	-	**8,254**
Disbursed	4,749	10,219	6,974	5,613	-	**27,555**

Source: GAO analysis of State data. | GAO-14-518

[a]The unobligated balances from fiscal years 2009 through 2012, totaling about $6.7 million, are funds that, according to State officials, were not obligated or were deobligated and may no longer be available to incur new obligations. Once the period of availability for obligation has expired, unobligated balances remain available for an additional 5 fiscal years for recording and adjusting obligations properly chargeable to the appropriations period of availability. For example, these funds may remain available for contract modifications properly within the scope of the original contract.

[b]The unobligated balance in fiscal year 2013 reflects funds that remain available for obligation until September 30, 2014 and that State is in the process of obligating.

Table 7: Status of Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs Counterterrorism Finance Funding for TSCTP Activities, by Fiscal Year Appropriations (2009-2013), as of November 2013

Dollars in thousands

	Fiscal years					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Allocated	-	1,500	-	-	-	**1,500**
Unobligated balance	-	-	-	-	-	**-**
Unliquidated obligations	-	1,244	-	-	-	**1,244**
Disbursed	-	256	-	-	-	**256**

Source: GAO analysis of State data. | GAO-14-518

Table 8: Status of Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs Terrorist Interdiction Program Funding for TSCTP Activities, by Fiscal Year Appropriations (2009-2013), as of November 2013

Dollars in thousands

| | Fiscal years | | | | | |
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Allocated	-	530	500	850	1,636	**3,516**
Unobligated balance	-	-	-	-	1,636[a]	**1,636**
Unliquidated obligations	-	-	-	-	-	**-**
Disbursed	-	530	500	850	-	**1,880**

Source: GAO analysis of State data. | GAO-14-518

[a]The unobligated balance in fiscal year 2013 reflects funds that remain available for obligation until September 30, 2014 and that State is in the process of obligating.

Table 9: Status of Economic Support Fund Funding for TSCTP Activities, by Fiscal Year Appropriations (2009-2013), as of November 2013

Dollars in thousands

| | Fiscal years | | | | | |
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Allocated	4,000	11,000	3,500	5,500	5,305	**29,305**
Unobligated balance	-	4[a]	-	31[a]	5,206[b]	**5,241**
Unliquidated obligations	160	4,675	1,209	4,703	99	**10,846**
Disbursed	3,840	6,321	2,291	766	-	**13,218**

Source: GAO analysis of State data. | GAO-14-518

[a]The unobligated balances in fiscal years 2010 and 2012, totaling about $35,000, are funds that, according to State officials, were not obligated or were deobligated and may no longer be available to incur new obligations. Once the period of availability for obligation has expired, unobligated balances remain available for an additional 5 fiscal years for recording and adjusting obligations properly chargeable to the appropriations period of availability. For example, these funds may remain available for contract modifications properly within the scope of the original contract.

[b]The unobligated balance in fiscal year 2013 reflects funds that remain available for obligation until September 30, 2014 and that State and USAID are in the process of obligating.

Table 10: Status of International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Funding for TSCTP Activities, by Fiscal Year Appropriations (2009-2013), as of November 2013

Dollars in thousands

| | Fiscal years | | | | | |
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Allocated	3,000	4,192	3,530	4,370	7,344	**22,436**
Unobligated balance	-	68[a]	2[a]	11[a]	3,962[b]	**4,043**
Unliquidated obligations	2,475	2,532	2,709	4,218	3,382	**15,316**
Disbursed	525	1,592	819	141	-	**3,077**

Source: GAO analysis of State data. | GAO-14-518

[a]The unobligated balances from fiscal years 2010 through 2012, totaling about $81,000, are funds that, according to State officials, were not obligated or were deobligated and may no longer be available to incur new obligations. Once the period of availability for obligation has expired, unobligated balances remain available for an additional 5 fiscal years for recording and adjusting obligations properly chargeable to the appropriations period of availability. For example, these funds may remain available for contract modifications properly within the scope of the original contract.

[b]The unobligated balance in fiscal year 2013 reflects funds that remain available for obligation until September 30, 2014 and that State is in the process of obligating.

Appendix V: Comments from the Department of State

United States Department of State
Comptroller
P.O. Box 150008
Charlotte, NC 28215-5008

JUN 0 6 2014

Dr. Loren Yager
Managing Director
International Affairs and Trade
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548-0001
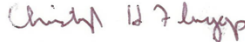
Dear Dr. Yager:

We appreciate the opportunity to review your draft report, "COMBATING TERRORISM: Enhanced Program Management Would Strengthen Northwest Africa Partnership" GAO Job Code 320983.

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

If you have any questions concerning this response, please contact Peter Quaranto, Counterterrorism Officer, Bureau of African Affairs at (202) 736-4435.

Sincerely,

Christopher H. Flaggs, Acting

Enclosure: as stated.

cc: GAO – Charles Michael Johnson
      AF – Linda Thomas-Greenfield
      State/OIG – Norman Brown

Department of State Comments on GAO Draft Report

**COMBATING TERRORISM: Enhanced Program Management Would
Strengthen Northwest Africa Partnership**
(GAO-14-518, GAO Code 320983)

Thank you for allowing the Department of State the opportunity to comment
on the draft report, *"COMBATING TERRORISM: Enhanced Program
Management Would Strengthen Northwest Africa Partnership."* The Department
deeply appreciates the professionalism of the GAO team over the course of this
yearlong project, and the thoughtfulness and cordiality they demonstrated in
carrying out their duties.

The Department of State is committed to working with other U.S. agencies
and international partners to build the capacity and resilience of governments and
civil society to contain, degrade, and ultimately defeat al-Qa'ida, its affiliates,
Boko Haram and other violent extremist organizations in Northwest Africa. We
view the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) as a valuable tool in
this regard. TSCTP provides dedicated, flexible funding that enables multi-year
planning. TSCTP also promotes and enables a regional approach to countering
terrorism, which is critical given the agile and diffuse terrorist threats in the region.

We appreciate that the GAO report highlights the multiple steps we have
taken to strengthen TSCTP and implement key practices of interagency
collaboration. These include (1) agreeing on an updated joint, interagency strategy
to guide TSCTP activities; (2) institutionalizing the interagency TSCTP Working
Group, which holds monthly meetings and/or teleconferences; (3) setting up an
email listserv to enable better information-sharing among TSCTP implementing
agencies and stakeholders; (4) establishing an annual strategic planning process
involving U.S. embassies to validate TSCTP's priorities and evaluate its overall
progress; and (5) standing up a Deputy Assistant Secretary-level committee to
provide strategic direction for TSCTP and broader efforts in the Sahel-Maghreb
region. As noted in GAO's report, we have also continued to organize an annual
TSCTP conference to promote coordination among agencies and between
Washington and the field. Finally, we have also taken steps to improve
coordination with international partners, including through the Global
Counterterrorism Forum's Sahel Region Working Group.

The GAO report's first recommendation is that the Department of State and
USAID take steps to routinely collect and assess information that will better enable

-2-

us to efficiently determine and report on the status of funds allocated for TSCTP.
The report notes that respective implementing units track and analyze such data,
but it is not consistently and comprehensively collected by the overall TSCTP
managers in State's Bureaus of African Affairs and Near Eastern Affairs. We
agree with GAO that this is an area for improvement. The number of interagency
implementing units and U.S. embassies involved, each with their own reporting
chains and requirements – as well as staff limitations – poses considerable
challenges in this regard, but we are seeking to identify better mechanisms and
processes for collecting and maintaining financial data on TSCTP activities.

The GAO report's second recommendation is that the Department of State
take steps to ensure that the Department of Justice (DOJ) is better integrated into
TSCTP coordination efforts. We agree with GAO that DOJ is a key agency for
building law enforcement capacity and has an important role to play within TSCTP
and related counterterrorism efforts. DOJ officers participate in TSCTP working
groups at several U.S. embassies and support implementation of specific projects.
We will engage DOJ to explore formalized participation in the TSCTP Working
Group as well as higher-level policy coordination mechanisms.

Again, the Department of State expresses our sincere thanks to the GAO for
its thoughtful assessments and engagement throughout this process. Please be
assured that the Department takes the GAO's findings very seriously and will
continue to work to strengthen TSCTP and all other tools that can advance our
counterterrorism efforts in North and West Africa.

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Charles Michael Johnson, Jr.
Director, International Affairs and Trade
U.S. Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

JUN 1 0 2014

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I am pleased to provide USAID's formal response to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) draft report entitled "Combating Terrorism: Enhanced Program Management Would Strengthen Northwest Africa Partnership" (GAO-14-518).

This letter, together with the enclosed USAID comments, is provided for incorporation as an appendix to the final report.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the GAO draft report and for the courtesies extended by your staff in the conduct of this audit review.

Sincerely,

Angelique M. Crumbly
Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Management
U.S. Agency for International Development

Enclosure: a/s

- 2 -

USAID COMMENTS ON GAO DRAFT REPORT
No. GAO-14-518

Recommendation 1: We recommend that the Secretary of State and the Administrator of USAID ensure that TSCTP program managers take steps to routinely collect and assess information on the status of funds for TSCTP.

USAID Response: We acknowledge the challenges in tracking funds for a regional cross-cutting program across multiple operating units, and note that USAID's management of TSCTP funds is in accordance with federal standards and internal control procedures. We are seeking to identify better processes for collecting and maintaining financial data on TSCTP activities.

Appendix VII: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact	Charles Michael Johnson, Jr., (202) 512-7331, or johnsoncm@gao.gov
Staff Acknowledgments	In addition to the contact named above, Godwin Agbara (Assistant Director), Aniruddha Dasgupta, Kendal Robinson, Ashley Alley, Martin de Alteriis, Karen Deans, and Etana Finkler made key contributions to this report. Cynthia Taylor and Sarah Veale provided technical assistance.

Related GAO Products

Combating Terrorism: State Department Can Improve Management of East Africa Program. GAO-14-502. Washington, D.C.: June 17, 2014.

Afghanistan: Oversight and Accountability of U.S. Assistance. GAO-14-680T. Washington, D.C.: June 10, 2014.

Countering Overseas Threats: DOD and State Need to Address Gaps in Monitoring of Security Equipment Transferred to Lebanon. GAO-14-161. Washington, D.C.: February 26, 2014.

Central America: U.S. Agencies Considered Various Factors in Funding Security Activities, but Need to Assess Progress in Achieving Interagency Objectives. GAO-13-771. Washington, D.C.: September 25, 2013.

Combating Terrorism: DHS Should Take Action to Better Ensure Resources Abroad Align with Priorities. GAO-13-681. Washington, D.C.: September 25, 2013.

Building Partner Capacity: DOD is Meeting Most Targets for Colombia's Regional Helicopter Training Center but Should Track Graduates. GAO-13-674. Washington, D.C.: July 24, 2013.

Status of Funding, Equipment, and Training for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. GAO-13-367R. Washington, D.C.: March 20, 2013.

U.S. Assistance to Yemen: Actions Needed to Improve Oversight of Emergency Food Aid and Assess Security Assistance. GAO-13-310. Washington, D.C.: March 20, 2013.

Building Partner Capacity: Key Practices to Effectively Manage Department of Defense Efforts to Promote Security Cooperation. GAO-13-335T. Washington, D.C.: February 14, 2013.

Afghanistan: Key Oversight Issues. GAO-13-218SP. Washington, D.C.: February 11, 2013.

Security Force Assistance: DOD's Consideration of Unintended Consequences, Perverse Incentives, and Moral Hazards. GAO-13-241R. Washington, D.C.: January 8, 2013.

Counternarcotics Assistance: U.S. Agencies Have Allotted Billions in Andean Countries, but DOD Should Improve Its Reporting of Results. GAO-12-824. Washington, D.C.: July 10, 2012.

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Uncertain Political and Security Situation Challenges U.S. Efforts to Implement a Comprehensive Strategy in Yemen. GAO-12-432R. Washington, D.C.: February 29, 2012.

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Somalia: Several Challenges Limit U.S. and International Stabilization, Humanitarian, and Development Efforts. GAO-08-351. Washington, D.C.: February 19, 2008.