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### Media Note

#### Office of the Spokesman

Washington, DC

February 17, 2005

## U.S. Pledges \$1.6 Million for OAS Counter-Terrorism Efforts

The United States has pledged an additional \$1.6 million to strengthen and expand counter-terrorism coordination in the Western Hemisphere, bringing the total U.S. contribution to \$5 million since the terrorist attacks of September 11.

Asa Hutchinson, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security, announced the pledge at the Organization Of American States (OAS) Fifth Regular Session of the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE), a three-day conference hosted by Trinidad and Tobago. The U.S. pledge represents approximately 80 percent of total hemispheric investments in the Committee.

This year's session brings together official delegations from all 34 participating OAS member states to evaluate existing policies and to develop new strategies for hemispheric communication, cooperation, and training in combating the threat of transnational terrorism.

Among the issues addressed at this year's conference are: improving border controls; document security; aviation security (including potential threats to civilian aircraft posed by Man Portable Air Defense Systems, or MANPADS); biometrics sharing; and links between arms/narcotics trafficking and terrorism.

Under Secretary Hutchinson is the head of the U.S. delegation. Other senior members of the U.S. delegation include Ambassador John Maisto, Permanent Representative to the OAS, and William F. Pope, Department of State Acting Coordinator for Counter-terrorism. The Committee was established in 1999 to foster a cooperative multilateral approach to counter-terrorism. For more information on this year's session, visit online at <http://www.cicte.oas.org/>.

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