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Remarks on Release of "Country Reports on Terrorism" for 2004

Philip Zelikow, Counselor of the Department

John Brennan, National Counterterrorism Center Interim Director

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(2:05 p.m. EDT)

MR. ERELI: Greetings, everyone. Thank you for coming on short notice. We're very pleased today to have two distinguished Administration officials to brief on the State Department Country Reports on Terrorism, and the statistical reports are prepared by the National Counterterrorism Center.

We will begin with an overview by Philip Zelikow, the Counselor of the State Department, and then hear from Interim Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Mr. John Brennan, on the statistical side of things. And then they'll be available to answer your questions.

So let's start with Dr. Zelikow.

MR. ZELIKOW: Thanks, Adam. What I'd like to do is to start with the substance and then go to the process.

So first, on substance. Terrorism remains a global threat from which no nation is immune. Despite ongoing improvements in U. S. homeland security, our campaigns against insurgents and terrorists, and the deepening counterterrorism cooperation among the nations of the world, international terrorism continued to pose a significant threat to the United States and its partners in 2004.

The slaughter of hundreds of innocents in the Beslan school, in the commuter trains of Madrid, on a Philippines ferry and in a Sinai resort proved again that the struggle against terrorism is far from over.

In 2004, the United States broadened and deepened its international cooperation on counterterrorism issues. Increased diplomatic, intelligence, law enforcement, military and financial cooperation contributed directly to homeland security and the interdiction or disruption of terrorists around the globe.

We'll offer a number of examples in the Country Report that we are releasing today. A few of them, for example, are as follows: Close cooperation with British, French and other authorities, coordinated through the State Department and U.S. Embassies in London, Paris and elsewhere, was pivotal to managing threats to airline security during the '03-'04 new year period. Information sharing with the United Kingdom and Pakistan led to the disclosure and disruption of al-Qaida attack planning against U. S. financial institutions.

U.S. diplomatic and military assistance facilitated cooperation among Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Libya and Chad that led to the capture and return of wanted GSPC faction leader El Para to Algeria to stand trial.

Law enforcement officers in Iraq, Colombia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, among others, applied U. S. specialized counterterrorism training to bring terrorists to justice. And there are a number of examples of that that we'd be glad to elaborate -- some remarkable stories, really.

Working with a broad spectrum of domestic and international partners, the United States has identified and disrupted many sources of terrorist finance. And the United States used its G-8 Presidency in 2004 to advance new international transportation security measures and to coordinate international counterterrorism assistance among the G-8 and other donors.

Notably, 2004 was also marked by progress in decreasing the threat from states that sponsor terrorism -- state-sponsored terrorism. Iraq's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism was formally rescinded in October 2004. Though they are still on the list, Libya and Sudan took significant steps to cooperate in the global war on terrorism. Unfortunately, Cuba, North Korea, Syria, and in particular, Iran continued to embrace terrorism as an instrument of national policy. Most worrisome is that these countries also have the capabilities to manufacture weapons of mass destruction and other destabilizing technologies that could fall into the hands of terrorists.

Iran and Syria are of special concern for their direct, open, and prominent role in supporting Hezbollah and Palestinian terrorist groups, for their unhelpful actions in Iraq and in Iran's case, the unwillingness to bring to justice senior al-Qaida members detained in 2003, including -- I will add personally -- senior al-Qaida members who were involved in the planning of the 9/11 attacks.

The United States will continue to broaden and deepen international cooperation to protect U.S. citizens. The trend away from centralized planning of terrorist activities and towards inspiration of local groups to commit acts of terror make it even more crucial to have deeper international cooperation to defeat the emerging violent extremist groups. The United States and its partners must intensify their efforts to bolster the political will and the intelligence, law enforcement, financial, and military capabilities of partner nations to combat terrorism, on their own or with us.

The United States will step up cooperation with its partners to prevent the spread of al-Qaida's ideology and the growth of jihadist terror. The United States will continue its efforts to defeat non-al-Qaida terrorist groups, discourage state sponsorship of terrorism, and mobilize international will and build capacity to prevent terrorist access to weapons of mass destruction.

Now let me turn to the process issues. For years, as many of you know, statistical data on global terrorism has been published as part of an annual State Department report called *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, that was last provided to Congress in April 2004.

The law itself requires basically two things: It requires detailed assessments of specified countries, and information about specified terrorist groups.

The compilation of data about terrorist attacks is not a required part of the report, but traditionally had been provided by the State Department, going back to the years in which the State Department was basically the public voice of the U.S. Government

on international terrorism, generally.

Of course, that situation has been changing in recent years. In July 2004, the 9/11 Commission recommended creation of a National Counterterrorism Center to provide an authoritative agency for all-source analysis of global terrorism. I would be glad to answer any questions how the 9/11 Commission reached that conclusion.

The President implemented the recommendation by Executive Order in August. And the agency was created by statute in December 2004, in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, which is Public Law 108-458, for those of you who wish to look it up right away.

But what's important for our purposes is what the law said the NCTC should do. It said the NCTC was the primary organization for analysis and integration of -- and I'm quoting from the law now -- "All intelligence possessed or acquired by the United States Government pertaining to terrorism or counterterrorism." The law further stated that the NCTC would be the United States Government's "shared knowledge bank on known and suspected terrorists and international terror groups, as well as their goals, strategies, capabilities, and networks of contact and support."

Therefore, given that statutory mandate, the State Department has focused its own report to Congress on the issues in its mandate, renamed *Country Reports on Terrorism: Assessing Countries and Providing Information on Terrorist Groups*, which we are still statutorily required to do. And it is deferred to the National Counterterrorism Center to assume its prescribed role as the "shared knowledge bank" for data on global terrorism.

We are publicly presenting our required report to Congress and the public today. In conjunction with that presentation, the NCTC will present current 2004 terrorist incident data that is compiled using the old statutory criteria, the old counting rules and past practices. We're presenting this data today in a period of transition to what should ideally be the proper way to present this data in the future, which NCTC is developing. NCTC will present its own approach to compiling statistics that need to be and will be significantly revised and improved, including its plans for providing a more comprehensive accounting of global terrorism incidents by June of this year. And to describe that effort further, I turn the floor over to Mr. Brennan, the Acting Director of the National Counterterrorism Center.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you, Philip. Good afternoon. My name is John Brennan. I am the interim Director of the National Counterterrorism Center. I am also formerly the Director of the Terrorist Threat Integration Center, the functions and responsibilities of which transferred to the NCTC as of 6 December last year.

Now, before I discuss specific numbers that are being released today, I would like to address two key issues. First, after the problems associated with last year's *Patterns* publication, the NCTC, along with the Department of State, engaged in a rigorous internal review of processes and procedures used to support the publications of *Patterns*. We also worked very closely with the Department's Inspector General, and we took the Inspector General's recommendations fully into account in the reengineering of that process.

To ensure a more comprehensive accounting of terrorist incidents, we in the NCTC significantly increased the level of effort from three part-time individuals to 10 full-time analysts, and we took a number of other steps to improve quality control and database management. This increased level of effort allowed a much deeper review of far more information and, along with Iraq, are the primary reasons for the significant growth in a number of terrorist incidents being reported.

Now, this increase in the number of incidents being reported today does not necessarily mean that there has been a growth in actual terrorist incidents. In other words, the data you will see today represent a break from previous years, and the numbers can't

be compared to previous years in any meaningful way. This point was made to congressional staffers earlier this week, but has not been accurately captured in the various press articles over the past couple of days.

Now, second. In our scrub of last year's data, it became increasingly clear that there were methodological problems associated with statutory language and counting rules. These criteria dated to a period of focus on state-sponsored terrorism in the early 1980s and not the transnational phenomena we confront now. I will discuss some of these methodological problems and what we're doing to improve the process of accounting for global terrorist incidents. I would like to first turn to our charts. Using the statutory criteria found in Title 22, Section 2656-F of the U.S. Code, along with counting rules that were provided to the National Counterterrorism Center, we compiled data on 651 attacks that met the criteria for significant international terrorist incidents. Now, there are several points of note. As you can see on the left-hand side, there were over 9,000 victims of significant international terrorism last year, of which 1,907 were killed. On the right-hand side, you can see the regional breakdown of total attacks and the relative share of the 1,907 individuals killed.

Now, a couple of points of note. Much has been made in the press about Kashmir and clearly there was, on average, an attack nearly every day in Kashmir. In fact, there were a total of 284 attacks in Kashmir that met the statutory criteria for significant terrorist incidents. Now, the total number of people killed in South Asia was about 500. In other words, the attacks were often conducted against one or two people. By contrast, there were very few attacks in Europe -- it's represented here on the blue bar, in Europe -- but there was a very high death toll. This reflects the very deadly attacks in places like Madrid and Beslan, Russia, where many hundreds of people were killed in single incidents.

As you can see in the lower left-hand corner, the methodology, chronology, and selected statistical charts are being posted and are already posted on www.tkb.org. This is the website for the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism in Oklahoma City, and we are most appreciative of the institute for partnering with us to make the data available to the American public.

Now, the next chart. This second chart reflects the subset of significant international attacks conducted against U.S. interests. As you can see on the left, 64 attacks, approximately 10 percent of the total number of attacks worldwide, were conducted against U.S. interests. The vast majority of these anti-U.S. attacks took place in the Middle East, where 83 percent of those attacks occurred. As you can see on the pie charts on the right-hand side of the briefing board, a far lower percentage of U.S. citizens were actually wounded or killed. Of the roughly 9,300 individuals wounded in significant international terrorist incidents, 103 were Americans. Total U.S. victims: 103. And of the more than 1,800 people killed last year in significant international terrorist incidents, 68 were Americans.

Now, as I said at the outset, the process of compiling this data highlighted some significant methodological shortcomings that are based on statutory criteria. I'd like to spend a few moments discussing these shortcomings, provide some examples of the misleading results, and then discuss what we're doing to provide what we believe will be a more accurate accounting of terrorist incidents.

To constitute a significant international terrorist incident, the statutory criteria and counting rules provided to NCTC were applied. Terrorism is defined in the statute, as noted in the left-hand column. It is a violent act. It involves non-combatants. It is premeditated, perpetrated by a sub-national or clandestine agent, and politically motivated. And for non-combatants in non-warlike areas, combatants who are in a non-combatant status are also included.

"International" is also defined in the statute as "involving the citizens or territory of more than one country." And as I'll show you on the next chart, this definition, while appropriate for state-sponsored terrorism, is simply not as useful for the current transnational threat we now face. And thirdly, "significant" has been traditionally defined as not only killings or severe woundings, but also property damage of over \$10,000. So, to be significant, deaths, more than superficial woundings, kidnappings, or property damage over \$10,000.

As I mentioned at the outset, there is simply no question that these statutorily based criteria, coupled with counting rules provided to the National Counterterrorism Center, resulted in a series of anomalies and misleading results. Here are a few examples of what was and wasn't counted.

Many incidents were not viewed as terrorism and are not reflected in our numbers. For instance, other types of political violence, such as hate crimes, were not counted. In one instance, 19 immigrants were wounded in a bomb blast against a Vietnamese dormitory in Moscow. That is not included in the tally because it does not meet the definition for international terrorism.

Far more problematic from our perspective was the statutory definition of international terrorism, which requires the involvement of citizens or territory of more than one country. On 27 February of last year, a member of the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines -- a terrorist organization -- sank Superferry 14, killing over 100 people. Now, obviously, this was an act of terrorism directed against innocent civilians. But because the perpetrator and the victims were all Filipino, this incident didn't meet the statutory definition and is not reflected in the chronology.

Iraq is a particularly difficult case. In the case of Iraqis attacking Iraqi election officials, this clearly did not meet the statutory definition. It was an attack in Iraq against Iraqis by Iraqis, and we generally found it virtually impossible to distinguish between insurgency and terrorism. Iraqis, for instance, fight for the terrorist, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, as well as for insurgent forces; but there is no defensible way to distinguish between the two: insurgents and terrorists. As such, our chronology focuses on attacks that killed or wounded non-Iraqi civilians in Iraq, and they are included in the chronology.

In the case of Uzbekistan, this instance on the board was undoubtedly Sunni extremism as three attacks took place on the same day, 30 July of last year: one attack against the U.S. Embassy, one attack against the Israeli Embassy, and one attack against an Uzbek Government building. Under the statutory definition, the latter, the attack against the Uzbek building, is considered indigenous because the perpetrator and victims were Uzbek.

And finally, on 24 August of last year, two Chechen suicide bombers blew up two Aeroflot flights. One flight contained all Russian citizens and under the statutory definition, does not constitute international terrorism. That flight isn't in the chronology. The other flight on that day had one individual with Israeli citizenship and therefore, under the statutory definition, constitutes international terrorism and is reflected in the chronology. The attack against the school in Beslan is considered to be international terrorism because one perpetrator was Uzbek and one perpetrator was Kazakh. If they were not, that would not have been included in the tally.

As far as the air flights are concerned, this is perhaps the poster child for what is wrong with the methodology. Two attacks against two airliners. One airliner had an Israeli citizen, the other did not. One counts, one doesn't. Now more generally, in our view, it simply makes no sense that a determination whether to count an incident as international terrorism would hinge on reviewing a manifest or determining citizenship of everyone involved.

And lastly, we had anomalies based on counting rules and the definition of "significant". On two separate occasions, bombs went off outside four HSBC banks in Turkey on the same day last year. While this would constitute international terrorism, no single bomb caused \$10,000 worth of damage and, therefore, did not meet the threshold. Now, as I believe should be readily apparent, the statutory criteria and legacy counting rules used to support Patterns simply do not reflect the nature of the global terrorism problem we now confront. Accordingly, the National Counterterrorism Center is in the midst of compiling 2004 data in a more comprehensive manner that will not only address the many anomalies I've already highlighted, but will also address the kinds of indigenous terrorism conducted by such groups as the ETA and FARC against their own citizens. These, of course, also are not reflected in the data provided today because it's indigenous terrorism. In other words, our intent is to capture any incident where

a non-combatant is targeted or indiscriminately attacked and the attack is politically motivated.

Now, we recognize that users of this information will want to query the data in various fashions, so we will be rolling out in June not only a more comprehensive data set, but also a database that will empower the user and support interactive queries.

What we'll be rolling out in June is a comprehensive chronology of all attacks where non-combatants are targeted or indiscriminately attacked and where the attack is politically motivated, which is not a crime or genocide. It will be (inaudible) terrorism and it will be available on www.tkb.org. It will have more data, will be accessible and searchable, it will be used for empowering, it will be open and transparent, and it will be regularly updated.

And finally, we look forward to interacting with both private and public experts to further refine our methodology and continually improve the approach for counting terrorist incidents.

VOICE: Thank you, John. Have a seat -- you don't need to go. Arshad?

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: Three questions if I may, very simple ones. In your last statement, is NCTC therefore committing to, on a regular basis, going forward, providing this more comprehensive data set on acts of terrorism? Second, you said that one reason for the increase this year, aside from the greater resources devoted to monitoring, was Iraq. What were the figures for Iraq in '04 and '03? Thirdly, why didn't you go back and redo the 2003 data in a more comprehensive manner so that there would be comparable data for at least '03 and '04? Those are addressed all to Mr. Brennan, of course.

MR. BRENNAN: First of all, yes, we are committing to make available on a regular basis the incidents that meet what we believe is a more comprehensive definition of international terrorism, so we are going forward. We are releasing this. We have released it today. We'll continue to do so.

Secondly, as far as the number in Iraq, in 2003 the number of incidents were 22. In 2004, the incidents were 201. I might add, that reflects the increasing number of civilians and contractors and others who were in Iraq who are participating in the rebuilding of the Iraqi economy and nation. And then the final question?

QUESTION: The final question was, why didn't you go back and redo the '03 data so that --

MR. BRENNAN: I think, as we tried to make clear, there are some serious shortcomings in the methodology used to date. What we wanted to do this year was to put out the information based on that methodology, based on a very rigorous application of that methodology with a very exhaustive data search. And I think what we demonstrated here today is that there are serious shortcomings. To apply very precious resources to go back and do 2003 or 2002 with a deficient methodology, I think, would not be in the best interests of the U.S. Government or the American people. What we're trying to do is to look forward. We want to, in fact, apply these resources, our new understanding, and the lessons that we've learned to the data compilation in the future.

QUESTION: Do you regard the Iraq numbers that you just gave us -- for which, thank you -- as comparable? And the reason I ask is that I've got to figure that if there's one piece of real estate that the U.S. intelligence community has devoted enormous resources to in the last two years, it's got to be -- two-and-a-half years -- it's Iraq. Therefore, do you think those figures are comparable, '03 to '02?

MR. BRENNAN: In terms of what the term you're using -- "comparable" -- to sort of denote here, I'm not certain. The rigor that we applied worldwide for the 2004 data also applied to Iraq. So it was Iraq, Kashmir, and others. So that number, I think, is the result of exhaustive search and research on that. Also, as I pointed out, the number of civilians that have come not just from the United States, but also from other countries -- the number of individuals who, in fact, are in different places in Iraq that have been involved in some of the attacks that have taken place there, I think that is the reason why, in fact, we're seeing an increase in that number.

QUESTION: The reason I ask the question, and I'm using the term "comparable" not in any complex sense, but in the same way that you used in saying that the overall '04 numbers are not comparable to the overall '03 numbers, because the greater rigor and --

MR. BRENNAN: Right.

QUESTION: -- and so on, the monitoring. My question on Iraq, I think, is germane because there has been enormously rigorous study by the U.S. Government on what has been happening in Iraq in '03 and '04. So if we were to say, "Look, 201 versus 22," that jump isn't the result of just more rigorous monitoring in '04 but in fact reflects the underlying reality.

MR. BRENNAN: Don't know the answer to that question because as you say, you know, we are not applying then this methodology, as the rigorous research to the 2003 data. We have not gone back and looked at it, at this point, in terms of Iraq. So all I can do is stand behind, very strongly, the figures for Iraq for 2004.

QUESTION: And henceforth, I presume, you're never going to -- are you ever going to go back and redo data in future, based in these methodologies that you feel are so inadequate that had been the case?

MR. BRENNAN: As I said, we are trying to look to the future in applying methodology to the future.

MR. ERELI: Elise.

QUESTION: A couple of questions. For Mr. Brennan, just a follow up on what Arshad was saying.

Basically, what you said is that, you know, you proved today that there are serious shortcomings in the methodology that was currently used. So did you do all that exhaustive effort -- don't you think that the efforts would have been served, kind of, moving forward than just to do this to make a point that there are such serious shortcomings?

I mean, you already kind of handicapped your own numbers, don't you think, in a way that will, you know, kind of makes us question why you put them out. Why don't you just wait to, kind of, June and say, you know, this is the new methodology --

MR. BRENNAN: Yeah. Well, first of all, we wanted -- we made a commitment to the State Department that we were going to revamp this process and provide the State Department everything they needed in support of their annual requirement as far as reporting to the Congress.

We learned a lot of things over the past nine months as we looked back at this information. And the lessons learned, the anomalies and other things, really became quite stark. We grappled with that last year when, in fact, we had to do a revised version of Patterns as a result of some flaws in terms of the publication process and how the information came out.

But we wanted to do is to make sure we really understood the totality of the issue. And so what we wanted to do, as a result of this thorough research, is to look at the shortcomings in the individual criteria and in the methodology. And we found out what the problems were. So what we did, as a result of this, we made the State Department aware of these anomalies and we worked very closely with them. And I think that's why, right now today, we have, in fact, NCTC and the Department of State issuing concurrent reports. What we want to do -- and I think this has been in the press recently -- in terms of full transparency to the American public, there was never any effort -- and I want to make that very clear -- never any effort that was applied to the NCTC to either suppress these numbers or not to release them.

We had moved forward on this, hand in hand with the State Department. We were committed to doing it. But once we realized that there were going to be shortcomings here, we wanted to make sure that it was understood when it was going to be presented, what those problems were.

But not just put them out and say, "There are shortcomings here, that's it." We wanted to say, "Okay, what are we going to do about it." And that's what we said today. We have something now in process, and by June there's going to be this comprehensive data set that's going to be made available, regularly updated, that is going to be much more user friendly, that can be a tool for individuals to research and to really look at the phenomena in international terrorism.

MR. ZELIKOW: Now, let me just add on that question. I mean, the reason -- I think it's a good question as to why we put out these numbers today. I asked that question myself some time back. And the reason we did it is because you wanted us to. And the Hill wanted us to. Because if we didn't put out these numbers, you'd say we were withholding data. That's why we're putting them out.

So we had this dilemma. We could either not put out the numbers and wait until we felt like we had good numbers and then put those out. And then you write stories saying we're withholding data. Or we put out numbers that are basically in transition, you know, like: okay, come visit us in the middle of this transitional process and we'll show you the numbers as they exist right now, and just tell you, as openly as we can, these aren't very good. That's why we're making them better and we'll have the good numbers ready for you in a couple of months. But just so you're not suspicious about what we're doing, let's be totally transparent and show you where we are right now.

And so we just chose the path of transparency.

QUESTION: Just one more for you, Mr. Zelikow. What do you say about the issue that this is no longer -- the State Department, yes, is putting out these Country Reports, but it's no longer what it used to be, which is Patterns of Global Terrorism. Is that what the NT -- Counterterrorism Center is going to do? If you could talk a little bit about your decision to -- and the State Department's decision to shift over to NCTC, and a little bit more in the -- there's a little bit in the report about global jihad phenomenon and how that, kind of, came as an off-shoot of al-Qaida. I know that's a bit but -- thank you.

MR. ZELIKOW: Sure. I came into the State Department earlier this year, as you know, and so I had not been a part of these issues in the past. I also came into the Department believing rather strongly in the importance of the NCTC. I'd been the director of the 9/11 Commission last year. I'd played a part in recommending the creation of that Center. I testified publicly to Congress in support of its creation and participated in the drafting of the statutory language that I quoted to you.

So when I come into the State Department and I kind of find out -- my instinctive reaction is, why isn't NCTC doing this? Congress mandated that they should do this, as I know well. And so my instinct was, we need to focus the State Department on country policies, which is what the State Department does. And since the statute requires us to describe international terrorist groups, we have to do that. Although I think NCTC is the more proper center to provide authoritative descriptions of those groups, but we're required to do that so we have to do that. So that's in the report, along with the discussion of global

jihadism, because of the language in the statute that refers to umbrella groups, the umbrella conception being the notion of Islamism and violent global Jihad and so that's described in the report as well, in order to comply with the mandate.

But very early on, I actually spoke to John and said, "John, you should do this." And in principle John agreed. And so there --

QUESTION: But what about the idea --

MR. ZELIKOW: -- we went forward from there.

QUESTION: -- what about the idea that you're not really putting forward? You're kind of putting out a lot of statistics and a lot of information about a lot of different stuff. But it's not being kind of put together in terms of what are the patterns of global terrorists.

MR. ZELIKOW: Well, in part, because the overall depiction of the trend lines and analysis of global terrorism as a phenomenon really is anointed as the business of the NCTC explicitly in the statute. And to the extent we can, we plan to defer to that. You could make the counter argument. The counter argument would be: Well, why don't you guys do it, too, and set yourselves up as a rival voice on this issue with NCTC? And that would, of course, replicate the precise phenomena we decried last year.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) basically, everybody agrees there's a significant increase in the number of terrorist attacks last year, right?

MR. ZELIKOW: No. We don't. We agree that we made a more aggressive effort to compile the data and therefore have a much larger dataset.

QUESTION: I remember somebody said that --

MR. ZELIKOW: I mean, we have really no way of knowing whether the actual number of attacks, had we equally aggressively compiled the data in previous years, whether the numbers would have gone up or down, if you had held the data compilation efforts constant. We have actually no way of knowing whether the attack numbers would have gone up or down.

QUESTION: Without numbers, how would you say that terrorism is a significant threat?

MR. ZELIKOW: Well, here's what we can -- you'll notice from -- John, I'm going to ask you to comment on this, too. You notice on the charts that there are thousands of people being killed and the implications of the counting rule problems are mostly about things that are excluded. So there are at least thousands of people killed. And if you had adopted different kinds of counting rules, the numbers both in '04 and '03 and '02 probably would be significantly enlarged. But at a point where you have groups killing thousands of people, even under these relatively straightened and odd counting rules, and plus trans -- once you redefine from international to transnational, killing hundreds, possibly thousands more, that's a very significant problem.

MR. BRENNAN: Just might add, the top five incidents of last year in terms of casualties resulted in over 4,000 deaths. That's five attacks. The attack in Spain -- 4,000 casualties, not deaths; 4,000 casualties. It's the attack in Spain against the railway, the attack in Russia against the school, and three attacks in Iraq -- two attacks on the second of March of last year in Karbala where there were suicide bombers that set off bombs against the Shia Muslim community there and another attack in Iraq on 1 February of last year in Irbil. So between those five attacks, over 4,000 casualties, it shows that, in fact, if you count those as five and then you take five attacks somewhere maybe in Kashmir, you really cannot compare the two because those five resulted in over 4,000 casualties, where maybe five attacks in Kashmir, you know, resulted in just a couple.

Let's go to Tammy.

QUESTION: I was wondering if I could ask Mr. Brennan about the Iraq figures. The 2,000 -- or I'm sorry -- the 201 number that you have according to the current counting rules, was culled from a larger universe. Do you have a figure that you can provide today of the numbers of attacks you believe took place -- terrorist attacks -- not according to the counting rules?

MR. BRENNAN: No, not today because, in fact, we're still in the process of compiling that information. As I said, it'll be made available in June on this website. That's what we want to do, is to make sure that people are able to see things. Now, Iraq and Afghanistan and other war-like conditions are, in fact, a little bit sort of unique. What we'll want to do is to, as we put this out in June, is to make as much data available. You know, we're talking about thousands of entries, you know, based on the totality then of incidents that constitute some form of terrorism, whether it be indigenous or transnational, whatever. So I think you're going to have to wait until June. We want to make sure that's right. We don't want to put out any numbers or anything else here that we really haven't scrubbed carefully.

QUESTION: Mr. Brennan, I just wanted to follow up what Mr. Zelikow was just saying. If you used the criteria that you all would prefer to use the numbers for 2004 would likely go up, correct?

MR. BRENNAN: I think what you'll see in June when we put out, in fact, this database, that the total number of incidents is going to increase, and it's going to increase probably significantly because it's going to take into account a lot of indigenous attacks. You know, within Colombia, a number of those incidents that I pointed out that are not included because of the limitations as far as the statutory criteria. So what we're trying to do is to have a much more comprehensive data set of all incidents that appear to be terrorism in nature, as far as being directed against noncombatants and are politically motivated. And so this will give people an opportunity to really sort of slice and dice these numbers according to a number of different criteria that -- we shouldn't be, you know, having a rigid one that will exclude some and not include the others because then we're never going to be able to sort of service the people who are looking really comprehensively around the world to get a better understanding of politically motivated terrorism violence.

MR. ZELIKOW: Let me add, I know this may be counterintuitive because the whole direction of the press commentary on this was like we're trying to hold the numbers down. In fact, we're revising the accounting rules that are going to raise the numbers up to show that transnational terrorism is at least as great a threat and, in fact, worse. But then you get into the phenomena of, well, is there a significant -- a statistical change then over the last few years, which is the question you asked. And again, this is just an elementary statistics point. I mean, you have to hold some of these variables constant. So if you held constant accounting rules and the compilation efforts, then we have no idea of whether, in fact -- what the graph would show. It's not at all obvious that the numbers in past years wouldn't have been hugely larger if we had compiled equally thoroughly and counted on transnational counting rules. We just don't know.

And in fact, just to tell you in a very straightforward way, what I think the global assessment would show is, you'd find it varied significantly by region and by country, that in some countries things have gone down and in other countries things have gone up, and that some of this is due to the success or failure of indigenous law enforcement efforts; and you'd have a fairly complex mosaic to examine.

QUESTION: Um, 651 attacks in 2004, compared to 175 attacks in your report in 2003. That's a sharp increase in terrorist attacks. What does that tell us about the war on terrorism -- the global war on terrorism and the cooperation?

MR. BRENNAN: I will tell you, but I just want to make sure it's clear: It does not necessarily represent a sharp increase in the number of terrorist attacks. What a sharp increase is in the number of incidents being reported now annually, again as a result of

much more rigorous research and identification of all these incidents. So I want to make sure it's understood that the numbers cannot be compared in a meaningful way because the number now is what is being reported as far as terrorist incidents. If we were to go back and apply that much more extensive research with a (inaudible) against that dataset in 2003, I bet you that we're probably going to see more. But again, what we want to do is to use those resources to continue to engage in counterterrorism activities looking in the future.

MR. ZELIKOW: I mean, the short answer is it doesn't tell us anything about the war on terror. The statistics are simply not valid for any inference about the progress, either good or bad, of American policy. I think that's the honest answer. If you just look at what the statistics are and what kind of inferences can legitimately be drawn from them, I can't come up with a defensible inference.

QUESTION: But, why do you issue a report like this? I mean, if it does not tell us anything about where the war on terror is heading, how can we evaluate this war and where it is right now?

MR. ZELIKOW: What we think would be fair is, we can compile the data we can compile. For example, when you look at the NCTC dataset, there is a chronology and of many terrorist incidents. It's a subset of the transnational terrorist total, but that's interesting. It's just hard to -- it's not a homogenous set for comparison with past years. There is interesting data there about -- let's say you wanted to find out some of the terrorist incidents that occurred in the Philippines. It would be a reference for some of those incidents, for example. Or there may be other uses to which people can put it. But fundamentally, the reason we're putting out these numbers now when they're still in a transitional condition are the reasons I gave in answer to a question earlier.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) about the states that sponsor terrorism. In the report you say that Cuba, North Korea, and Syria have the capacity to manufacture weapons of mass destruction. And I wonder if you could elaborate on Cuba. How can Cuba -- I mean, in what way or --?

MR. ZELIKOW: If you expect me to walk into the minefield of discussing the Cuban biological weapons program, I'm going to disappoint you. (Laughter.) However --

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

MR. ZELIKOW: No. The Cuban Government has the capability to manufacture some weapons of mass destruction. The U. S. Government has discussed what those capabilities are in other settings and I don't want to get into that here. The same is true for Syria and the other countries we named. What we're focusing on here principally is less what is the WMD capability of the states, is simply what is the role of those states in state sponsorship of terrorism. And then please look at that against the background of what we have already said publicly about the capabilities of those states in the WMD world. And then you can draw some inferences about whether that's disturbing or not.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) the report about terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, so then you explain a little bit in what way --

MR. ZELIKOW: It is --

QUESTION: -- (inaudible) do it because I look in the country description and there is no information on that.

MR. ZELIKOW: No information on?

QUESTION: On weapons of mass destruction.

MR. ZELIKOW: No, because the report is not on -- this is not a weapons of mass destruction report. It's a report about sponsorship of terrorism and relationship to terrorism. We simply point out that if you look at the state -- at some of these state sponsors of terrorism and you note that they also have been described in other U.S. Government statements of being involved in WMD production, some might consider that a disturbing combination.

QUESTION: Hi. I'm Janine (inaudible), Bloomberg News. Two questions. Were NCTC figures released in response to Hill pressure because it was not included in the State Department version? And secondly, I was a little confused about the new numbers that are going to come out, Mr. Brennan. Are you not mandated under the same statutes to define terrorist acts -- international terrorist acts, the way the Congress says because it's coming out of your group instead of the State Department?

MR. ZELIKOW: Let me start on that. The decision to release these numbers today for '04 was not made this week. So it is not a response to articles in the press this week or to pressure from Hill staffers this week. That decision had already been made. The statement that I read you on process today was given practically word-for-word identically in a briefing of Hill staffers on Monday.

So it's been our view all along that we needed to go ahead and give you the data in this transitional form because we already anticipated that if we did not do so, there would be accusations that we were hiding something. So we thought transparency was the better route.

MR. BRENNAN: And we did not release any numbers as a result of any pressure from the Hill or elsewhere.

QUESTION: And the question about how -- we understand what you said is that Congress says you have to define international terrorism in a certain way. You are now going to define it in a new way, including a Russian attack -- an attack on a plane with only Russians are killed. Are you allowed to do that because you are releasing it and not State?

MR. BRENNAN: In the statute that requires State to issue this annual report, it defines international terrorism, it sets a definition there in terms of citizens or territory of more than one country. So therefore, in the report that the State Department puts out, it is bound by that statutorily defined criteria.

As we, now, in the NCTC are looking at the phenomenon of worldwide terrorism, we want to make sure that we are looking at it as openly and as exhaustively as possible. And therefore, in this effort -- and since we are compiling this data -- we are going to be making that data available to other U.S. Government departments and agencies, and as a result of the effort while we're working with the State Department now, making that available also to the U.S. public because it is based on information that is available in the press. So if we're doing that, it's a service that is going to be provided then and made available to the public.

MR. ZELIKOW: Now let me just clarify. Now do you see the source of the statistical anomaly, in part, and why these counting rules are so peculiar is because the definitions were not definitions for the construction of a database. The definitions were created for the specification of countries on which you must report and groups that you must describe.

But since those were the only definitions in the statute and since we were compiling a database, we therefore fell into the habit of applying those definitions to the construction of a database, which turns out, on reflection, to be unsuitable.

Therefore, you have transnational terrorism. There is no statutory guidance on how to define it, so in a way the NCTC is free to simply try to do this right and come up with an -- which and they would then publicize it and then they will have to defend that and people can argue whether or not it's defined correctly or not.

QUESTION: Just to clarify --

MR. ZELIKOW: Go ahead.

QUESTION: Just to clarify, are you now saying you're -- I'm interested in both Mr. Zelikow and Mr. Brennan's opinion on this -- are we now saying that all previous reports should be considered suspect because of the issues that the NCTC managed to identify in its review of the report for this year's report? In other words, should we consider that there is not a useful evaluation of terrorist activity in all previous reports, first of all.

And second of all, you've talked about the changes in your methodology and your information collection, that you've had ten people working full time to gather incidents, for example -- but I'm less clear on what changes in methodology you're saying. In other words, aside from potentially gleaning more terrorist incidents that were out there that you might not have in previous years, have you made other substantial changes in your methodology from previous years?

MR. ZELIKOW: Let me do the first one and if you understood the second question, John, I'll let you try to answer; it was hard for me.

On the first question, what does this say about the quality of the data compilations in previous years, I think it speaks for itself. I think now you have to -- people should examine those compilations in previous years with their eyes wide open as to the level of effort involved in compiling the data and the counting rules they labored under. Rules, which as John described earlier, seemed to make good sense in the 1980s when they began regularly doing this. And then you can judge the quality of how that worked over the years.

This is, by the way, not an unusual problem in the social sciences, where there are lots of phenomenon that we try to measure -- poverty, unemployment and so forth -- and advancing methodology and questions then as how you regard previous statistics calculated by different methods. And this is, yet, another one of those stories.

MR. BRENNAN: I think looking back at previous years' data, there is, I think, a degree of confidence that the methodology and criteria, as defined by the statute, were applied as the counts were done on an annual basis. Might there have been some underreporting? Yeah, I think so. But it was partly a result of that limitation that was imposed by the statutory definition, as well as the practices that were used as far as trying to define some of these other aspects of terrorism.

Now, as far as the changes for the future, we are in fact now stripping away some of those limitations that I tried to explain, as far as why the one Aeroflot flight was not counted. We are not going to limit this database to only those instances that involved citizens and territory of more than one country. I think we have ample evidence of terrorism conducted by groups that are designated by the U.S. Government, as well as other governments, as being foreign terrorist organizations perpetrating attacks. And we want to make sure that that information is included.

So again, it's going to result in an increase in the number of incidents that are included in the database. But as Phil pointed out, the NCTC does not have to adhere to that statutory definition because that statutory definition only applies to the annual State Department obligation.

What we're trying to do, and be based on the legislative language that created the NCTC that we have primary responsibility in U. S. Government for analysis and integration of all information dealing with terrorism and counterterrorism. And so that's why it's going to be a much more comprehensive data set.

MR. ZELIKOW: Does that answer the question?

QUESTION: Well, I'm just trying to figure out just one more time, maybe I wasn't clear. Did you make any other significant changes in what you were allowing or not allowing? I thought that you said that the numbers that you are releasing today, in this transition period, were based on the statutory criteria. And that the main difference that -- I've heard you say today, the main difference is simply that you had more manpower devoted to making sure that you got all the terrorist incidents.

QUESTION: (Inaudible).

MR. BRENNAN: Right, I mean, there are several different issues here that are at play. One is that, you're absolutely right, we applied much more rigor, more manpower, better quality control to the effort over the past year than in previous years, which has resulted in a much more comprehensive data set that we looked at. By multiple measures, we looked at much more information.

As a result of that more comprehensive research then, we identified more incidents that met that definition and the criteria. And so that is one of the reasons, I think, one overwhelming reason for this increase in the number that are being reported, as far as terrorist incidents.

Are there other factors that come into play also? I think that there are. There are some things that we're looking at now in terms of individual countries. What's the reason for, or in fact, the number of incidents that took place there?

Again, trying to compare it with past practices that were less than one-third or one-fourth of the effort that was expended, I don't think it would be a fair comparison to take a look at the numbers that we're issuing today and the numbers in previous reports. And so, we've learned from that and we're making adjustments accordingly.

MR. ZELIKOW: Especially since the effects of the more aggressive data is just, "Well, okay, so we've discovered, you know, hundreds of additional incidents in Kashmir," because we actually -- people went out and looked at local newspapers from Kashmir and so on and said, "Okay, now what larger inference should I then draw from that for the conduct of the global war on terror," (inaudible). Hard argument.

QUESTION: Can we move back to the Country Report for a minute, Mr. Zelikow, and just -- you've --

MR. ZELIKOW: I don't care.

QUESTION: -- gone -- you know, pretty tough against al-Qaida and have said that you've eliminated -- you know, a lot of the leadership of al-Qaida but that there's this new phenomenon of global -- you know, kind of jihadist sympathizing with that. Is that the new face of terrorism as you see it? And if you could flesh that out a little bit more.

MR. ZELIKOW: Yes, that's -- I think that's a fair summary. A declining role for a significantly degraded, highly organized al-Qaida network of the kind that had built up before 9/11; rising emergence of decentralized, more local groups that are loosely affiliated or inspired by the Islamist ideology espoused by al-Qaida, creating a different kind of transnational terrorist phenomenon for us to tackle.

QUESTION: Do you believe that the United States and its allies are winning the war on terrorism?

MR. ZELIKOW: I do think we are winning the war on terrorism, but I think it's a very long struggle. Just looking back on this from a historical perspective and a little bit having looked at the pre-9/11 period before, obviously a period in which the terrorists essentially owned a state and could more or less unhindered organize and mount transnational catastrophic terrorist attacks from within that kind of shelter, building up a very large, complex global organization can, I think, be favorably contrasted with their ability to mount catastrophic, long-range attacks today. And I think one indicator of that is the absence of attacks on the homeland of the United States in a situation where, obviously, they would have wanted by now to carry out such attacks. So there is some issue of capacity.

But I want to underscore -- let me triple-underscore: no complacency, no reason to think that the danger has now passed. The language of the 9/11 Commission report last July said, "We are safer, but we are not safe", and I think that the administration today would continue to echo those words.

QUESTION: Could I follow up on one aspect of that? Well, actually, if I may just do -- on the Country Reports. On Libya, you said that you've expressed your concerns about the alleged plot to kill Saudi Crown Prince Abdallah. Have the Libyans yet allayed those concerns, or are those concerns still there?

And secondly, you say that Sudan took significant steps to improve its counterterrorism cooperation but concerns remain. Reading the quick summary, I didn't perceive what those concerns were. Could you outline the concerns about Sudanese support for -- state support for terrorism?

MR. ZELIKOW: First on the Saudi issue and Libya, we continue to address those concerns with the Libyan Government. On the second question having to do with Sudan, both the reasons why we think they've cooperated more cannot be elaborated fully in public, and the full nature of our continuing concerns, I'm afraid, also cannot be fully elaborated in public.

The point is we want to acknowledge an improvement in their counterterrorist cooperation, while we have not removed them yet from the designation list because we still feel there's -- a further along that road they still have to travel.

QUESTION: Briefly, I remembered the thing I wanted to ask you. On the question of when the decision was actually taken to release this? It was explained to me, and perhaps I misunderstood, that technically, no decision was taken for NCTC to release the numbers because NCTC falls under the DNI. The DNI didn't actually get confirmed, I think, until Friday. So when -- I just want to understand to make sure that you're statement is accurate. When did DNI Negroponte actually decide to release this, or was the decision taken by the President or somebody else, you know, a couple of weeks ago or months ago?

MR. ZELIKOW: All right, let me clarify what the State -- the timing of the State Department. There are two separate decisions. There's a decision by the State Department and a decision by the NCTC. And I can only speak to the former.

On the decision by the State Department, the Secretary took the decision as to how to restructure the report some weeks ago, and with the knowledge and expectation that NCTC would pick up the statistical compilation in a fashion that they needed to determine and they needed to decide how and when they wished to make that public and in what form because it would be their responsibility.

That then led to a decision-making process within NCTC involving both the CIA, its current owner, and its future owner; and John should comment on that.

MR. BRENNAN: Ambassador Negroponte was confirmed by the Senate and sworn in by the President last Thursday afternoon. Before then, the NCTC reported to the Director of Central Intelligence. Once the Director of National Intelligence, Ambassador Negroponte, he was sworn into office, we then fell under the Director of National Intelligence.

We had engaged with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and with Ambassador Negroponte on the plans to support what we were going to be doing this week, as far as the rollout on the 29th. And so we wanted to make sure that he was aware, first of all, and had seen the information report. Since we fall under him, I wanted to respect that chain of command; but we had every intention to move forward on it.

And so there were, I think, a lot of misunderstandings that were out there as far as that were -- we're not going to commit to it or it was not going to happen. No; the plan was, we were going to move forward. But in the first few days in office, you can imagine Ambassador Negroponte had a number of things. And so what we wanted to do was to do it in the right order and to respect the DNI's --

QUESTION: When did he actually sign off on it then, because obviously he couldn't sign off on it prior to his having been confirmed and sworn in, so when did he actually say "go"?

MR. BRENNAN: Well, I was engaged with Ambassador Negroponte's office extensively this morning since we moved this up so we'd (inaudible) today. So, as of this morning.

QUESTION: So he signed off this morning?

MR. BRENNAN: It was acknowledged that we were going to hold this press conference and the release had to be done today, so you can imagine we had to do a number of last minute, you know, a sort of a hurry up as far as making sure that we could push it out. It was done this afternoon, so he had no problem or his office, and I was engaged with them extensively.

MR. ERELI: Just a few more questions.

QUESTION: Based on the new methodology that's used to capture the statistics on terrorism. Will this be used as a basis for also determining foreign terrorist organizations?

MR. BRENNAN: No. There is -- foreign terrorist organizations and their designation is the creature of still more law and regulation governed by its own set of definitions and procedures, which we patiently study and attempt to apply.

QUESTION: Because there's a clear division here between indigenous attacks and attacks involving foreigners.

MR. BRENNAN: Correct.

QUESTION: So would you use the same --

MR. BRENNAN: Yet one more area of legacy law, which we continue to apply. Though we have found that the designation of foreign terrorist organization is still pretty meaningful, and works for a lot of the different organizations that we have to cover so it doesn't present some of the same kinds of problems that we're trying to address in the statistical compilation, but it's a whole separate story all its own.

MR. ERELI: One last question. Arshad.

QUESTION: Can you give us, Mr. Brennan, can you give us the 2003 figure for Kashmir related violence? And just to be precise about it, should one refer to this as violence that is related to Kashmir but took place in India and Pakistan? Or did you mean to, quite precisely, say that it took place in Kashmir and therefore, how do you define Kashmir?

MR. ZELIKOW: I'll take that latter one for you.

MR. BRENNAN: Okay. The numbers for 2003 in Kashmir: there were 52 incidents in Kashmir that were included in the chronology that was issued last year; 284 in 2004. The number of victims in Kashmir in 2003 was 776; in 2004, it was 1,872. The number of killed in Kashmir in 2003 was 111; and in 2004, it was 434. And in the chronology that we are issuing, you will see that is listed under -- for each of the individual incidents, listed under India, but it identifies Kashmir as the location for the attack.

QUESTION: Can you give us the killed and wounded also for Iraq, since that was the other one you broke up for us in terms of attacks?

MR. BRENNAN: Incidents: 22 in 2003, 201 in 2004. Number of victims in 2003, 501. Number of victims in 2004, 1,709. Number of killed in 2003, 117; in 2004, 554.

Now again, this is what we had pulled out from it this morning, but it's out on the database there right now, so I just wanted to make sure that was -- are consistent with what's out.

MR. ZELIKOW: And just to clarify, of course, all attacks in Kashmir occurred in either India or Pakistan. (Laughter.) But --

QUESTION: (Inaudible) We can consider the UN line --

MR. ZELIKOW: You certainly can.

QUESTION: Yes, well, did they happen in India but --

MR. ZELIKOW: We're not trying to make any new policy on defining the international status of Kashmir.

MR. ERELI: Thank you, everyone. Thank you to our guests.

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