

WEST POINT COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER



West Point
READY 

READY TO SERVE. READY TO LEAD.



“The Combating Terrorism Center sits at the intersection of theory and practice. Through their research and activities, they help provide information to practitioners like myself and policymakers so we can understand what is happening. The ability to sit back and analyze information, put it into perspective for practice, I think is very, very important. This is a hugely complex problem, one we’ve been dealing with for a long time. And it’s not going away anytime soon. So the more we can do to understand what’s causing it, where we can make the best use of our limited resources and concentrate those in the right areas, I think, is important. And I think the research organizations and entities like the Combating Terrorism Center . . . are absolutely essential to understanding this problem and helping us moving forward effectively.”

—GEN Joseph Votel, CTC Interview, April 21, 2015

COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER AT WEST POINT

The origins of the Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) are inextricably linked to the attacks of September 11, 2001, as they brought the threat of international terrorism to the forefront of the American consciousness and ushered in a new era of security challenges. West Point responded to this new challenge with the creation of the CTC. Since its founding in 2003, the Center has become an internationally recognized research center—one that is called upon by our nation’s leaders for education, research, and policy advice on the critical issues within the field of terrorism. Moving forward, the Center seeks to raise an endowment, which will ensure the continuation of the CTC and further its high-quality work in service to the nation.

A PRESSING NEED

The CTC endeavors to remain an enduring resource of expertise and knowledge on the threat of terrorism for the nation. The field of terrorism is constantly evolving as terrorist groups continuously adapt to the changing environment in which they operate. In order for the United States to respond to this adaptive enemy, it too must evolve. The Center aims to continue to equip our national leaders with the tools and resources needed to face these unprecedented challenges and protect our national security. As our nation understandably turns its focus to great power competition with Russia and China, CTC provides a team of globally connected experts who will not lose site of the persistent current and future terrorist threats.

A UNIQUE POSITION

Among the only institutes of its kind in the nation, the CTC is dedicated to understanding the intellectual underpinnings of the terrorist threats facing our nation. The CTC is uniquely situated at the nexus of theory and practice. By combining practitioners with world class academics, the Center provides academically rigorous and policy-relevant research and has

become a leading institution in the terrorism field. The CTC’s credibility stems not only from its products but also from its independent voice, made possible by its financial independence gained through private funding.

To that end, the CTC strives to serve as a strategic research center for the nation. Furthermore, its physical location at West Point allows the Center to ask unique questions and take a long view in studying the complexities of terrorism.

IMPACT

Educate

One of the core missions of the CTC is to educate future military and counterterrorism practitioners. The CTC accomplishes this mission by administering a minor in terrorism studies within the West Point academic program, which provides cadets with advanced courses in terrorism, counterterrorism, and homeland security, and is the most popular minor at West Point. Cadets are provided with exciting broadening opportunities, to include class trips, conferences, summer internships at operational entities, and guest lectures by a variety of high-ranking military, government, and private sector leaders. At West Point, the CTC is one of the only research centers that studies the enemy that cadets will face upon graduation. As such, the CTC provides instruction on terrorism to all cadets at West Point through the required international relations course. The CTC also goes outside of West Point to provide terrorism and counterterrorism education to practitioner audiences.

Research

The CTC is well known for its high-quality, policy relevant research related to terrorism and political violence. This is because the Center has at the core of its research philosophy a drive to publish academically rigorous, theoretically grounded research that contributes to the original body of terrorism knowledge and also supports policymakers who are engaged in the daily rigors of counterterrorism. In addition to conducting research on some of the most prominent groups of the day, such



Combating Terrorism Center AT WEST POINT

as Al-Qa'ida and the Islamic State, the Center also looks at the dynamics related to terrorists' use of technology, the connection between criminal organizations and terrorist groups, and a number of other topics. This ability to conduct research on groups and topics, to drill down deep into history and to analyze important events as they happen, allows the Center to dynamically look at terrorism and the associated drivers of terrorism in a way that benefits consumers of its products.

While the Center publishes long reports geared toward the academic community, it also tailors these reports into concise documents that are useful for policymakers and practitioners. Moreover, the Center reaches a broader audience through its monthly journal, the CTC Sentinel. This journal allows academics, journalists, practitioners, and the general public to understand the constantly evolving nature of the threat.

Evidence of the relevance of the Center's work is not just limited to its engagement in academic and policy circles, but also reaches the broader public. The CTC's research has been featured in every major U.S. media outlet, as well as numerous international publications. The CTC's analysis and release of interrogation reports related to the former leader of the Islamic State involved not only close coordination with U.S. government partners, but also collaboration with investigative reporters. The project was featured in dozens of media reports and resulted in a series of television features on Al Aan TV, a major outlet in the Middle East.

Policy Advice

The Combating Terrorism Center is consistently called upon by senior policymakers as well as practitioners in the field to aid them in their work. The CTC has informed FBI investigations, briefed members of Congress, and advised senior military leaders at the highest levels. Examples of advisory engagements include: the Secretary of Defense; the director of the CIA; the commanders of U.S. Special Operations Command, U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, and U.S. Northern Command; and many others. Moreover, the Center has provided substantive presentations to various military units, national security groups, governmental organizations, and think tanks, and regularly deploys analysts overseas in support of special operations task forces.

The Center's policy advising occurs as a by-product of its focus on rigorous research and education. The Center does not advocate specific policy positions but rather attempts to augment the policy discussion in order to ensure decision-makers are properly informed.

A TRADITION OF SERVICE TO THE NATION

The CTC embodies the time-honored values and ethos of West Point—Duty, Honor, Country—and exists to serve the nation.

In the 21st Century, the United States will face a myriad of new and unprecedented challenges and among those challenges will be the threat of terrorism to the nation's security. The CTC stands ready to help our national leaders rigorously comprehend the threat that terrorism poses and act with confidence.

Please join us as we ensure West Point's reputation as a leader in all endeavors and take pride in the transformative power of the generous gift you can make today.



LEFT: The Combating Terrorism Center published a special issue of the CTC Sentinel in September 2021 that examined the terrorism landscape 20 years after 9/11. The issue both looked back at the past two decades, via five interviews with former senior CT officials, and looked forward, via a series of articles examining the evolving global threat landscape. The issue had significant impacts across the CTC's practitioner, academic, and public audiences. RIGHT: Then Secretary of Defense Ash Carter gains insight from the Combating Terrorism Center in 2016.



Photo: Lee Ross '73

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

GENEROUS GRADUATES AND FRIENDS OF THE ACADEMY WHO SUPPORT THE WEST POINT COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER WILL TAKE PRIDE IN THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF THEIR GIFTS.

Total Center Endowment (<i>funded</i>)	\$11.6 million
Terrorism Studies Program Assistant Director	\$3.3 million
Senior Terrorism Professor	\$2.3 million
Distinguished Chair	\$2.2 million
Africa Portfolio Assistant Director	\$2 million
South Asia Portfolio Assistant Director	\$1.7 million

MARGIN OF EXCELLENCE



Angela Oakley | West Point Association of Graduates
698 Mills Road, West Point, NY 10996
Phone 845.446.1504
WestPointAOG.org

as of March 20, 2025