

set of objectives.”<sup>6</sup> The phrase raises public expectations—both in the United States and abroad—that there was a battlefield solution to the problem of terrorism. Similarly, the French government refused to refer to counterterrorism efforts as *war*, arguing that the term legitimized the terrorists.<sup>7</sup> And in Australia, government officials eschewed the use of the phrase *war on terror*.

This strategy is consistent with our findings. A transition to the political process is the most common reason that terrorist groups end (43 percent). The possibility of a political solution is linked to a key variable: the breadth of terrorist goals. Most terrorist groups that end because of politics seek narrow policy goals, such as policy and territorial change. If a transition to nonviolence is impossible or undesirable, policing is likely to be the most effective strategy to destroy terrorist groups (40 percent). The logic is that police and intelligence services have better training and information to penetrate and disrupt terrorist organizations. They are the primary arm of the government focused on internal security matters. Unlike the military, the police and intelligence agencies usually have a permanent presence in cities, towns, and villages; a better understanding of the threat environment in these areas; and better human intelligence.

Other strategies are less likely to be successful. The military is usually too blunt an instrument, and most soldiers are not trained to understand, penetrate, and destroy terrorist organizations; thus, 7 percent of terrorist groups have ended as a result of military action. In addition, 10 percent of the time, terrorist groups ended because their goals were achieved. When groups achieved victory, it was usually because they had narrow goals, such as policy or territorial change. No terrorist group that sought empire or social revolution ever achieved victory.

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<sup>6</sup> Jane Perlez, “Briton Criticizes U.S.’s Use of ‘War on Terror,’” *New York Times*, April 17, 2007, p. A10.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with members of l’Unité de Coordination de la Lutte Antiterroriste by Seth G. Jones, Monterey, Calif., January 22, 2008.