

## Ending the “War” on Terrorism

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The U.S. strategy after September 2001 was not effective in significantly weakening al Qa’ida by 2008. Some have argued that an effective strategy against al Qa’ida should include a broad range of tools that target the demand and supply side of the organization. As Rohan Gunaratna argued, for example, this strategy includes sanctions against state sponsors; the use of military and police forces against al Qa’ida’s leaders, members, collaborators, and supporters; the resolution of regional conflicts in such locations as Kashmir and Palestinian territory; redressing grievances and meeting the legitimate aspirations of Muslims; and countering al Qa’ida’s ideology.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Daniel Byman noted that “there is no single strategy that can successfully defeat the jihadists. All heads of the hydra of terrorism must be attacked.”<sup>2</sup>

A comprehensive strategy should indeed include a range of tools. The problem, however, is that a “kitchen-sink” approach does not prioritize a finite amount of resources and attention. Nor does it provide an assessment of what is most likely to be effective (and what is not). For example, economic sanctions are rarely effective in changing

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<sup>1</sup> Gunaratna (2002, pp. 308–322); also see Rohan Gunaratna, “Combating the Al-Qaeda Associated Groups,” in Doron Zimmermann and Andreas Wenger, eds., *How States Fight Terrorism: Policy Dynamics in the West*, Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007, pp. 175–202.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Byman, *The Five Front War: The Better Way to Fight Global Jihad*, Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons, 2008, p. 44.