

from low-level operatives) and a top-down one (issuing strategy and operations from a central hub in Pakistan).<sup>1</sup>

## Ending the “War” on Terror

Al Qa'ida's resurgence should trigger a fundamental rethinking of U.S. counterterrorism strategy. Based on our analysis of how terrorist groups end, a political solution is not possible. Since al Qa'ida's goal remains the establishment of a pan-Islamic caliphate, there is little reason to expect that a negotiated settlement with governments in the Middle East is possible. A more effective approach would be adopting a two-front strategy.

First, policing and intelligence should be the backbone of U.S. efforts. In Europe, North America, North Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, al Qa'ida consists of a network of individuals who need to be tracked and arrested. This would require careful work abroad from such organizations as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as well as their cooperation with foreign police and intelligence agencies. Second, military force, though not necessarily U.S. soldiers, may be a necessary instrument when al Qa'ida is involved in an insurgency. Local military forces frequently have more legitimacy to operate than the United States has, and they have a better understanding of the operating environment, even if they need to develop the capacity to deal with insurgent groups over the long run. This means a light U.S. military footprint or none at all. The U.S. military can play a critical role in building indigenous capacity but should generally resist being drawn into combat operations in Muslim societies, since its presence is likely to increase terrorist recruitment.

A key part of this strategy should include ending the notion of a war on terrorism and replacing it with such concepts as *counterterrorism*, which most governments with significant terrorist threats use. The Brit-

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Hoffman, “Challenges for the U.S. Special Operations Command Posed by the Global Terrorist Threat: Al Qaeda on the Run or on the March?” written testimony submitted to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities, February 14, 2007, p. 3.