

This chapter is divided into four sections. First, it summarizes the core arguments about how groups end. Second, it outlines the research design to test these arguments. Third, it examines the data and provides an overview of the findings. Fourth, it offers a brief conclusion.

The End of Terrorist Groups

This section begins by outlining the five main arguments about why terrorist groups end. It then outlines a range of other explanatory factors that may affect the end of terrorist groups.

How Groups End

There are at least five major ways in which terrorist groups end: policing, military force, splintering, politics, or victory.¹ Other tools may also be useful: providing economic aid to countries dealing with terrorism, imposing economic sanctions on states that harbor terrorist groups, dissuading groups by hardening targets, improving intelligence, or engaging in diplomacy.² But these are too weak to be used in a leading role. In practice, terrorist groups typically end due to a combination of factors. But with limited resources and attention, policymakers need to understand where to prioritize their efforts. Consequently, in coding how groups end, we assessed the primary ways in which they ended. Many factors may have contributed to the end of a group, but which was the most significant? What carried the most weight in pushing the group over the edge?

¹ We did not include a separate category for capturing or killing enemy leaders, what is often referred to as a *decapitation* strategy. Rather, we subsumed this under other categories. If a police force adopted this strategy, we included it under law enforcement. If military forces adopted it, we included it under military force. On economic aid, sanctions, and other counterterrorist instruments, see Audrey Kurth Cronin and James M. Ludes, eds., *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy*, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2004; and Paul R. Pillar, *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001.

² Trager and Zagorcheva (2005–2006).