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Beyond al-Qaeda

PART 2

The Outer Rings of the Terrorist Universe

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Prepared for the United States Air Force

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Summary

The “al-Qaeda universe” does not incorporate the entirety of the terrorist or extremist threat facing the United States. Clearly, Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders hope that their efforts will persuade other Islamic militant groups to join the global jihad. But what about the terrorist or extremist groups that are not part of the al-Qaeda network and do not adhere to its agenda? The temptation for policymakers is to set aside groups that have not chosen to join al-Qaeda as less dangerous. Yet these Islamist groups, non-Islamist terrorists, and criminal organizations still pose a threat to the United States, its interests, and its allies. This volume, therefore, addresses the threats outside the al-Qaeda universe.

Islamist Groups

The first category of groups examined in this part of the study consists of terrorist groups that articulate an Islamist agenda for their own country but are not part of the global jihadist movement. Two considerations guide the analysis of these groups: the threat that they pose to U.S. friends and allies and U.S. regional interests, and the conditions under which they could rise to the level of global threat.

Of the groups in this category, Lebanese Hezbollah is perhaps the best known and the most capable. This group was responsible for the 1983 suicide attack against the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, which inaugurated the era of mass-casualty terrorism, and for two terrorist attacks in the Western hemisphere, both in Buenos Aires: the 1992

bombing of the Israeli embassy and the 1994 bombing of the Jewish Community Center. In addition, since the early 1980s, Hezbollah has established a far-flung financial network, stretching from the tri-border area of South America (where the borders of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay intersect), to North America, to West Africa, and Southeast Asia. So Hezbollah has the potential to inflict damage on U.S. interests and allies across the globe. Yet this group remains relatively detached from the al-Qaeda network and has not directly threatened the United States since the 1983 attack. Today, Hezbollah projects an image of political legitimacy in Lebanon. At the same time, the group maintains its terrorist network of 20,000–25,000 members, conducting some limited attacks on Israeli forces and supplying military aid to Palestinian groups.

Although Hezbollah is predominantly a Shi'ite group, its leaders articulate a universalistic view of the Muslim community, the *umma*, that incorporates Shi'ites, Sunnis, and even secularists. Hezbollah's universalism is tempered by pragmatism. The ideological foundations of Hezbollah, therefore, explain at least part of the group's reluctance to join the al-Qaeda network. Its leadership might feel some spontaneous sympathy with wider pan-Islamist, Sunni agendas, but these movements do not necessarily align with Hezbollah ideologically. However, just because Hezbollah does not align with other Islamist groups ideologically, it may still coordinate with them. Despite the ideological disparities between Hezbollah and the al-Qaeda network, some parallel interests exist. In particular, Hezbollah historically has opposed "Western domination" of the Muslim world and the United States specifically. So although the ideological background of Hezbollah might explain its lack of affiliation with the al-Qaeda network, Hezbollah's strategic objectives pave the way for possible cooperation in the future. (See pp. 5–15.)

After Hezbollah, the most capable of the groups in this category is the Islamic Resistance Movement, known by its acronym, Hamas. Hamas's fundamental objective is to establish a Palestinian Islamic state in Israel proper, the West Bank, and Gaza. To achieve its strategic objectives, Hamas has followed a two-pronged strategy: One part of the strategy, designed to secure a Palestinian state, involves a terror

campaign against the Israeli government and citizens. A key tactic in this campaign is suicide bombings. Although Hamas was not the first Palestinian terrorist group to adopt the tactic of suicide bombings, it has made the most extensive use of this tactic—even though at times the wider Palestinian community has been highly critical of it. The second part of the Hamas strategy requires the group to pursue its Islamic agenda vis-à-vis al-Fatah and the Palestinian Authority.

Like many Islamic movements in the Arab world, Hamas's ideology is firmly grounded in the teachings of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. One key ideological difference between the Brotherhood and Hamas is that Hamas believes in the use of violence in addition to religious proselytizing and political activity. In addition, Hamas's ideology is strongly nationalistic, in contrast to the Brotherhood's pan-Islamism.

Hamas presents an interesting contradiction in strategic and operational objectives, especially when it comes to potential shifts. On the one hand, an assessment that the U.S.-Israeli relationship is the center of gravity of its opponent might encourage Hamas to take on a more global agenda, attacking the United States and U.S. targets overseas. On the other hand, Hamas's leadership appears to be pragmatic enough to realize that widening the conflict may alienate its own support base, bring in a strong U.S. response, and jeopardize its political advances. After the the January 2006 Palestinian elections in which Hamas won an outright majority in the Palestinian Legislative Council, the group was warned by al-Qaeda's deputy leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, to continue the struggle against Israel, and was criticized in jihadi forums for participating in elections and not pursuing an Islamist agenda. The jihadist criticism lays bare the rift between the global jihadist movement, with its supra-national goals, and local groups and organizations that have more limited objectives and are open to tactical use of the political process. (See pp. 15–24.)

Other Islamist groups examined include Algeria's Armed Islamic Group, known by its French acronym, GIA; Egypt's al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya and al-Wa'ad; South Africa's People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD); and the Eritrean Islamic Jihad–Islamic Reform Movement. The GIA saw the establishment of an Islamic government in Algeria as its primary goal; to that end, the group employed meth-

ods so extreme and brutal that they went beyond those employed by some of the most virulent terrorist organizations operating today. As a result, the GIA alienated its potential support base. Unlike its splinter faction, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), the GIA never established a solid relationship with al-Qaeda outside the few members who were veterans of the Afghan war and who knew or had met bin Laden in that context. The GIA has not conducted any attacks outside Algeria since 1996. (See pp. 25–30.)

Egypt's al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, like other Islamist terrorist groups, began as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Gama'a gained a renewed sense of purpose after the return of its members from the Afghan jihad. Al-Gama'a leaders were energized by what they believed was a moral victory of Islamism in Afghanistan and were convinced that they could accomplish in Egypt what the mujahidin achieved in Afghanistan by ousting the "illegitimate" governing power. As a result, al-Gama'a put its theories into practice in Egypt by attacking a wide variety of targets—including Coptic Christians, banks, police, politicians, tourists, and the media—with the goal of undermining Egyptian state power, secular institutions, and the economy. Al-Gama'a's operational leader, Rifa'i Taha Musa, signed bin Laden's 1998 declaration of war against "Jews and Crusaders." However, Taha Musa was unable to recruit many of his cadre to support bin Laden and join the global jihad. Al-Gama'a witnessed how the Egyptian Islamic Jihad had suffered significant setbacks because of its decision to join al-Qaeda. In 1999, the group's historic leadership declared a unilateral ceasefire and in 2002 issued a statement renouncing the use of violence.

Al-Wa'ad ("the Promise") is a shadowy Islamic extremist organization based in Egypt about which not much is known. According to press reports of the recent trials of al-Wa'ad members in Egypt, the group is rather small and made up largely of Egyptian citizens with dual nationality, including Russians (Chechens), Dutch, Germans, Canadians, and reportedly even Americans. The group was accused in a 2001 indictment of raising money for international jihadist causes, including Palestinian and Chechen groups. Although the arrests may have eliminated or reduced the potential al-Wa'ad threat, some press reports indicate at least two new terrorist groups have formed in Egypt

as of this writing—the Jihad Group for the Victory of Muslims at Home and Abroad and Jundullah, a faction of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. The Egyptian investigation of Jundullah's activities found that it had ties to al-Zawahiri and was in contact with leaders in other extremist organizations in Europe, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. (See pp. 30–37.)

People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) was formed in 1996 as a community anticrime group to fight drugs and violence in South Africa. By early 1998, PAGAD had also become violently antigovernment and anti-Western. It is closely associated, if not intertwined, with a South African Iranian-inspired Islamic group, Qibla. In addition to the few hundred estimated criminal victims of PAGAD's targeted violence, PAGAD's bombing targets have included South African authorities, moderate Muslims, synagogues, gay nightclubs, tourist attractions, and Western-associated restaurants. There are indications that South Africa could become a haven for jihadists from other parts of the world and a source for radicalizing Muslim youth to mobilize against Western interests globally. (See pp. 37–44.)

The last group examined in this category is the Eritrean Islamic Reform Movement (EIRM), also known as the Islamic Salvation Movement, a Sunni Islamist group. The group has been active in the Horn of Africa in various guises since the mid-1970s and seeks the violent overthrow of Eritrea's secular government and its replacement with an Islamic government. The leadership of the EIRM and of the umbrella organization to which it belongs, the Eritrean National Alliance (ENA), has indicated that it sees its struggle against Eritrea's government within the wider context of a push for a new Islamic caliphate, but the focus of the group remains firmly fixed on overthrowing the government. There is a possibility that the EIRM could become involved with other like-minded Islamic organizations throughout the Horn of Africa to promote common interests and perhaps seek to establish an Islamic federation in the Horn. (See pp. 44–49.)

The Iraqi Insurgency

The nonaffiliated part of the Iraqi insurgency—that is, the component that is outside of the al-Qaeda and al-Zarqawi networks—is diverse and widespread, and composed of groups of both nationalist and religious provenance. In response to the insurgents, both the Shi'ite and Kurdish communities have continued to rally around their new national leaders and have apparently refused to engage in sectarian revenge. (However, Shi'ite revenge killings against Sunnis have been on the rise since the bombing of the al-Askari mosque in Samarra on February 22, 2006.)

This section focuses on the Sunni insurgents. We do not place the Shi'ite militiamen associated with Muqtada al-Sadr in the same category, because—even though al-Sadr's militiamen, organized in the so-called “Mahdi's Army,” share the Sunnis' hostility toward the United States and have certainly engaged in violent activities—these activities generally do not rise to the level of Sunni terrorism. Moreover, al-Sadr must operate within the broader framework of Shi'ite politics in Iraq. (Other Shi'ite and Kurdish militias are in fact the military arms of political organizations that are part of Iraq's legitimate political spectrum. Nevertheless, we discuss them here because they are outside of the Iraqi government's control and could become engines of sectarian conflict.) (See pp. 51–60.)

At least 28 different insurgent groups have formed from 2003 through 2005. Some—but not all—are based in the Sunni triangle north and west of Baghdad. The danger of bloodshed is intensified because some of these groups increasingly embrace tactics imported by foreign fighters, such as the car bombings of civilian targets. It goes without saying that the universe of insurgent groups in Iraq is both dynamic and fluid. Groups appear, change, merge, divide, and disappear, operate under different names and sometimes under no name at all.

This insurgency, certainly one of the most complex and challenging ever faced by the United States, presents no single coherent enemy against which the United States can mass its superior military strength. The insurgency's various components, generally characterized more by their heterogeneity than by their homogeneity, fight for their

own unique reasons and have little in common other than a desire to remove the U.S. and coalition presence from the country. In general, they seek to create a crisis between the Iraqi government and the Iraqi people in the hopes that outside support for the government will wane, forcing the withdrawal of foreign forces.

The strategic and operational objectives of these groups vary widely. The jihadists, as discussed in the first volume of this study, are seeking to foment a religious war between Sunnis and Shi'ites, who—until the February 2006 bombing of the al-Askari mosque in Samarra—largely refrained from engaging in sectarian revenge. Former regime loyalists believe that they have no option but to continue fighting and are also convinced that the United States and its coalition partners will tire long before they do. These groups are trying to apply the experiences of other guerrilla and terrorist organizations to their operations. Their objective is to restore the former Ba'ath party establishment to power. Nationalists do not necessarily support the return of the Ba'ath—some actively oppose it—but they resent what they consider to be the occupation of Iraq and are angered by the coalition's failure to restore order and security. Iraqi Islamists have emerged after decades of suppression by the Ba'athist regime but have the experiences of Islamist organizations in other countries to help them. Their objective is the establishment of an Islamic state in Iraq. (See pp. 54–56.)

As of the time of this writing, the Iraqi insurgency is in a transitional stage. It is evolving in response to transcendent political events in Iraq—the January 2005 elections, the approval of a new Iraqi constitution, and the January 2006 elections for a permanent Iraqi government—which center, of course, on the rise of the Shi'ites and the Kurds to a dominant position in the state. (See pp. 58–60.) In the end, terror alone cannot guarantee success for the insurgents. The insurgency can continue to wreak havoc but will become an exercise in political futility. In these circumstances, three general scenarios are possible:

In the most benign case, significant elements of the Sunni community realize that a return of the status quo ante is no longer viable and accept a minority role within a democratic Iraq. The Sunnis might find a common interest with the Kurdish parties in balancing

Shi'ite predominance, and a rough balance of power could develop, allowing for what we called in another study “democracy with Iraqi characteristics.”

In the second scenario, the representatives of the Sunni community are too alienated or terrorized to enter into a political arrangement with the Shi'ites and the Kurds. The insurgency could continue, perhaps at high levels of violence, but would be unable to transcend its narrow social base or to prevent the nascent government from gradually consolidating its control over the country.

In the third scenario, if the new government is unable to contain the insurgents and terrorists, or to win broad support among the diverse ethnic and religious communities in Iraq, it will be no match for local warlords and will have to contend with the growth of terrorist infrastructures. A failure of central authority could lead to a formal or de facto partition of the country.

The wild card in Iraq's political evolution is external interference. There is the potential for non-Iraqi state and nonstate actors—particularly Iran—to interfere more actively in Iraqi politics. The activities of Iranian operatives in Iraq suggest a long-term strategy by Tehran to create an Iranian sphere of influence in southern Iraq. Matters are complicated by the existence of Iraqi Shi'ite political parties that have varying degrees of loyalty to Iran. The key question is whether they will identify themselves as Shi'ites first, united with their Iranian brethren, or as Iraqis, threatened by Iranian encroachment. The answer may not become clear for years.

Non-Islamist Threats

U.S. friends and allies and regional interests are not threatened by Islamist extremist and terrorist groups alone, of course. There are several capable non-Islamist insurgent and terrorist groups seeking to overthrow governments friendly to the United States or to carve out separate ethnic-based states. (See pp. 61–84.) These groups include the following:

- *The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, one of the world's most innovative and successful terrorist-insurgent groups.* It is one of the few that has institutionalized a permanent, highly trained martyr wing—the Black Tigers—as a formal component of its overall organizational structure. Although the LTTE does not presently threaten the United States, it does provide a benchmark of the sophistication that a substate insurgency can achieve given the right combination of circumstances. (See pp. 68–78.)
- *Basque Fatherland and Liberty (Euskadi ta Askatasuna, or ETA), a Marxist group that uses terrorism in hopes of forming an independent Basque state in parts of northern Spain and southwest France.* Although the ETA has not targeted U.S. interests, an increasingly anti-American tenor within the ETA after Operation Iraqi Freedom and connections with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's terror network could make U.S. citizens and interests an ETA target in Europe. (See pp. 78–80.)
- *The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), Marxist armed groups that have operated in Colombia since the 1960s.* The FARC, the most important of the two, has not deviated from its original strategy of “protracted people's war,” a strategy based on Maoist and Vietnamese precepts that involves gradually extending the organization's presence and control in the countryside and eventually isolating the government forces in the major cities. This strategy of territorial control is linked to the FARC's involvement in the cocaine drug trade that generates much of the revenues that fund the organization's operations, together with extortion and kidnapping. (See pp. 61–65.)
- *Maoist insurgencies.* This rubric refers to the “People's Army” phenomena found in Peru (Shining Path), Nepal (Communist Party of Nepal), India (Naxalites), Bhutan (Ngolops), and the Philippines (Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army). These groups are Marxist-Leninist-Maoist entities that practice the “vanguard” philosophy, which holds that a small armed group (sometimes through the employment of extreme violence) will lead the proletariat in establishing a worker's utopia. Although not a direct

threat to the United States, these groups are terrorists inherently hostile to the international order and may find common interests with al-Qaeda and associates. They are also increasingly participating in drug trafficking to fund their activities. Factors that could move the Maoists to become a larger threat include U.S. support for governments under attack by Maoists, spillover effects from insurgency, and recruitment and indoctrination of native peoples against urban elites and governments. (See pp. 65–68.)

To complete the picture of the universe of terrorism, actual and potential, this study provides an overview and assessment of anarchist groups, the “New, New Left” and right-wing extremists in Europe and North America; movements in Latin America; and ecoterrorists and other niche extremists on the even farther fringe of the movement. In the context of this analysis, we examine the possibility of a tactical alliance between non-Islamic fringe extremist groups and Islamist extremists. Al-Qaeda, according to some accounts, has shown some interest in reaching out to non-Islamic militant groups, with anti-Semitism, anti-Americanism, and anti-Westernism serving as a common ground. The possibility of tactical alliances cannot be discounted and warrants carefully watching. However, although neo-Nazis, Islamists, and the New, New Left share an anti-Zionist stance (and a deep well of anti-Semitism), opposition to Israel remains a relatively minor component of the non-Islamic extremists’ agenda, and so is unlikely to serve as the foundation for any real partnership. (See pp. 85–99.)

The Convergence of Terrorism and Crime

An analysis of the future of terrorism cannot be complete without a discussion of the convergence of terrorism and crime. Criminals generally seek economic gain through illicit means, while terrorists seek political or ideological goals and use criminal means to achieve those ends. Nevertheless, the important fact is that these two sets of actors are joining forces against the state and society. This phenomenon is growing because similar conditions give rise to both terrorism and

transnational crime and because terrorists and organized criminals use the same strategies to promote their operations and sometimes engage in strategic alliances.

During the Cold War, many of the insurgent and terrorist organizations were largely dependent on great-power support. The end of the Cold War brought an effective end to external support for these groups. The Soviet Union disappeared, and the United States simply lost interest in the fate of many of its former clients. The post-Cold War survival strategies of these groups hinged on their ability to generate new sources of revenue to support their operations. Some groups were unable to make the transition and disbanded or made peace with the governments that they were seeking to overthrow, as in the case of the Salvadoran and Guatemalan rebels. Other groups, however, tapped into locally available sources of revenue and grew in strength. The most successful in making the transition were those that operated in countries that produced high-value commodities, legal or otherwise—for example, diamonds in West Africa, minerals in Central Africa, cocaine and heroin in Colombia, and opium and heroin in Southwest Asia and the “Golden Triangle” of Southeast Asia.

Other groups were able to fund themselves successfully from smuggling and arms trafficking, kidnapping and extortion, piracy, compact disc counterfeiting, and a variety of other criminal activities. These commodities provided easy targets of opportunity for terrorist or rebel movements. The groups had the firepower to deal themselves into the trade. They could trade the commodities themselves, as in the case of the Liberia-backed Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone and “conflict diamonds”; or protect and “tax” them, which is the preferred approach of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC); or set themselves up as middlemen in human and arms trafficking.

This transition from more conventional forms of financing to crime has also been a feature of the evolution of al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda’s effort to hide assets and capitalize on trade in West African conflict diamonds appears to date from September 1998, following international efforts to freeze al-Qaeda and Taliban accounts after the August 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. As mentioned previously, Lebanese Hezbollah is known to maintain a global network

to support fundraising and operational and logistical requirements for its operations abroad. Hezbollah has raised significant amounts of funds through drug trafficking and diamond sales from Sierra Leone, and through smuggling, black market activity, and money-laundering operations in the tri-border area of South America. We examine several other case studies of the convergence of insurgent and terrorist organizations and crime in this study.

The criminal activities of these groups tend to weaken and corrupt political and social institutions, particularly when trafficking in a lucrative and social destructive commodity such as cocaine is involved. To the extent that they are successful, these groups also displace state and government institutions, usually weak to begin with, in the areas where they establish a foothold. Unchecked, the groups will expand their resource base, increase their recruiting pool, and generate greater capacity at the expense of the state. Therefore, there is a high correlation between the development of these groups and failed or failing states. (See pp. 101–160.)

Conclusions and Recommendations

From a policy perspective, the first-order question is whether the trajectory of insurgent and terrorist groups outside the global jihadist movement will bring them closer to that movement. To answer this question, we examine what factors could affect this outcome and what the U.S. policy response should be. The second-order question is what level of threat these groups represent for U.S. regional interests, including the security of U.S. friends and allies, and what the U.S. policy response should be. (See pp. 161–166.)

With regard to convergence with al-Qaeda, the groups that generate the greatest concern are the Islamist groups that share aspects of al-Qaeda's worldview. Of the groups examined, only two—Egypt's al-Wa'ad and the Iraqi insurgents—have developed since bin Laden's notorious 1998 Khost fatwa against "Jews and Crusaders." The other groups were well established and active, and had articulated their own agendas prior to al-Qaeda's emergence in the international arena.

Therefore, they can be assumed to be less receptive to al-Qaeda's ideology of global jihad than the groups that have emerged since that time. Among these groups, the majority interpret their jihad much more narrowly than groups affiliated or associated with al-Qaeda. Hezbollah's interests center on Lebanon and its immediate vicinity; Hamas is focused on the Palestinian issue; and the GIA on overthrowing the Algerian government. In the groups for which association with al-Qaeda might be operationally attractive, external and internal factors have held such tendencies in check. For example, Hezbollah appears to be influenced by its ties to Syria and Iran, as well as by its involvement in Lebanese politics. Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya appears to be concerned about carving out some political space to operate in Egypt.

Even some of the non-Islamist groups could also decide to cooperate with al-Qaeda or other Islamist groups for their own reasons. For example, many of these militant groups now maintain representatives in the criminal and black market world. This interconnectivity allows terrorists to acquire weapons as necessary, perhaps even to expand their capabilities. It is also important to stress that some terrorist groups could shift their worldview, thus adopting an agenda similar to al-Qaeda's. Alternatively, others could simply capitalize on a perceived anti-U.S. trend, shifting the focus of their attacks toward U.S. targets to increase their own potential through alliances with more capable al-Qaeda affiliated groups or simply to gain greater recognition.

A recent RAND study analyzed factors that caused terrorist groups to adjust their intentions (e.g., ideology or worldview) and their capabilities. Specifically, the study isolated the following three key factors that cause terrorist groups to shift from their chosen paths: (1) counterattacks by security forces; (2) external support from states or other militant organizations; and (3) gain or loss of popular support. To those, we add a fourth: general shifts in the international security environment—such as that brought about by the U.S.-led global war on terrorism. Some extremist organizations, such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), have tried to distance themselves from al-Qaeda to reduce their exposure to the global war on terrorism. Similarly, according to a well-informed Sri Lankan source, the global

war on terrorism has reduced international tolerance of LTTE terrorism and influenced the LTTE's decision to enter into peace negotiations with the Sri Lankan government.

A potentially dangerous shift can be seen in the emerging Hamas-Hezbollah nexus, as seen in the March 14, 2004, attack in the Israeli port of Ashdod. The significance of this attack was not the number of casualties; indeed, Hamas has killed many more in single suicide bombing attacks. But rather, it demonstrated—especially to Israeli counterterrorism experts—Hamas's ability to hit more strategic targets.

Given the qualitative leap in Hamas's efforts, it might not be a surprise that Hezbollah financed and, indeed, allegedly planned this attack. Yet this degree of aid and coordination is greater than anything seen before in the Hamas-Hezbollah relationship. From an Israeli viewpoint, some security officials have stated that this attack motivated the government to assassinate Sheikh Ahmad Yasin. But the Ashdod attack also holds other, more global implications for the war on terrorism. First, it demonstrates that Sunni and Shi'ite militants *will* work together, given a mutual enemy. In this case, the enemy is Israel, but this does not preclude cooperation between Sunni and Shi'ite militants against the United States. Second, up to this point, Hamas was facing significant counterterrorism pressure from the Israeli government. Thus, it could have been more willing to take strategic guidance from Hezbollah: not just aid, but actual suggestions for types of attacks and targets. Parallel counterterrorism efforts by the United States and its allies in the war on terrorism could provoke other nonaffiliated terrorists to accept guidance from al-Qaeda in the future, as Hamas did from Hezbollah. Finally, in the case of Hezbollah, one potential explanation for the shift in its aid is that Hezbollah may be struggling to sustain attention and support now that Israel has pulled out of southern Lebanon. Greater involvement in the Palestinian resistance could help Hezbollah increase its momentum and support. It is therefore possible that Muslim anger at the U.S. presence in Iraq could similarly provoke shifts in the agenda of Hezbollah or other groups vis-à-vis the United States, as these groups continue to vie for local recruits and support.

The bottom line is that these groups have political aspirations as opposed to outright murder and mayhem. Because of their political agendas, they are more likely to accept political rules and social norms acceptable to a majority than are al-Qaeda and its affiliates.

Beyond the question of convergence, it is important to keep in mind that just because some of these groups have not joined the global jihadist movement, they should not be dismissed as unthreatening. Some represent deadly threats to the states that they seek to subvert; others, like Hezbollah, could suddenly emerge as global threats.

Implications for the U.S. Military and the U.S. Air Force

In Part 1, we discussed the use of air power as an option to attack terrorists in difficult or inhospitable terrain, as well as the use of air transport in counterterrorist or counterinsurgency operations in countries with widely dispersed populations and poor land transportation infrastructure. These considerations apply as well to many of the cases discussed in this volume, with the difference that, with the exception of the Iraqi insurgency, the United States is not—and as a general principle should not—be involved in direct military operations against these groups. (See pp. 164–166.)

Therefore, the emphasis should be on strengthening the capabilities of friendly governments to confront insurgents, terrorists, and other extremist groups. U.S. Air Force Special Operations Forces (active duty, Reserve and National Guard units)—at approximately 11,000 personnel, second only to Army SOF at 29,000—can be particularly pertinent for the counterinsurgency and counterterrorism training role required by the new environment.

The judgment in Part 1 of the study—that these local wars must be fought and won by the local governments and security forces with the United States in a supporting role—is even more valid in the case of local conflicts, some of which are driven by legitimate (or at least rational) grievances and in which the rebel movements enjoy significant support. By the same token, because some of these groups have limited political agendas, under the right circumstances they can become part

of a negotiating process leading to a political solution of the conflict—a major difference from groups that are part of the global jihadist movement, which have to be destroyed or forced to leave the field.

To develop effective strategies against insurgent and terrorist groups, it is important to look at these groups in a broad context, even if they operate locally, because the migration of tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) is creating a globalization of violence. They are learning what works and adopting best practices. Their tactical models contribute to the proliferation of effective styles of unconventional warfare throughout different zones of conflict. Innovations include the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and their evolution into sophisticated weapons designed to interrupt supply lines by Hezbollah. Hamas has been known to use ambulances as a cover for bombs or logistical support. Man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) and now suicide bombers with suicide vests, first used against Israeli targets in Israel and in the Palestinian territories, are now used as mass casualty weapons by Chechens against Russian military and civilian jets.

The first implication for the U.S. military and the Air Force is that they must understand clearly that the tactics, techniques, and procedures used by all groups, whether part of the global jihad or not, are beginning to mimic each other. This means that, from a tactical standpoint, U.S. military doctrine must anticipate the dissemination of these tactics across theaters in the war on terror.

The second implication is that, although the United States has a supporting role in opposing the groups in the “al-Qaeda universe,” the potential role for the United States in countering those extremist groups beyond al-Qaeda is even more indirect. The challenge for the U.S. military is to be prepared either to provide increased levels of support to key allies should they require it or to engage these extremist groups should they shift their attention toward the United States, while at the same time avoiding direct involvement in these conflicts. This strategic challenge has particular relevance to the U.S. Air Force. Understanding the circumstances that might stimulate change in extremist groups, for example, may require the allocation of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance resources. It may also neces-

sitate broad global readiness, incorporating regions such as Southeast Asia and Latin America in addition to the Middle East, in the war on terrorism.

For the U.S. military and the U.S. Air Force in particular, there are tools for targeting terrorist groups that can also be used in cooperation and coordination with host state operations against terrorist, insurgent, and criminal groups. It is important to note that the criminal transport of narcotics, arms, illegal migrants, explosives, etc., occurs in hubs and spokes concurrent or collocated with terrorist groups. This argues for the “dual use” of U.S. security assistance for both counterterrorism and counternarcotics purposes. Older aircraft with high-tech intelligence-collection capabilities can be used to mitigate both terrorist havens and criminal nodes. In addition, air support for host country coast guard operations in and around waterways that harbor terrorists or criminal activity is a critical component of coastal and riverine surveillance and interdiction of smuggling routes.