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## SUMMARY

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Although the armed forces of the United States do not bear the sole or even the primary responsibility for protecting the nation against terrorist attacks, they do play important roles in this regard and these roles are, in some cases, placing new demands on the armed forces. Nowhere is this more true than in cases in which a foreign government shares our interest in eradicating terrorism but lacks the wherewithal to do so effectively on its own. Such states—call them “willing but weak”—span a wide gamut, from traditional security partners, such as the Philippines, to states with which the United States lacks a long history of security cooperation, such as Yemen. Some, like the governments of Uzbekistan and the Philippines, seek to prosecute fairly aggressive operations against terrorist groups on their territory. Others, such as Sudan, Indonesia, and Somalia, may have a more ambivalent attitude or simply be incapable of mounting effective operations. Given this wide range of potential operating environments, one would expect a wide variance in the types of operations that U.S. forces might be called upon to conduct in these countries. Is it possible to generalize about the demands of counterterrorist operations?

The mission of U.S. forces in these countries is clear: to eliminate or neutralize terrorist groups threatening U.S. interests. Operations in support of this mission will generally be undertaken in cooperation with (and, indeed, in support of) forces of the host country. Specific campaigns will generally comprise combinations of the following operational objectives (see pages 5–20):

- Strengthen the capabilities and will of host government forces
- Disrupt the activities of terrorists
- Help to alienate terrorists from the populace
- Gather intelligence about terrorist networks and activities around the world
- Protect friendly forces and bases
- Find and capture or kill terrorists
- Prevent terrorists from acquiring, retaining, or using chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) weapons.

If this vision of future U.S. military operations against terrorist groups is an accurate guide to strategy, it suggests that the widely used term “war on terrorism” is unfortunate. The sorts of operations envisaged here are likely to be long-term efforts in which the use of force, at least by U.S. military personnel, is only sporadic. Indeed, military operations against terrorist groups often will have to have much in common with effective counterinsurgency operations if they are to be successful. Accordingly, the hallmarks of effective counterterrorist efforts in these “willing but weak” states generally will be:

- The host government and not the United States plays the leading role in hunting down the terrorists
- The terrorists are subjected to relentless pressure and are not able to determine the tempo and timing of operations but rather are forced to react to government-initiated operations
- Operations are information intensive, depending crucially on accurate information on the activities, location, and identities of the terrorists
- Most important, the government must win the support of the populace, alienating the terrorists from potential sources of support (see pages 9–14).

These considerations point to a demanding set of operating environments for U.S. forces charged with countering terrorist groups

abroad. Those forces will be called upon to forge strong relationships with host-country personnel, to show great discretion in their conduct of operations, and to maintain a low profile in the host country yet be able to react swiftly and effectively when promising targets arise.

The United States Air Force will be called upon to provide many important capabilities, assets, and skill sets to counterterrorist operations abroad. Chief among these are:

- Surveillance platforms, operators, and analysts
- Language-qualified personnel—commissioned officers as well as enlisted—to help train and advise host-country forces, interact with others in-country, and analyze the intelligence “take” from human and communications intelligence (HUMINT and COMINT) sources
- Security police and other force-protection assets
- Base operating support personnel and equipment to provide vital functions, such as communications, housing, and transportation at a wide range of operating locations
- Combat search and rescue (for U.S. and host-country personnel) as well as special operations forces (SOF) insertion and extraction capabilities
- Humanitarian relief assets, including engineers, doctors and dentists, public health specialists, tactical airlift aircraft, and crews (see pages 32–34).