

The Bush administration's terrorism-fighting strategy has not significantly undermined al-Qaeda's capabilities, according to a major new study that argues the struggle against terrorism is better waged by law enforcement agencies than by armies.

The study by the nonpartisan Rand Corp. also contends that the administration committed a fundamental error in portraying the conflict with al-Qaeda as a "war on terrorism." The phrase falsely suggests that there can be a battlefield solution to terrorism, and symbolically conveys warrior status on terrorists, it said.

"The U.S. military can play a critical role in building indigenous capacity," it said, "but should generally resist being drawn into combat operations in Muslim societies, since its presence is likely to increase terrorist recruitment."

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