



Terrorist Attacks in the U.S Between 1970 and 2013: Data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD)

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Purpose

CATALOGUE comprehensive data from a variety of open media sources about the terrorist attacks that have occurred in the United States.

ANALYZE trends pertaining to the dates, locations, tactics, targets, perpetrators, and outcomes of attacks.

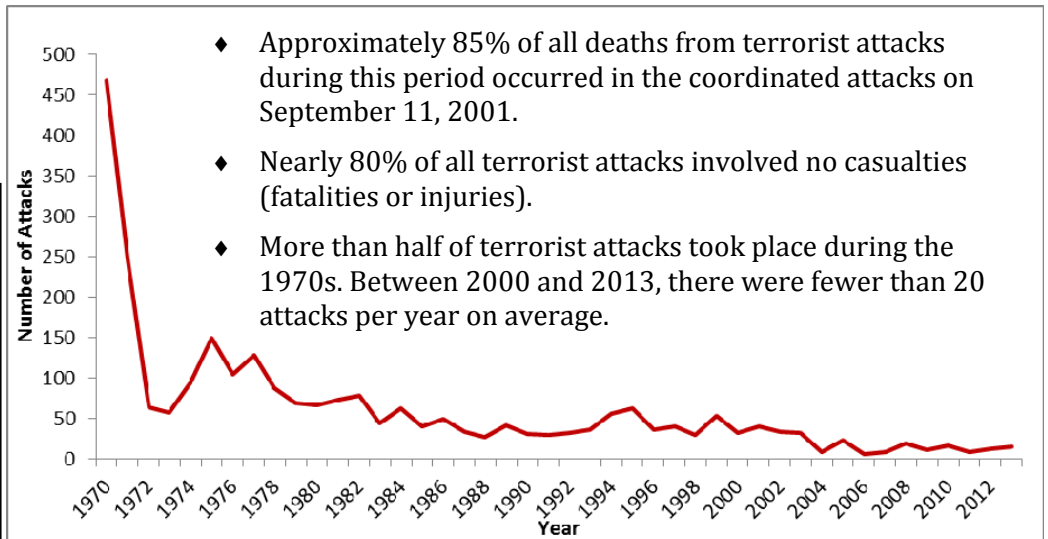
PROVIDE objective data on terrorist violence to the public, practitioners, and policymakers.

Background

START's Global Terrorism Database (GTD) contains information on more than 125,000 domestic and international terrorist attacks* that occurred between 1970 and 2013. Collectively, these attacks have resulted in more than 266,000 deaths and more than 354,000 injuries. This research highlight focuses on the terrorist attacks that occurred in the United States between 1970 and 2013.

Overall Attack Trends

From 1970 through 2013, more than 2,600 terrorist attacks took place in the United States, resulting in more than 3,500 fatalities.



Attack Targets

The most frequently attacked type of target in the United States between 1970 and 2013 was business targets. Nearly one-third of all attacks on business targets were on banks/commerce, and an additional 23% were on retail entities.

Terrorist attacks frequently targeted buildings and infrastructure rather than individuals.



94% of attacks against **abortion-related targets** were on clinics, while 6% targeted providers or personnel.



78% of attacks against **educational targets** were on schools, universities, or other buildings, while 22% targeted teachers or other educational personnel.



73% of attacks against **government targets** were on government buildings, facilities, or offices, while 27% targeted personnel, public officials, or politicians.

*Terrorism is defined as the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation. More information available at www.start.umd.edu/gtd.

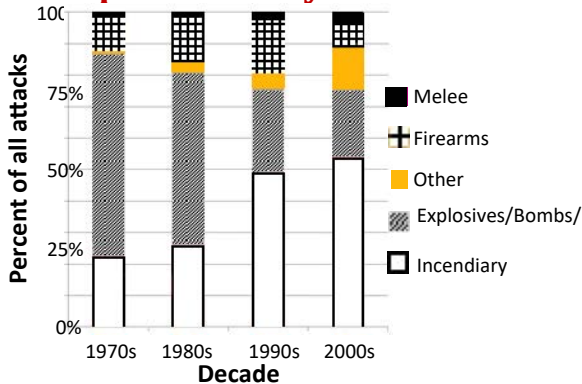
Perpetrators, 2000-2013

- Between 2000 and 2013, the vast majority of attacks in which named organizations were identified were carried out by environmental and animal rights violent extremist groups.
- However, attacks were most frequently carried out by individuals not known to be affiliated with a perpetrator group. These include Wade Michael Page's assault at a Sikh temple in Wisconsin in 2012, as well as Nidal Hasan's attack at Ft. Hood in 2009.
- Twelve of the 28 attacks in 2012 and 2013 were attributed to unaffiliated individuals.

Known Perpetrators**	Attacks 2000-2013
Unaffiliated Individual(s)	64
Earth Liberation Front	60
Animal Liberation Front	42
Anti-Abortion Activists	15
Coalition to Save the Preserves	8
Al-Qa'ida	4
Neo-Nazi Group	2
Revolutionary Cells-Animal Liberation Brigade	2
White Extremists	2
Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula	1
Anarchists	1
The Justice Department	1
Ku Klux Klan	1
Minutemen American Defense	1
Revenge of the Trees	1
Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan	1
Veterans for Non-Religious Memorials	1

****Information on the perpetrator(s) responsible for an attack is unknown in 72 attacks. Nine attacks were conducted by both ELF and ALF.**

Weapons Used by Decade



Incendiary refers to a weapon capable of catching fire, causing fire, or burning readily and producing intensely hot fire when exploded.

Melee refers to a weapon that can only be used at very close range, e.g., blunt objects, knives, materials that can be used to strangle or suffocate victims.

Locations

- **1970-2013:** Terrorist attacks occurred in all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, however 50% of all attacks took place in California, New York, and Puerto Rico.
- **2000-2013:** Although fewer attacks occurred compared to earlier periods, terrorist attacks still occurred in 35 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Three states — California, New York, and Washington State — accounted for 35% of all attacks.

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS, 1970-2013

- 82% of all attempted attacks, i.e., those in which perpetrators were “out the door” intending to imminently attack their targets, were successful.
- The percentage of attempted attacks that were unsuccessful (e.g., the bomb failed to detonate or was defused) has varied considerably over time, particularly as terrorism in the country has declined.
- It peaked in 2011 when 44% of attempted attacks were unsuccessful, and was at its lowest in 1990 and 2012, when all attempted attacks were successful.

TERRORISM & EXTREMIST VIOLENCE IN THE U.S. DATABASE

This research is part of a larger effort to develop a comprehensive database on Terrorism and Extremist Violence in the U.S. (TEVUS) that integrates data from the Global Terrorism Database, the American Terrorism Study, Profiles of Perpetrators of Terrorism in the U.S., and the U.S. Extremist Crime Database. Led by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), the research team is creating a resource that will allow operational and academic end-users to conduct unprecedented analyses that incorporate incident, perpetrator, and geospatial information.



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