



TERRORIST ATTACKS IN THE U.S. BETWEEN 1970 AND 2012: 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.

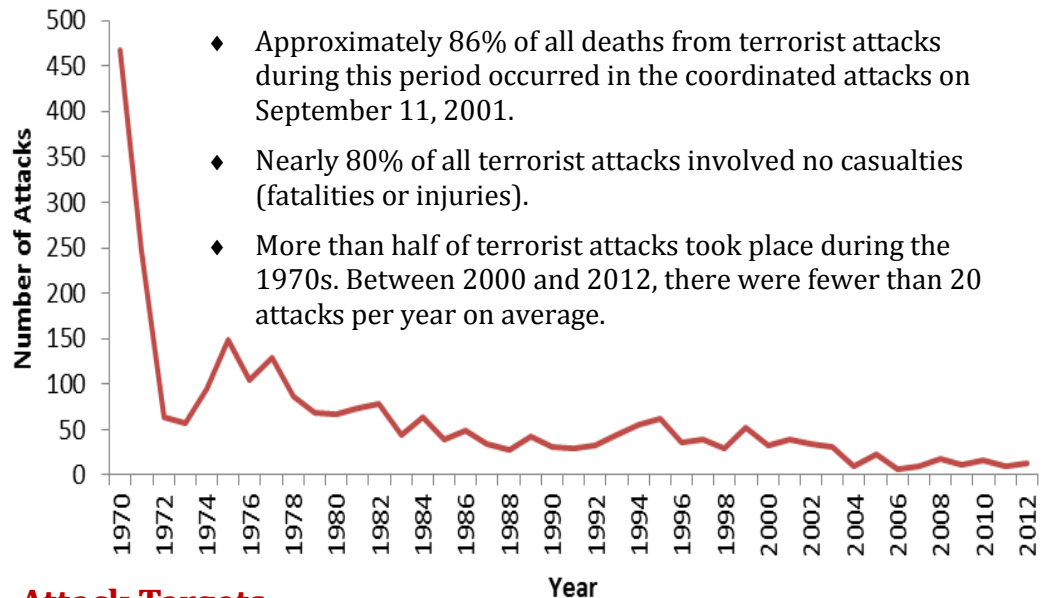
PROVIDE objective data on terrorist violence to the public, practitioners, and policymakers.

Background

START's Global Terrorism Database (GTD) contains information on more than 113,000 domestic and international terrorist attacks* that occurred between 1970 and 2012. Collectively, these attacks have resulted in more than 243,000 deaths and more than 324,000 injuries. This research highlight focuses on the terrorist attacks that occurred in the United States between 1970 and 2012.

Overall Attack Trends

From 1970 through 2012, more than 2,600 terrorist attacks took place in the United States, resulting in more than 3,500 fatalities.



- ◆ Approximately 86% of all deaths from terrorist attacks during this period occurred in the coordinated attacks on September 11, 2001.
- ◆ Nearly 80% of all terrorist attacks involved no casualties (fatalities or injuries).
- ◆ More than half of terrorist attacks took place during the 1970s. Between 2000 and 2012, there were fewer than 20 attacks per year on average.

Attack Targets

The most frequently attacked type of target in the United States between 1970 and 2012 was business targets. Nearly one-third of all attacks on business targets were on banks/commerce, and an additional 22% were on retail entities. Remaining attacks targeted a variety of business targets.

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.



79% of attacks against **educational targets** were on schools, universities, or other buildings, while 21% targeted teachers or other educational personnel.



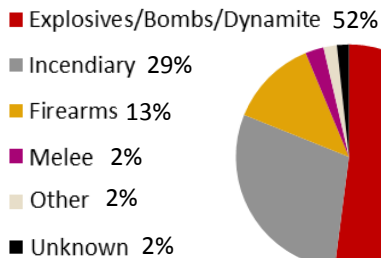
75% of attacks against **government targets** were on government buildings, facilities, or offices, while 25% targeted personnel, public officials, or politicians.

*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, 2000-2012

- Between 2000 and 2012, the majority of attacks in which the perpetrators were identified were carried out by environmental and animal rights violent extremist groups.
- Attacks were also 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.
- Seven of the 13 attacks in 2012 were attributed to unaffiliated individual perpetrators.

Weapons Used



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.

Attacks in the U.S., 1970-2012



Locations

• 1970-2012:

Terrorist attacks occurred in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, however more than half (50.3%) of all attacks in the United States took place in California, New York, and Puerto Rico.

- **2000-2012:** 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 34.8% of all attacks.

Known Perpetrators**	Attacks, 2000-2012
Earth Liberation Front (ELF)	59
Animal Liberation Front (ALF)	41
Unaffiliated Individual(s)	33
Anti-Abortion Violent Extremists	15
Al-Qa`ida	4
Revolutionary Cells-Animal Liberation Brigade	2
Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	1
The Justice Department	1
Revenge of the Trees	1
Al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula	1
Coalition to Save the Preserves (CSP)	1
Minutemen American Defense	1
Ku Klux Klan	1

****Information on the perpetrator(s) responsible for an attack is unknown in 48 attacks. Nine attacks were conducted by both ELF and ALF.**

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS, 1970-2012

- Nearly 83% 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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