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Introducing the Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (WITS)

by John Wigle

Abstract

For researchers looking for an authoritative data source on terrorist attacks: The Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (WITS) is the U.S. Government's authoritative database on acts of terrorism, and is used to enumerate statistical data for the annual publications Country Reports on Terrorism (from the U.S. Department of State) and the NCTC Report on Terrorism. This article provides a brief tutorial on WITS and, by way of example, a cursory look at trends in terrorism lethality.*

Origination of WITS

With the publication of the 2003 *Patterns of Global Terrorism* report and the ensuing criticism, [1] the U.S. Government (USG) performed a zero-based review of all business processes, information technology, and staffing necessary to perform the delicate work of terrorism data collection and analysis. [2] Out of this review, the WITS database was born. It is now housed at the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), which is committed to an open and transparent process for the data behind the report. Interested social scientists, scholars, and the public can find the detailed data used to enumerate the statistics for the report on the NCTC's public website or at wits.nctc.gov. As a part of the zero-based review, the USG reviewed the congressional requirements behind the report. There were some inconsistencies between the definition [3] and inclusion filters for the report, as well as measures that were seemingly outdated for today's terrorism concerns. As a result, NCTC opted to drop the filters and track international and domestic acts of terrorism, regardless of significance.

Challenges with International and Significant Filters

During 2004, several acts of terrorism underscored the difficulty with two of the criteria used to limit the types of terrorist incidents covered by *Patterns of Global Terrorism*. In order for an attack to qualify for inclusion in the report, it had to be both international and significant. International meant any acts that involved the citizens or territory of more than one country.[4] A seemingly simple definition, but cramming all of humanity into computer bits, ones and zeros, creates many occasions for grey areas, as shown below. What constituted a significant act was even fuzzier and was legally left to the opinion of the Secretary of State,[5] although there were some prescribed rules promulgated by the State Department. For example, a significant attack meant an act of terrorism that either killed or seriously injured a person, or caused USD \$10,000 in property damage. Asking intelligence analysts to diagnose the severity of injuries from a distance is a challenging request. Difficulty also arises when estimating the amount of property

damage, particularly when the US dollar equivalent is stronger or weaker in other areas of the world. Finally, another area of complexity was aggregation and disaggregation of multiple attacks that might be coordinated. Coordinated attacks can take place over minutes or even hours.

Depending upon the information available and counting rules, an incident like the 9/11 attack might be counted as 1, 2, 3 or even 4 attacks. Is the World Trade Center 1 attack or 2? Do you count the Pentagon as a separate attack or combine it? Ultimately, NCTC realized these counting rules were too complicated and the filters did not address today's concerns about terrorism. To anyone involved in a terrorist attack, it is significant, regardless of casualty levels and cost estimates.

Here are three real examples that gave NCTC some headaches in 2004:

1. On August 24, 2004, two Russian jetliners were targeted by Chechen black-widow bombers. Both planes were Russian flagged, had Russian aircrews, were targeted by a Russian terror group, and flew in Russian airspace when they exploded. These two bombings were a part of one coordinated attack, but only one plane counted for the report since two Israeli passengers were on board,[6] thereby making it an "international" event. Hypothetically, if the Israeli passengers had missed the plane, then neither of the planes and the scores of people killed in the attacks would have been mentioned in the report.
2. In February 2004, a Filipino terror group targeted a ferry carrying local nationals between Philippine islands. The attack killed more than 100 people and may be the deadliest act of terrorism ever recorded at sea, but it did not count for the purposes of the report. The attack took place within the territorial waters of the Philippines, the ship was Philippine flagged, it had a Filipino crew, and a domestic group perpetrated the attack. Given that it may be the largest maritime terrorist attack ever, regardless of "definitions" it seems the USG should probably pay attention to this attack.
3. In May of 2004, bombings in Turkey targeting four Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) operated by the same bank probably exceeded USD \$10,000 in total, but if separated, the ATM incidents did not count for reporting purposes unless NCTC could demonstrate they were a single coordinated attack.

During 2004, NCTC recorded 3,195 incidents that met the definition of terrorism and, of those attacks, NCTC determined 651 met the filtering criteria for international and significant following the procedures used in *Patterns of Global Terrorism*. That only 20 percent of the incidents made their way into the report seemed to undermine the spirit of the report. Ultimately, NCTC opted to discard the two filters and track all acts of terrorism. Increasing the radarscope

on terrorism had its pros and cons. NCTC would not be blind-sided by seemingly smaller and less fatal acts of terrorism, and it would have a larger universe of terrorism to study. It would, however, require more resources to carry out the needed work within appropriate quality tolerances to assure a statistical baseline was meaningful for time-series trends and analysis.

Data Collection for WITS

To provide a robust collection effort for WITS, NCTC addresses two areas of concern: it practices basic knowledge management techniques to ensure consistency in data collection during analyst turnover, and it casts a wider net on political violence than may be considered terrorism. Casting a wider net ensures all candidate events are given fair consideration. I will describe these two areas of concern in further detail.

NCTC gathers data from open sources manually using commercial subscription news services, the USG's Open Source Center (OSC), local news websites reported in English, and, as permitted by the linguistic capabilities of the team, local news websites reported in foreign languages. Although a manual and labor-intensive process, the team strives to maintain consistency in collection by centrally maintaining knowledge of the search strings and Internet web sites commonly used by the analysts. A senior intelligence analyst performs an important quality control function on the team: maintaining the list of sources and search strings, or "knowledge capital," used by the analysts in their work. This knowledge capital provides consistency during turnover on the team. In theory, if an analyst won the lottery and quit the next day, NCTC would have a list of sources and search strings the lucky analyst used to cull through open source to find data. Although this knowledge capital does not resolve individual bias introduced by analytic interpretation of the data, at least different analysts could duplicate the data collection. To reduce interpretation bias further (or increase inter-rater reliability), NCTC has analysts maintain account notes of commonly used terms and phrases found in the press, recurring political and ethnic issues, terrain notes, weather related trends, and other factors that influence a mastery of context surrounding acts of violence in countries assigned to their area of responsibility.

The second key principle behind the collection effort is the need to cast a wider net on what may be considered terrorism. The statutory definition is inclusive by itself. But to ensure NCTC gives fair and proper consideration to all the events available in open source, NCTC collects information on attacks that have any indications of terrorism. It is very difficult and more time consuming to go back and try to retroactively collect data. Other collection efforts have noted the same challenge with historic data collection.[7] Many web sites delete or archive content after a number of months or weeks, making a complete historical collection impossible. Additionally, assuming all the data is still available, experience has taught NCTC that sorting through a haystack to find missing data is more time consuming than collecting all the data when harvesting. Therefore, NCTC prefers to cast a wider net to collect a large set of candidate incidents, rather than going back to find missing candidates.

Human and Computers – Decision Making Theory

NCTC designed the WITS data coding process to make the best use of humans and computers. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that statistical models based on expert human judgment in older cases tend to outperform the same expert human judgment in newer cases. [8] Studies show that humans are good at categorizing and recognizing discrete objects and concepts, but often lack the ability to make effective aggregate judgments. This is part of the reason humans designed computers, which can aggregate data quickly and make logical conclusions. Using the best of both worlds, the analysts pull apart the specific components of an act of violence and code them into the database, and the WITS system reads the record and makes a logical decision on whether the act meets the statutory criteria for terrorism. To illustrate this in everyday life, I give an analogy of a grocery store. Humans can easily recognize items on a store shelf, like a gallon of milk, a carton of eggs, or a loaf of bread, and they will generally know the costs of those items. However, if you filled your shopping cart with food items and pushed it to the checkout line and the cashier flatly asked: “how many items do you have, and how much does all that cost?” you would have no idea. You might have to empty your cart, and place each item, one by one, back on the conveyor as you counted each item and added up the prices.

Additionally, you might have to stop and restart the whole process because you lost count. Ultimately, when you are done and have calculated a total, you likely will have made an error in counting the items or adding up the total cost. To resolve this issue, humans put UPC labels on products because they know what the products are (computers do not). The Universal Product Codes (UPC) on each item then allow the computer to quickly read all the labels and tell you how many items you have and how much they cost. A computer can also tell you how much is taxable and nontaxable, how much is dairy, meat, or vegetable, and if nutrition labeling were linked to UPCs, it could tell you how many calories, sugars, and fats you have in your cart.

Similarly, NCTC analysts look at the discrete pieces of an act of violence, for instance, the event types, weapons, victims, and facilities. The analysts then code these discrete pieces into the database and the computer logically analyzes the coding to determine if an act of violence meets the statutory criteria for terrorism. Having the computer assist NCTC with what is or is not terrorism allows an analyst to compare the computer’s answer with human thinking about the attack. In a vast majority of cases when there is a disagreement between the human (or expert) judgment and the computer’s conclusion it is the result of a human error in the (UPC) coding: a combatant flag for a military victim was not set to true, or a kinetic event type was accidentally selected for a non-kinetic event. This objective conclusion by the computer reinforces proper coding of the attack and serves as a quality control function. In the vast majority of remaining cases where the coding is correct but humans and computers disagree, the computer has still been right and the expert judgment wrong, typically because the human element has allowed emotions or bias to enter into the aggregate decision making process. For example, in one very

tragic event, the 2005 Baghdad bridge stampede, the experts insisted the event was an act of terrorism. Nevertheless, a simple cursory review of the statutory criteria revealed that the computer had arrived at the correct conclusion when it did not categorize it as such. For those less familiar with the incident: Muslims had gathered in large numbers to pilgrimage to a Mosque in Baghdad. A bridge near the historic shrine was closed. During the height of the crowd, a rumor started among the pilgrims that a suicide bomber had infiltrated the crowd. Panic ensued and thousands of people began rushing over the closed bridge; the railings gave way and hundreds of people fell into the river and drowned. Nearly 1,000 people died during the stampede. An investigation into the incident revealed no perpetrator was involved. The experts, nonetheless, felt that terrorists had succeeded in creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation and that this incident reflected that success and should be considered an actual act of terrorism in and of itself. However, the statutory definition does not consider the atmosphere of fear and terror. Instead, it requires that there is a kinetic event (violence) and that it should be premeditated. There were no indications of either of these two criteria, so the computer concluded correctly that it was not terrorism. In those cases where there is some question of whether the computer or human is wrong, the debate quickly turns to the key coding pieces tied to the statutory definition. Such constructive arguments on the specific attributes of the definition and whether or not the fact pattern of the attack fits the definition is healthy. Such debate insures that NCTC is making a best effort to properly code all attacks and pay close attention to those that fall in grey areas of coding.

Conversely, in cases where humans cannot code values for things so easily (such as the amount of property damage caused by an attack) then human judgment should be limited to broad stroke conclusions. Reusing the grocery store analogy, if you have to make a guess on how many items you have in your cart, it's best to make it a broad estimate, such as 15 items or less, or more than 15 items. Just imagine the chaos that would ensue in a grocery store that had checkout lanes for 15 items or less and other lanes for 16 to 19 items, 20 to 38, 39 to 52, 53 to 71, etc. It might be best to limit your shopping to 15 items per visit in order to avoid being attacked by someone with a loaf of French bread for inadvertently choosing the wrong lane. It is best to leave aggregate judgments to broad strokes when relying on humans to make the call. Such broad strokes make easier and more consistent calls, and thus maintain an enduring statistical baseline.

Humans often include bias and emotion in their aggregate judgment process, which hampers their ability to make factual conclusions. The computer algorithm in WITS assists NCTC with staying on the narrow path of objectivity. There are plenty of examples of computers assisting humans with making decisions. Recently, inventors created a Bluetooth® enabled stethoscope that transmits the audio to the doctor's computer or a handheld device running software that can check for heart murmurs and other ailments.[9] Before computers were in hospitals, doctors used statistical prediction rules (SPR) to make a diagnosis and determine a course of action for treatment. The SPR process takes discrete components of the diagnostic process and calculates the probability of a diagnosis or treatment outcome.[10] The SPR process assists the doctor, no matter his or her level of expertise, in making an accurate prediction. Today, doctors enter the

data into a computer that provides the probability of a diagnosis or treatment outcome in seconds. This same principle is used in the WITS database.

Methodological Principles

NCTC developed the following guideposts, or methodological principles, to assist in the formulation and maintenance of its coding practices.

1. Consistency Principle – Can a variety of analysts or coders arrive at the same result using a proposed rule or procedure? It is better to place a threshold where a decision can be most consistently applied, even if less useful, than it would be to place it where confusion abounds during coding. The easier it is to make the call the stronger the inter-rater reliability.
2. “Who Started It?” Principle – NCTC excludes actions initiated by the State. For instance, police raids, counter-terrorism, or counter-insurgency operations are considered State-initiated actions. Conversely, a checkpoint is a passive state action, and if attacked would count as an incident.
3. Police Shooting Principle – Perpetrators are responsible for the deaths and injuries resulting from a reasonable State response. If a civilian is killed in a gun battle between police and terrorists, the terrorists are responsible for the death even if it is determined police fired the fatal shot. Unreasonable responses are determined in context to the norms of the society where the use of force and incident took place. In those cases, the analysts parse through the casualties to assign responsibility and must document their reasoning.
4. Too Vague Principle – There comes a point when missing information makes the remaining known data meaningless. If a press account does not provide enough detail to identify a time span, location, and type of attack, it is considered too vague and is not counted.
5. Terrorist-on-Terrorist Principle – Attacks between terrorist cells or groups are not counted as acts of terrorism.
6. The George Washington Test – Yasser Arafat once said, “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.” Settling this bias is tough. Certainly, people can understand legitimate resistance, such as General George Washington and his troops taking up arms against the King of England. Nevertheless, where is the boundary between legitimate resistance and terrorism? More to the point of the test, what if, hypothetically, George Washington targeted colonists and bombed the colonial governor’s home? Would that constitute terrorism? This is the essence of the George Washington test: If NCTC seats General Washington into the fact pattern of a given attack today, has the act crossed the imaginary boundary of legitimate resistance and into terrorism? This principle provides

a challenge to analytic bias to over subscribe terrorism to events if they occur outside the United States and on the other hand keep the process impartial and fair using George Washington as an imaginary bar or threshold on civility involving violence by resistance fighters.

7. Threshold Principle – To insure the fishing net is cast wide enough on acts of political violence, NCTC requires analysts to capture incidents where an attacker has crossed the threshold of his or her base of operations to conduct an attack. Incidents prior to crossing the threshold, for instance mishaps in mixing chemicals at a terrorist safe house that result in the death or injury of innocent people, do not count. They usually lack premeditation.

A Suggestion for Future Event Databases

Using the same technique that NCTC uses for WITS, a next generation events database could simultaneously track multiple definitions of terrorism or political violence from discretely coded data. Knowing that 9 out of 10 definitions say a specific act constitutes terrorism has some intriguing utility and could be used as a form of “confidence level” in whether or not an act is broadly accepted as terrorism. Automated decision analysis allows various academics or governments to use the same set of data for a variety of reasons, increasing both its value and utility.

Table 1 below shows various select attributes that researchers could hand-code for the definitions shown in the table. As more definitions are added to the table, it is very likely that only a few additional attributes are needed to track them.

Table 1 - Common Attributes of Terrorist Definitions

		State Dept Report	UN [11]	US Criminal Code [12]	US Reg, 28 CFR 0.85 [13]	US DOD [14]	European Union [15]	UK [16]
	No Discrete Attribute							
1.	Premeditated?	√				√		
2.	Violent?	√	√	√		√	√	√
3.	Threat of violence?					√	√	√
4.	Crime committed?		√	√				
5.	Politically motivated/ designed to coerce a population or government?	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
6.	Noncombatants targeted?	√	√					
7.	Sub national group or clandestine agent?	√	√					
8.	Unlawful or illegal use of force?		√	√	√	√	√	
9.	Life threatening?			√			√	
10.	Cause fear or terror?		√					
11.	Destabilizes structure of society, country or NGO?						√	√
12.	Advances political, religious or ideological causes?					√		√

By coding a couple of dozen discrete attributes, the next generation events database could track different definitions of terrorism. Finally, it would be possible for a scholar to invent or test their own definition of terrorism by mixing a cocktail of attributes. The University of Maryland START, Global Terrorism Database (GTD) has a similar feature allowing the researcher to select one or more inclusion criteria to filter data.[17]

A cursory look at trends in terrorism illustrated by the WITS data

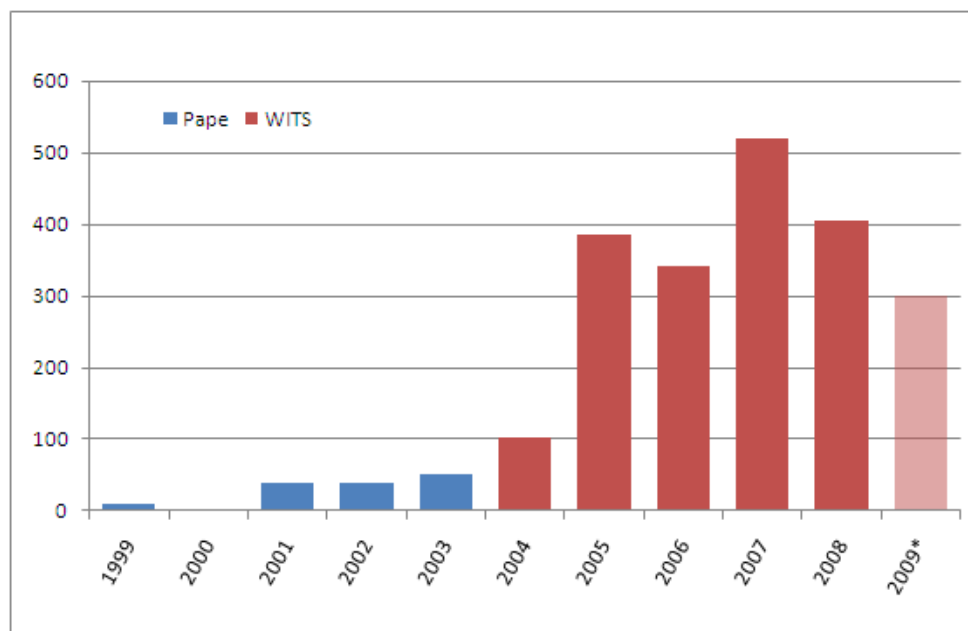
One of the trends seen as early as 2006 by the Worldwide Incidents Team at NCTC is the increasing lethality of acts of terrorism.[18] Some credit the rising death toll to an increased use of technology by perpetrators, while others credit seasoned and hardened terrorists improving their battle readiness.

In Robert Pape's book "Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," he analyzes a data set on suicide terrorism maintained by the University of Chicago.[19] His research revealed, that "the raw number of suicide terrorist attacks is climbing" with the average number of attacks increasing each year. Although Pape's book infers a questionable conclusion that terrorist use suicide tactics in cases of occupation,[20] I focus solely on the raw data in his book, which states that an average of 10 suicide attacks took place per year during the 1990s, more than 40 in 2001 and 2002 each year, and almost 50 in 2003.

I often stress to researchers and scholars that, if possible, they should test their hypothesis and verify empirical conclusions using another data set. For instance, although several professors at Princeton University praised Pape's data collection on acts of suicide terrorism, they provided a critical analysis of his research findings summarizing that his work selects on the dependent variable because the data set only has acts of suicide terrorism. The WITS data include a variety of acts of terrorism, and might be useful to test Pape's hypothesis. Practicing what I preach—although my beautiful and always correct wife would argue that I do so only occasionally—I decide to use the publicly-available WITS data set to test several easy questions that are on my mind about his work:

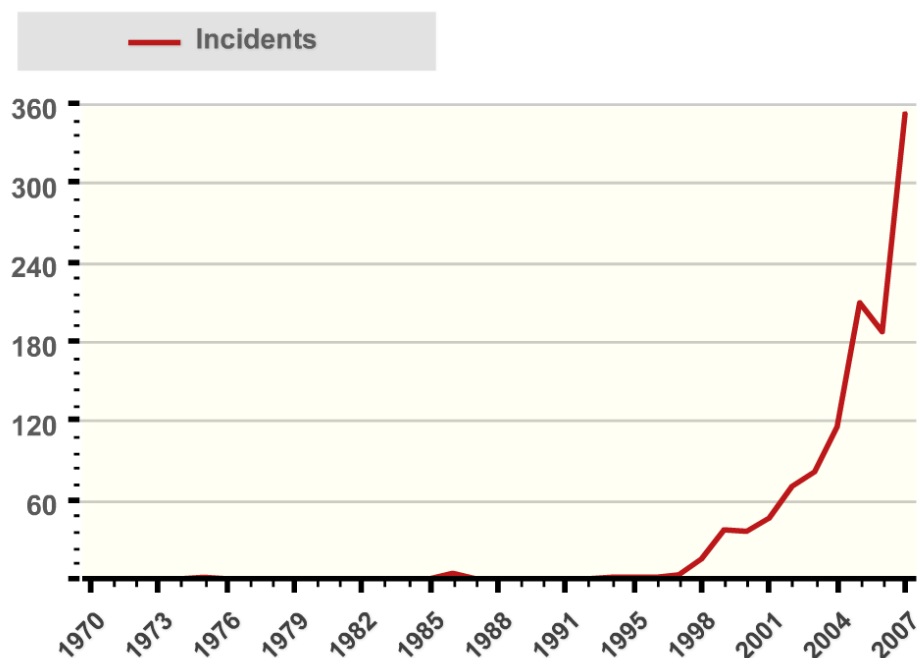
1. Does the WITS data also show the same raw data trend found in Pape's research?
2. Is the increasing use of suicide attacks driving the lethality rate upward?
3. Is the same lethality trend found inside Iraq and Afghanistan?

A reading of Pape's book reveals that NCTC and the University of Chicago database use slightly different definitions for suicide attacks,[21] but the trend I find in the data far outpaces the subtle difference. In the chart below I have imprudently mixed baselines between Pape's research and WITS data, but I still find some value in its rendering.

Chart A1 – Suicide Attacks (Pape and WITS baselines)

* 2009 data is doubled to crudely estimate year end totals

The WITS data shows there were 102 suicide attacks in 2004,[22] 385 attacks in 2005, 342 in 2006, 520 in 2007, 405 in 2008, and 225 during the first three-quarters of 2009. I divide 225 by 0.75 to crudely estimate a 2009 total of 300. I estimate the 2009 total because I see the overall number is trending lower than 2008. Plotting this on a chart with the numbers from Pape's book suggests that suicide attacks appear to be on the rise, but might be trending downward since 2007. I double-check with the University of Maryland START program's Global Terrorism Database (GTD).[23] GTD has a baseline through these years, and their data also suggests the same trend in suicide attacks, but 2008 and 2009 data are unavailable. If the suicide trend is dropping in starting in 2008, then GTD cannot see it yet.

Chart A2 - Suicide Attacks (GTD baseline)

Assuming that I have answered question A within the affirmative—the raw totals of suicide terrorism is on the rise—I can test my next question that suicide terrorism correlates (not necessarily causally) with a rise in overall lethality noted by NCTC in early 2006, and further look at the data in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Is Suicide Terrorism Raising Lethality Levels?

I pulled the data in the tables below from the WITS database on Saturday, February 6, 2010. The WITS data were current through September 30, 2009, at that time. I calculated the data in a third table using the first two tables of data from WITS. I intentionally separated out Iraq and Afghanistan, as many would say that these two cases are outliers. The separate data will allow others to compare totals with and without Iraq and Afghanistan, and it will assist me with question C. Below is the data I pulled from WITS:

Table B1: From WITS on 5-Feb-2010: Suicide Attacks

Year	Iraq		Afghanistan		Rest of World	
	Attacks	Deaths	Attacks	Deaths	Attacks	Deaths
2004	63	934	2	4	37	610
2005	348	2,938	15	17	22	195
2006	231	2,156	90	306	21	213
2007	353	3,938	106	524	61	844
2008	211	1,602	102	556	92	1,130
2009	68	873	80	373	77	782

Table B2: From WITS on 6-Feb-2010: All Attacks (including suicide attacks)

Year	Iraq		Afghanistan		Rest of World	
	Attacks	Deaths	Attacks	Deaths	Attacks	Deaths
2004	927	2,916	151	289	2,177	4,271
2005	3,438	8,188	494	688	7,103	5,615
2006	6,631	13,345	962	1,253	6,861	5,909
2007	6,210	13,612	1,124	1,955	7,126	7,182
2008	3,256	5,013	1,221	1,989	7,251	8,755
2009	1,827	2,757	1,404	2,233	5,029	6,412

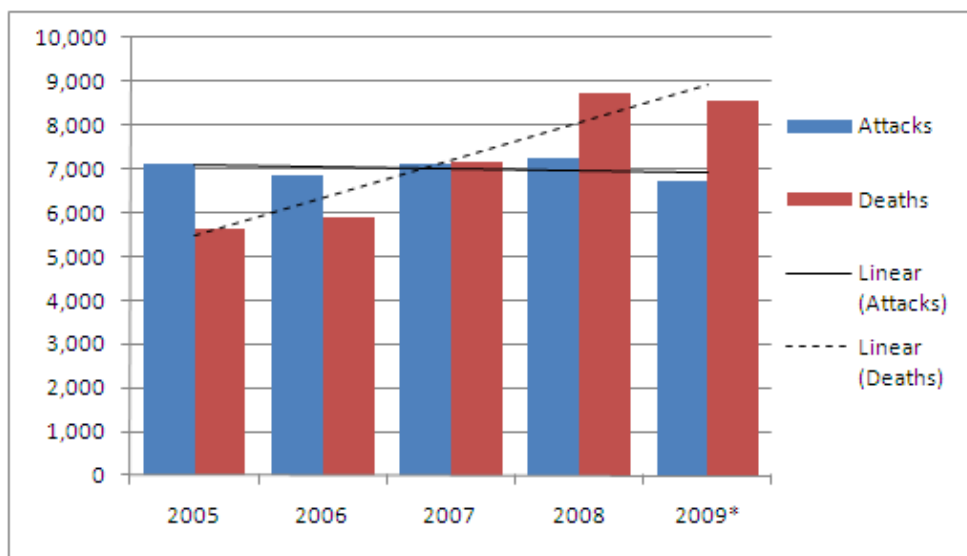
Table B3: My Calculations
using WITS 6-Feb-2010 data

Year	Rest of World (w/o Suicide attacks)	
	Attacks	Deaths
2004	2,140	3,661
2005	7,081	5,420
2006	6,840	5,696
2007	7,065	6,338
2008	7,159	7,625
2009	4,952	5,630

I have listed the 2004 data in the tables, but I have not used them in the graphs because NCTC has stated the 2004 data are not compatible with the baseline for the data for 2005 and onward (see endnote 22). Also the data tables above show the original total for 2009 pulled from WITS through the end of September 2009. I have divided the 2009 numbers by 0.75 to crudely estimate the year-end totals for 2009 and have used them in the charts below.

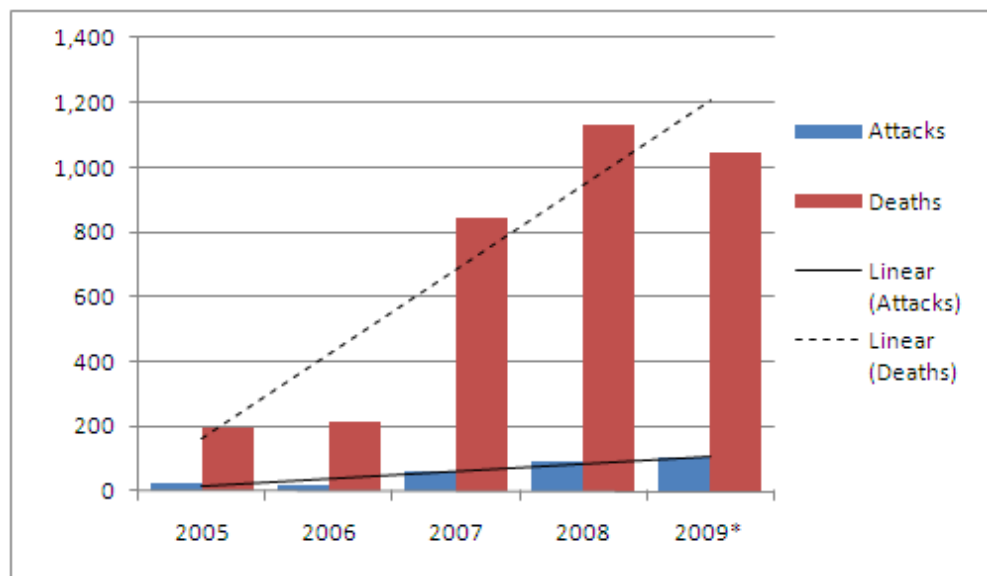
I first examine the ratio of fatalities to all attacks in the rest of the world to replicate what NCTC had published in the past several years. The charts published in the NCTC reports included Afghanistan and I want to verify that the exclusion of the Afghan data did not skew the trend observed by NCTC. To observe the pattern easily I add a linear trend line to the charts. Chart B1 reveals that the growing lethality trend is present even with the exclusion of the Afghan data from my research.

Chart B1 – All Attacks and Deaths (excludes Iraq and Afghanistan)



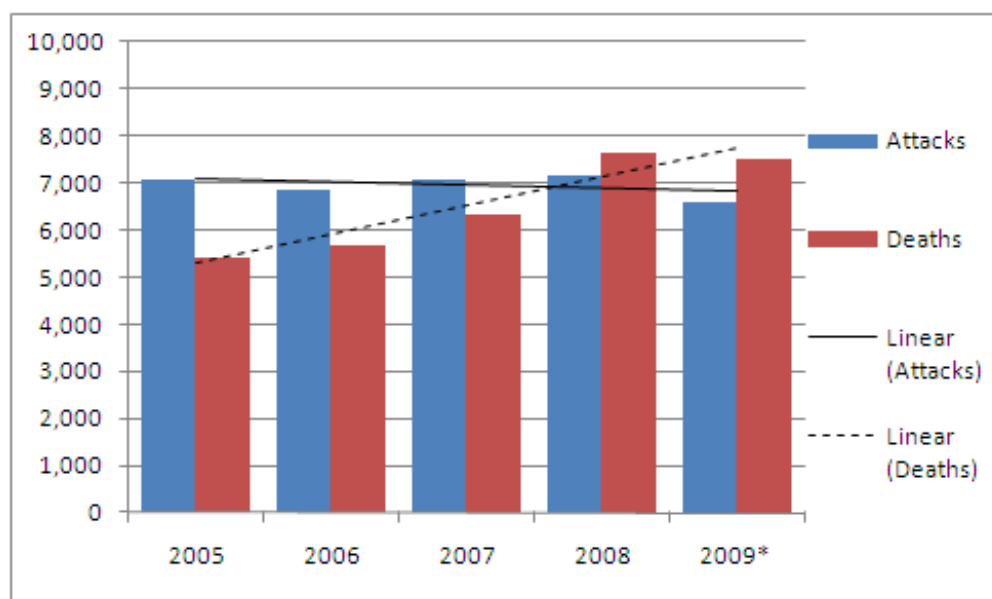
*2009 year end total is estimated.

Next, Chart B2 examines the trends for suicide attacks only. The lethality is very high, visible by the widely separated linear trend lines.

Chart B2 – Suicide Attacks and Deaths (excludes Iraq and Afghanistan)

*2009 year end total is estimated.

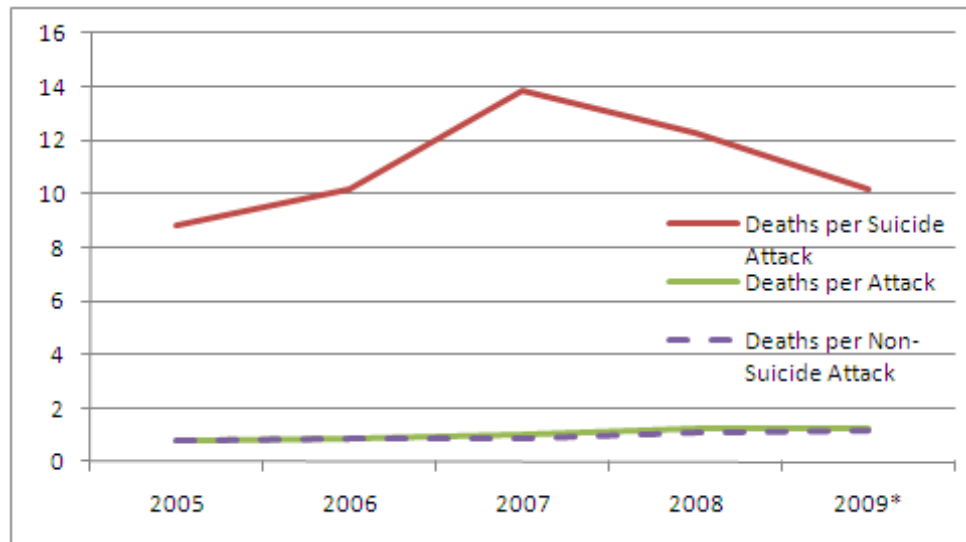
Finally, Chart B3 examines the trends for all attacks, except suicide attacks. The trend in lethality is also increasing, visible by the crossing trend lines. This appears to negatively answer question B.

Chart B3 – All Attacks Except Suicide Attacks and Deaths (excludes Iraq and Afghanistan)

*2009 is based upon estimated totals.

I then plot the fatalities per attack in Chart B4. Examining data from all attacks (green line) and non-suicide attacks (dashed purple line), lethality rates are essentially the same. This is not surprising since suicide attacks only represent about three to four percent of all attacks in the WITS data. The lethality for suicide attacks (red line) is very visible.

Chart B4 – Deaths per Attack by Attack Type (excludes Iraq and Afghanistan)

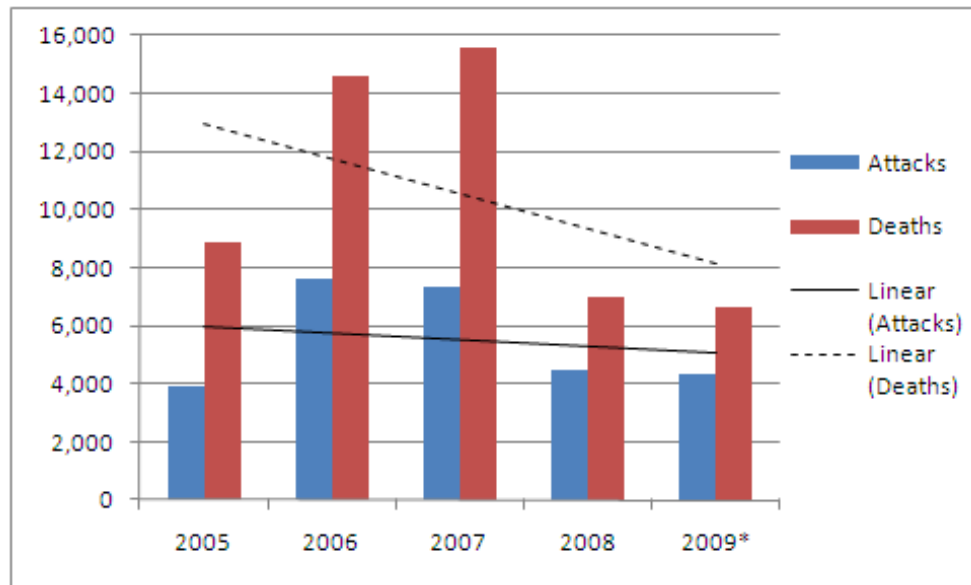


*2009 is based upon estimated totals.

As a result of this cursory look, there does not appear to be a noteworthy correlation between the increase in lethality rate and suicide attacks.

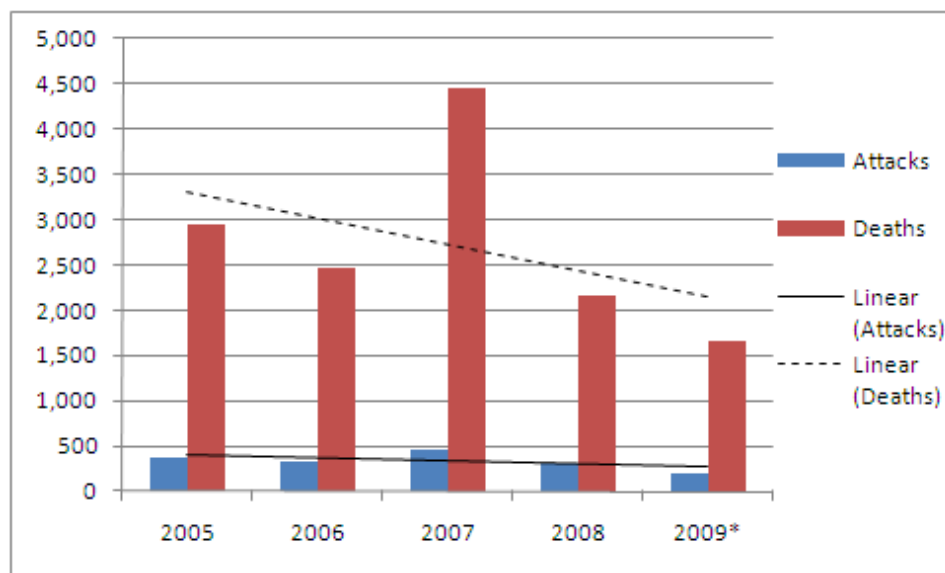
A Cursory Look at Iraq and Afghanistan

Chart C1 plots the WITS data for all attacks, including suicide attacks and associated deaths in the countries of Iraq and Afghanistan. The lethality of attacks is declining in these two countries combined. To me, this is an interesting find as one might expect the attacks in these two countries to be more spectacular and lethal.

Chart C1 – All Attacks and Deaths (Iraq and Afghanistan Only)

*2009 year end total is estimated.

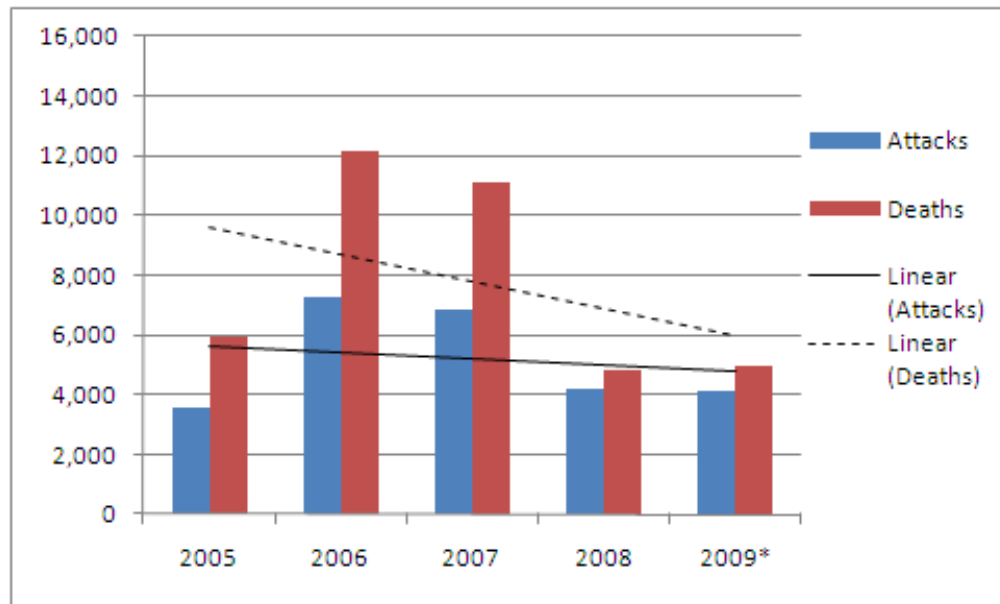
Chart C2 plots the WITS data for just suicide attacks and associated deaths in the countries of Iraq and Afghanistan. The lethality of attacks is also declining in these two countries. Another interesting find.

Chart C2 – Suicide Attacks and Deaths (Iraq and Afghanistan Only)

*2009 year end total is estimated.

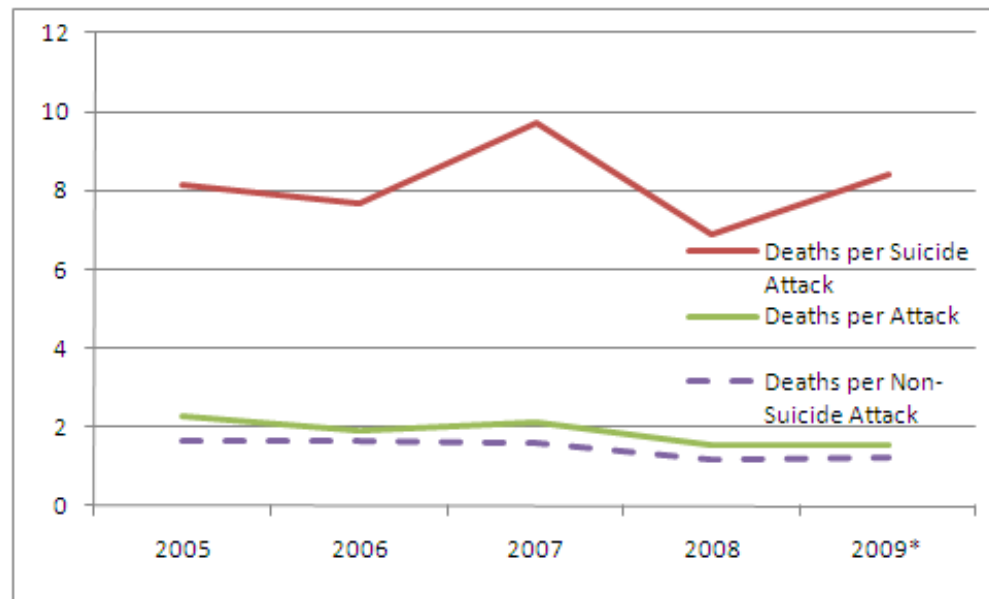
I plotted the data on all attacks except suicide attacks in Chart C3. The trend in lethality is also declining, contrary to the rest of the world.

Chart C3 – All Attacks Except Suicide Attacks and Deaths (Iraq and Afghanistan Only)



*2009 year end total is estimated.

In chart C4, I plot data for deaths per attack for suicide (red line), for all attacks including suicide (green line), and for all attacks except suicide attacks (dashed purple line). The chart appears to show the lethality ratio holding at about 8 people killed per attack in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Chart C4 – Deaths per Attack by Attack Type (Iraq and Afghanistan Only)

*2009 is based upon estimated totals.

The worldwide trends for all locations were substantially affected when Iraq and Afghanistan were included: The lethality of the attacks in these two countries is diminishing, dragging the rest of the trend downward toward a flat line for suicide attacks, or a declining rate of lethality for all attacks including, and excluding suicide attacks.

Areas of Additional Research

This cursory look does not take into account many variables that need to be controlled in a complete study, and any correlations suggested are not likely to be causal. For instance, is this rise in lethality simply temporary due to suicide campaigns in other parts of the world (i.e. Somalia)? To properly study and control the infinitely relevant variables, no database is comprehensive enough in and of itself. As such, the WITS data will need to be compared with other data sets to correlate relationships about terrorism. Other academics have used the WITS data in this fashion with some interesting findings.[24]

Does Chart B4 shows the ratio of fatalities to attacks as a monotonic increase or is the top of the curve in 2007? What is the driving factor behind the spike in 2007 shown in several of the charts?

As Robert Pape's research suggested that suicide terrorism is tied to foreign occupation rather than Islamic fundamentalism,[25] can the WITS data show this same correlation if tied to a data set on foreign occupations? Such an examination using the WITS data would address the concerns raised in Pape's research by the four professors at Princeton.

Why is the trend for terrorist lethality declining in Iraq and Afghanistan? One could speculate the trend – relative to other places – is due to heightened security, better intelligence gathering, or countermeasures utilized to mitigate suicide attacks.[26] Can any of these speculative guesses be tested to see if they are true?

Can the use of technology to assist with data classification, analysis, and decision making improve terrorism data sets? The Rutgers University used the WITS data in an experiment to test a new algorithm it has developed for automatic classification called High Order Naïve Bayes (HONB).[27] The results were very promising, and they showed it out performed Naïve Bayes and Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI) at lower training rates, including with minority classes. Such work shows that WITS and other terrorism data sets can be quickly evaluated and potential correlations can be identified quicker and more reliably than manual and human processes.

Final Word About the WITS Data

The WITS data set is a living database, and as such the data can change from quarter to quarter as new attack data are added and older data are revised with new insights and information. Therefore, I have included the date I pulled my data from WITS, and for the period through which it was current.

The entire WITS data set is available for download, free of charge, to anyone. There are three formats: two in XML format, one for databases and one for spreadsheets; and the other is the raw database export format used to load the public website with the data. NCTC requests that when using their data to properly cite any works to WITS. For cites to specific attacks, the incident control number (ICN), visible in the upper left hand corner of the incident detail screen, provides the unique reference number to the attack. For aggregate works, cite the database generally, provide the website address, and date accessed. If using the WITS search capability, it would also be helpful to record the search string used when aggregating the data. The WITS system shows the search string at the top of the query results listing. This will let people know which attack records were retrieved from WITS and would be helpful when verifying results.

Cite to WITS, for example, as:

“Worldwide Incidents Tracking System,” National Counterterrorism Center, wits.nctc.gov, accessed on: <date>.

or:

ICN 200912345, “Worldwide Incidents Tracking System,” National Counterterrorism Center, wits.nctc.gov, accessed on: <date>.

The WITS data, like any other data set, has its strengths and weaknesses. NCTC does endeavor, however, to maintain it as accurately as open sources allow. With that in mind, NCTC analysts use some subjective judgment when there is incomplete or inconsistent information coming from multiple open sources about the events tracked. NCTC endeavors to minimize incidents of subjective judgment to reduce bias in the data. If your researchers modify the WITS data to correct errors or judgment calls, properly indicate so in your work.

There are other data sets out there, but I am confident that you will find the WITS data the most comprehensive of its kind that is freely available. The WITS methodology and coding practices are the result of a lot of time, energy, and effort by NCTC and academia. NCTC hopes the WITS data are useful to scholars as well as USG officials. Having access to the same data the USG uses for its annual reports can only improve the necessary debate and dialog about the causes and possible methods to aid in the suppression of violence against the innocent.

**The findings, recommendations, and opinions in this essay are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of The Johns Hopkins University, or the National Counterterrorism Center, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Department of Homeland Security, and the US Government.*

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Endnotes

[1] Alan Krueger and David Laitin. "Faulty Terror Report Card," 17 May 2004, *Washington Post*, pp. A 21.

[2] Josh Meyer. "The Nation; Doubts Fly on Terror Report's Reliability; The State Department finds that flaws in what is supposed to be a definitive analysis of the global threat go much deeper than suspected," 21 Nov. 2004. *Los Angeles Times*, pp. A-1.

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- [3] The definition of terrorism prescribed in the congressional reporting statute, 22 U.S.C. § 2656f (d)(2), reads, “the term ‘terrorism’ means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents.” Some documents erroneously cited the statutory definition by adding the following phrase at the end of the definition, “intended to influence the audience.” This subtle difference was probably not the biggest culprit in my estimation. For instance, the Federal Bureau of Investigation frequently cites the title 18 statutory definition of terrorism used in criminal cases.
- [4] The definition from the statute, 22 U.S.C. § 2656f (d)(1), reads: “the term ‘international terrorism’ means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than 1 country.”
- [5] The definition from the statute, 22 U.S.C. § 2656f (a)(1)(A)(i), reads: “in which acts of international terrorism occurred which were, in the opinion of the Secretary, of major significance.”
- [6] ICN 200460002, “Worldwide Incidents Tracking System,” National Counterterrorism Center, wits.nctc.gov, 17 Nov. 2009. See also, “The Moscow Times: ‘Something Happened Fast’ in Crashes,” *Moscow Times*, 27 Aug. 2004. NewsBank: Access World News, 17 Nov. 2009 <<http://www.newsbank.com/>>
- [7] Gary LaFree and Laura Dugan. “Introducing the Global Terrorism Database,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 19: 181-204, 2007. Footnote 33. See also, “Using GTD: Data Collection Methodology”, Caution about Data Consistency section, <<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/using-gtd/>>
- [8] Robyn Dawes. “The ethical implications of Paul Meehl’s work on comparing clinical versus actuarial prediction methods,” *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, Oct. 2005. Vol. 61, No. 10: 1245–1255, at 1252.
- [9] Chris Seper. “A Bluetooth stethoscope (BlackBerry software pending),” *MedCity News*, 19 Aug. 2009. <<http://www.medcitynews.com/index.php/2009/08/a-bluetooth-stethoscope-blackberry-software-pending/>>
- [10] Abraham P. Schwab. “Virtual Mentor,” *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*, July 2006. Vol. 8, No. 7: 469-472.
- [11] UN Security Council Resolution 1566, dated 8 October 2004, says acts of terrorism are “... criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act...”
- [12] From the United States Code, 18 U.S.C. § 2331.
- [13] From the federal code of regulations, 28 CFR 0.85(l), “Terrorism includes the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.”
- [14] US Army Field Manual 100-20 and Air Force Pamphlet 3-20. “Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict,” Washington, D.C. , 5 Dec 1990, pp. 3-1.
- [15] “Official Journal of the European Communities,” Vol. L164 [EN], 22 Jun. 2002. Council Framework Decision on 13 June 2002 on Combating Terrorism, Article 1, Section 1.
- [16] “Terrorism Act of 2000,” 20 Jul. 2000, UK Parliament. Available at <<http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/content.aspx?activeTextDocId=1851852>>
- [17] START, “Global Terrorism Database Codebook 3.0,” May 2009, University of Maryland. <<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf>>
- [18] See the last chart in the 2006 NCTC Report on Terrorism, and chart 16 in the 2007-2008 editions of the NCTC Reports on Terrorism, available at www.nctc.gov.
- [19] Robert Pape. “Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,” 2005. New York, Random House Publishers, p. 6.
- [20] Scott Ashworth et al. “Design, Inference, and the Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 102, Issue 2, May 2008, pp 269-273.
- [21] Ibid. Pape, pp. 10-11.
- [22] Although I used the 2004 data here, NCTC does not recommend relying on the 2004 data since this was a transition year, and the statistical baseline is relatively soft for acts that did not meet the international and significant filters for the report. See the 2005 NCTC report’s methodology section for more details.
- [23] University of Maryland Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) program is a DHS Center of Academic Excellence: www.start.umd.edu. START and DHS are not responsible for the conclusions or opinions of the author.
- [24] Alan Krueger and Jitka Malecková. “Attitudes and Action: Public Opinion and the Occurrence of International Terrorism.” *Science*, 18 Sep. 2009: Vol. 325. no. 5947, pp. 1534 – 1536.
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- [26] Intuition is not science. One must be empirically prove such correlations in a study with data beyond the scope of WITS.
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The Global Terrorism Database (GTD): Accomplishments and Challenges

by Gary LaFree

Abstract

The paper provides an update on the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), an open source event database that now includes information on over 82,000 domestic and international terrorist attacks since 1970. [1] GTD was launched by computerizing data originally collected by the Pinkerton Global Intelligence Service (PGIS).[2] Following computerization, the research team has continued working to update and validate the data. This paper describes original data collection efforts and the strategies employed to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of the data, addressing also the strengths and weaknesses of Open Source data in general and the GTD in particular. The paper also provides descriptive statistics on the contents of the most recently available version of the GTD and offer observations about the future of event databases.*

Terrorism Event Databases

Because of the challenges of collecting traditional crime data on terrorism, open source event databases have received increasing attention over the past four decades. While collection strategies have varied greatly, all of these databases rely on reports about terrorism from the print or electronic media. Open source databases began to appear in the early 1970s, and there were more than a dozen of them by the late 1990s.

Event databases have serious limitations. The media may report inaccuracies and lies; there may be conflicting information or false, multiple or no claims of responsibility. Government censorship and disinformation may also affect results. But despite these limitations, compared to more traditional criminology data, they also have important advantages. In particular, because of the compelling interest that non-state terrorist groups have in media attention, open source information may be uniquely useful in the study of terrorism.

Thus, while no serious researcher would suggest that we track burglary or car theft rates by relying solely on media sources such a strategy is much more defensible in the case of terrorist attacks. And compared to most crime data, terrorism event data are not limited to highly industrialized countries. For example, with currently available data the study of common crimes like homicide is mostly limited to highly industrialized western-style democracies. By contrast, open source terrorism databases offer at least some coverage for all countries. While it is the case that traditional media under-report news stemming from developing countries or in highly autocratic states, the salience of terrorism as a phenomenon today makes it more likely than ever that media will report such incidents as information becomes available.

The evolving open source terrorist event databases have allowed for more rigorous analysis of terrorism and terrorist activity. However, a major limitation of most of these databases is that they have traditionally excluded domestic terrorist attacks. In general, international terrorist attacks are those involving a national or a group of nationals from one country crossing international borders and attacking targets in another country. Domestic attacks are those involving a national or a group of nationals attacking targets in their home country. In the past, part of the reason for excluding domestic attacks from these databases was bureaucratic. Many governmental agencies, including the US State Department, have had a long history of concentrating on international terrorism. But beyond the tradition of dividing bureaucratic responsibility for terrorism according to international-domestic distinctions was the practical challenge of collecting global data on a very large number of incidents: Sources that have compared domestic and international terrorist attacks have concluded that the former outnumber the latter by as much as seven to one.[3]

This was the main feature that attracted me to the PGIS terrorism data. It was the only of the early open source databases on terrorism that attempted to track domestic as well as international attacks.

The PGIS database was the original platform for the GTD. From 1970 to 1997, PGIS trained researchers to identify and record terrorism incidents from wire services (including *Reuters* and the *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* [FBIS]), US State Department reports, other US and foreign government reporting, US and foreign newspapers (including the *New York Times*, the *British Financial Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*), and information provided by PGIS offices around the world. In the early days, PGIS relied especially on wire services and newspapers. By the 1990s, PGIS researchers were relying increasingly on the Internet. Although the coding form used by PGIS went through three major iterations, most of the items included were similar during the entire 28 years of data collection. About two dozen persons were responsible for coding information over the years spanned by the data collection, but only two individuals were in-charge of supervising data collection during the entire period.[4]

PGIS defined ‘terrorism’ as events involving “*the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation.*” Based on coding rules originally developed in the early 1970s, the employees responsible for collecting the PGIS data excluded criminal acts that appeared to be devoid of any political or ideological motivation as well as acts arising from open combat between opposing armed forces, both regular and irregular. Data collectors also excluded actions taken by governments in the legitimate exercise of their authority, even when such actions were denounced by domestic and/or foreign critics as acts of “state terrorism.” However, they included violent acts that were not officially sanctioned by government, even in cases where many observers believed that the government was openly tolerating the violent actions.

Through the generosity of PGIS and aided by long-time PGIS employee Hugh Barber, in 2001 I arranged to move the original hard copies of the PGIS terrorism database to the University of Maryland. During this transfer process, we discovered that one year of the PGIS data – 1993 – had been lost in an earlier office move. These data were never recovered. [5]

Once we transferred the remaining PGIS records, my colleague Laura Dugan and I applied for, and secured, funds from the National Institute of Justice [6] to computerize the data. We conducted training sessions for an original group of approximately 70 undergraduate coders. Over time, training sessions were added as new students joined the project. Once the data computerization began, we implemented an ongoing process of data verification. The computerization of the original PGIS data was completed in December 2005.

Collection of the Post-1997 Data

In April 2006 we received funding from the Human Factors-Behavioral Science Division of the US Department of Homeland Security to extend the GTD beyond 1997. Data collection for 1998 to 2007 was conducted by a team led by Gary Ackerman and Charles Blair on behalf of the START Consortium. We began by creating a GTD Criteria Committee, composed of a group of international terrorism experts.[7]

This committee reviewed the original PGIS criteria and made suggestions for producing a final set of data collection guidelines. This process was guided by two principles; preserving the value of the PGIS heritage data, while also making improvements in the rigor of the data collection process and the quality of the data collected. Following extensive discussions, the GTD Criteria Committee developed a revised codebook for extending the data beyond 1997. The new procedures captured more than 120 variables and unlike the original PGIS data, the new data also included the Open Source texts upon which each event was based.

Ackerman and Blair's team of 25 to 35 data collectors included researchers who were fluent in six language groups (English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Mandarin). Their data collection process began by monitoring general data bases such as Lexis-Nexis (Professional) and Opensource.gov (previously FBIS). A typical day produced as many as 10,000 potential events. Data collectors were asked to review all of these events to determine which qualified as terrorist events according to the target definition, and then to corroborate each case with at least two additional source articles. Data collectors submitted their expected cases to supervisors for review. Problematic cases were referred back to the GTD Criteria Committee for final decisions. Based on these procedures, in March 2009 we released the extended version of the GTD through 2007 that forms the basis for this chapter.

With funding from the Department of Homeland Security, in 2008 the START Consortium began work with Richard Ward and Daniel Mabrey at the Institute for the Study of Violent Groups (ISVG), headquartered at New Haven University, to carry out new GTD data collection. ISVG operates a data collection laboratory with student data coders who have expertise in a wide

variety of major languages. At the time this article was being prepared, we were working with ISVG to finalize the GTD through 2008. We plan to release annual updates to the GTD as these become available.

In the next section, I consider some of the highlights from the most recent version of the GTD. I begin by looking at the total extent of terrorism as reflected in our database, then consider major sources of terrorism, the lethality of terrorism and the resilience of terrorist groups and finally, I will provide a few insights from the data regarding the impact of counter measures taken by governments.

The Extent of Terrorism

Our recent analysis of the GTD indicates that terrorist attacks are highly concentrated in geographic space. This concentration can be demonstrated at the national level by examining the proportion of all terrorist attacks that take place in those countries with the most terrorist activity. In Table 1, I present the top 20 countries in terms of terrorist attacks and compare the cumulative percentage of total attacks against these countries to their share of all countries in the world.

Table 1. Percentage of Total Attacks for the Twenty Most Frequently Attacked Countries, 1970-2007

Country	Cumulative % of All Attacks	Cumulative % of All Countries
Colombia	8.16	0.48
Peru	15.44	0.96
El Salvador	21.87	1.44
India	27.08	1.92
Northern Ireland	31.62	2.40
Spain	35.44	2.88
Iraq	39.25	3.37
Turkey	42.49	3.85
Sri Lanka	45.64	4.33
Pakistan	48.70	4.81
Philippines	51.71	5.29
Chile	54.46	5.77
Israel	57.05	6.25
Guatemala	59.49	6.73
Nicaragua	61.88	7.21
South Africa	64.20	7.69
Lebanon	66.51	8.17
Algeria	68.50	8.65
Italy	70.29	9.13

United States	71.93	9.62
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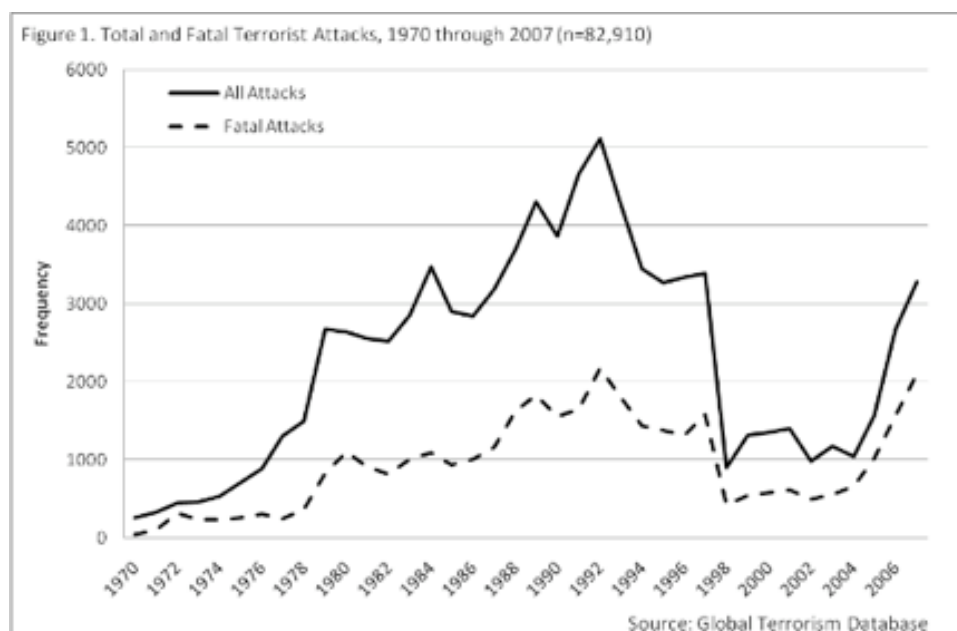
Source: Global Terrorism Database

According to Table 1, the top 20 countries and territories in terms of terrorist attacks account for nearly 72 per cent of all terrorist activities while constituting less than 10 per cent of all countries of the world. Two per cent of the world's countries account for more than 27 per cent of the world's terrorist attacks. Five per cent of the world's countries account for half of the world's terrorist attacks.

Considerable concentration is also apparent if we examine terrorist attacks with smaller geospatial units. For example, in an analysis of known terrorist attacks in India from the GTD, START associate Susan Cutter found that the vast majority of all attacks were concentrated in just two regions – Punjab and Kashmir, on the border with Pakistan, and the area around Bangladesh.[8] The vast majority of Indian territory suffered few terrorist attacks from 1970 until quite recently which is one of the reasons why the 2008 attacks on Mumbai were so shocking. Similarly, in an analysis of the GTD for Germany, GTD researcher Brandon Behlendorf found considerable geospatial concentration of terrorist attacks at the *Länder* level.[9] In short, terrorism, like more common crimes, is highly concentrated across geographical units.

The GTD also shows that the patterns of terrorist attacks and fatal attacks since 1970 are more complex than is commonly recognized. According to Figure 1, terrorist attacks reached their twentieth century zenith in 1992 (with over 5,100 attacks worldwide), but had substantially declined in the years leading up to the 9/11 attacks.[10] In fact, total attacks in 2000 (1,351) were at about the same level as total attacks in 1977 (1,307). Looking more broadly at overall trends, Figure 1 shows that worldwide terrorist attacks through the mid-1970s were relatively infrequent, with fewer than 1,000 incidents each year.[11]

But from 1976 to 1979 the frequency of events nearly tripled. The number of terrorist attacks continued to increase until the 1992 peak, with smaller peaks in 1984, at almost 3,500 incidents, and 1989, with over 4,300 events. After the first major peak in 1992, the number of terrorist attacks declined until the end of the twentieth century, before rising steeply to a 10-year high of nearly 3,300 in 2007 – four years after the start of the Iraq war. Still, total attacks in 2007 were 36 per cent lower than total attacks for the 1992 peak.

Figure 1: Number of Attacks

Fatal attacks also declined in the years prior to the 9/11 attacks. In fact, fatal attacks in 2000 (580) were considerably lower than they had been more than two decades earlier, in 1979 (832). In general, the number of fatal attacks clearly followed the pattern of total attacks ($r = .93$), but at a substantially lower magnitude (averaging 947 fatal attacks per year compared to 2294 total attacks per year worldwide). Fatal attacks rose above 1,000 per year for the first time in 1980. After hovering close to 1,000 attacks annually for most of the 1980s, they more than doubled between 1985 and 1992. Like total attacks, fatal attacks declined somewhat after 1992, bottoming out in 1998 with 426 attacks and then rising again to a global peak of more than 2,100 fatal attacks in 2007. The peak in 2007 (2,111) was similar to the peak in 1992 (2,178).

In short, in the four years prior to 9/11 worldwide terrorist attacks and fatal attacks were at their lowest level in 20 years. However, both total and fatal attacks have increased considerably since then so that in 2007 total attacks were back to levels they had been at in the mid-1990s and fatal attacks were approaching the peak year of 1992.

The US has long been perceived as being the target of an inordinate number of terrorist attacks. Thus, Neumayer and Plumper [12] argue that most foreign victims of terrorist attacks are American citizens and the US State Department recently claimed that one-third of all terrorist attacks worldwide are directed at the US. [13] However, because previous estimates of attacks against the US have been based only on transnational terrorist attacks, they do not take into

account the possibility that the groups that target the USA may be even more active in targeting their own countries.

In Table 2, I present data from the GTD showing the 20 most frequently attacked countries in the world, from 1970 to 2007. I also present a rank ordering of the 20 countries with the most terrorist fatalities for the same years. According to Table 2, the US ranks 20th in terms of total attacks. The most frequently attacked country in the data set is Colombia with over 6,700 attacks. Note that the top three most frequently attacked countries are all Latin American while three more Latin American countries are in the top 20 (Chile, Guatemala and Nicaragua). Latin America had the largest number of terrorist attacks of any region of the world throughout the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. Four Middle Eastern or Persian Gulf countries are in the top 20 (Iraq, Turkey, Israel and Lebanon) and four are in South Asia or Southeast Asia (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Philippines). Western Europe contains three countries in the top 20 (Northern Ireland [treated here as a country], Spain and Italy). South Africa and Algeria are the sole countries from Africa in the top 20 most frequently targeted countries.

Table 2. Twenty Top Ranking Countries in terms of Total Terrorist Attacks and Fatalities, 1970 to 2007

Most Frequently Attacked		Most Fatalities	
Country	Frequency	Country	Fatality Count
Colombia	6767	Iraq	17754
Peru	6038	Sri Lanka	14272
El Salvador	5330	India	13434
India	4318	Colombia	13009
Northern Ireland	3762	Peru	12822
Spain	3165	El Salvador	12496
Iraq	3161	Nicaragua	11324
Turkey	2691	Algeria	8545
Sri Lanka	2611	Philippines	6304
Pakistan	2536	Pakistan	5540
Philippines	2490	Guatemala	5135
Chile	2287	Turkey	4674
Israel	2140	Burundi	4084
Guatemala	2023	Afghanistan	3764
Nicaragua	1986	United States	3339
South Africa	1921	Rwanda	3200
Lebanon	1913	Lebanon	3093

Algeria	1650	Russia	3057
Italy	1487	Angola	2861
United States	1362	Northern Ireland	2842

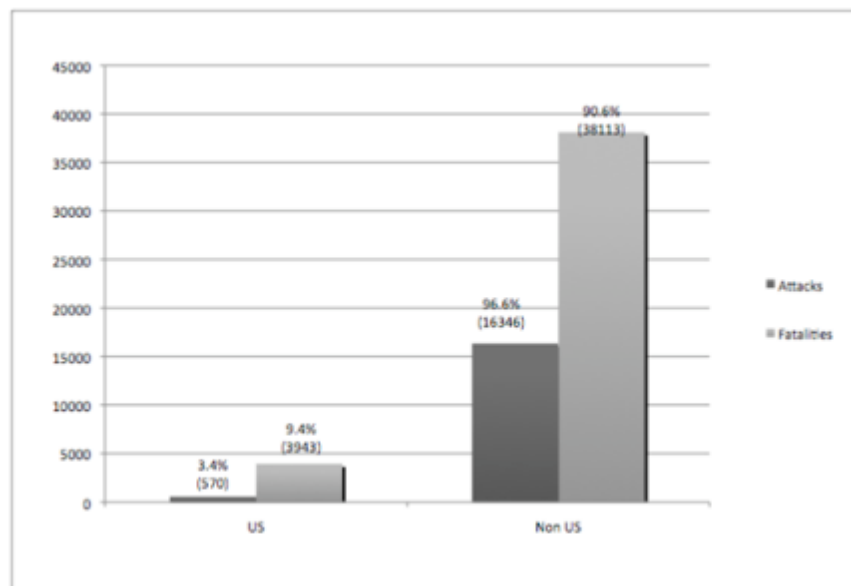
Source: Global Terrorism Database

Table 2 shows that at number 15, the United States ranks higher in terms of total fatalities than attacks. However, 90 per cent (N=3,007) of total US terrorism fatalities from 1970 to 2007 are accounted for by a single event – the four coordinated attacks on September 11, 2001. If these attacks are removed from the estimates, US fatalities during the period spanned by the data would be similar to fatalities for Canada or Greece.

In a recent study, my colleagues and I examined the attack patterns of 53 foreign terrorist organizations that were identified by the US Department of State and subsequently the National Counterterrorism Center as especially dangerous for the United States.[14] In Figure 2, I show the proportion of attacks by these 53 groups against the US homeland and US targets in other countries compared to attacks on targets not connected to America. The results are striking. According to Figure 2, between 1970 and 2004 nearly 97 per cent of the more than 16,000 terrorist attacks from these groups were directed at non-US targets. Moreover, of the 3.4 per cent of all attacks directed at the United States, only five attacks (0.9%) were on the US homeland. These include one attack by Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) on August 18, 1983, against the Washington, D.C. Navy Yard (Navy Regional Data Automation Center) with small explosives as well as the four attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001.[15]

Major targets for anti-US attacks in other countries from these 53 groups included US businesses (233), US diplomats and embassies (106), and the US military (96).[16] The rest of the attacks are widely scattered in terms of target selection and include US educational institutions, journalists, non-governmental organizations, and tourists. The US suffered proportionally more fatalities from attacks at the hands of these 53 groups than their non-US targets, with US-directed attacks accounting for over nine per cent of total fatalities. But again, a very large proportion of these fatalities (76.3%) are accounted for by the 9/11 attacks.

Figure 2: US and Non-US Attacks by 53 Foreign Terrorist Groups Identified as Threats to the United States



Source: LaFree, Yang and Crenshaw (2009)

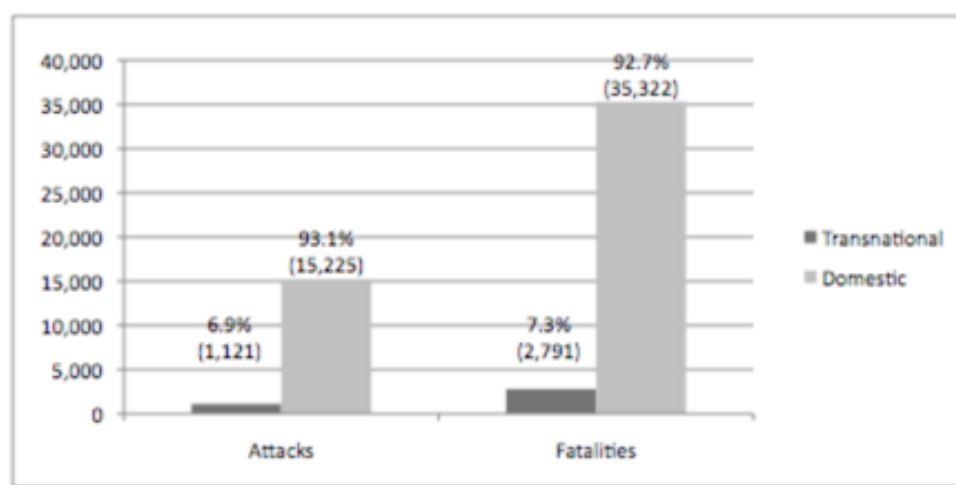
The fact that total attacks and fatalities by this set of designated anti-US organizations is so lopsidedly against non-US targets is consistent with the proposition that the decision of anti-US terrorist groups to attack the US is often strategic. Attacks on the US may be useful for pragmatic as well as ideological reasons as terror strikes on Americans are highly visible and both acts of terrorism and the American response may well arouse popular emotions in an audience of importance to the terrorist organization. Also, as Martha Crenshaw suggests, the United States may become a preferred target if domestic challengers cannot succeed at home unless the scope of the conflict is expanded beyond local boundaries.[17] Beyond these considerations, attacks on US targets can be useful for directly influencing American policies such as compelling the US to withdraw from a military commitment that supports a local government. The bombing of the Marine Barracks in Lebanon in 1983 is a prominent example. Terrorism directed at the US may also be a mechanism for drawing the US into a local conflict, perhaps to pressure the government to make reforms or to undermine its legitimacy.

Regardless of the strategic intent behind attacks on the United States, or the virulence of anti-American ideology, our results show that the vast majority of terrorist attacks by foreign groups deemed dangerous to national security by the American government are in fact directed at non-US targets. Local governments suffer the most. US decision makers might be well-advised to avoid parochialism and keep in mind the fact that even the most seriously threatening groups direct most of their activities elsewhere.

The Sources of Terrorism

As noted above, because none of the Open Source terrorist event databases before the GTD included domestic terrorist attacks over a long time period, we have lacked baseline information about how common domestic attacks were compared to transnational attacks. In the recent study by LaFree, Yang and Crenshaw,[18]we were able to use the GTD to examine the domestic and transnational attack patterns of the 53 foreign organizations that were identified by the US government as especially dangerous for America. Figure 3 shows that between 1970 and 2004, more than 93 per cent of the non-US attacks of these groups were domestic attacks. That is, more than nine times out of 10, these groups operated at home against local targets.

Figure 3: Total Domestic and Transnational Attacks by 53 Foreign Terrorist Groups Identified as Threats to the United States



Source: LaFree, Yang and Crenshaw (2009)

Because these 53 foreign groups have been identified by the US government as especially dangerous to America, we might assume that compared to a random sample, they would be especially likely to carry out transnational attacks. The fact is that they do not have at least two important policy implications. First, it underscores the importance of proximity to terrorist targeting. Even though these groups have ample interest in striking the United States, actually doing so is not an easy task. Anti-American objectives are not sufficient. Mounting an attack against the United States from primary bases outside America is extremely challenging. Clarke and Newman conclude that “Terrorists are constrained by geography. Like criminals, they will choose targets that are close to their operational base.” [19]

And second, the ratio of transnational to domestic attacks likely reflects challenges faced by attackers due to cultural and linguistic barriers. Foreign attackers typically encounter an environment in which they have an imperfect understanding of local language, culture, and daily life. This impediment may explain why recent research by Smith and Damphousse [20] shows that international terrorist attacks against the United States have a much longer planning time horizon than attacks by domestic groups. To overcome cultural and linguistic obstacles, foreign attackers will probably be more likely than domestic attackers to rely on immigrant communities or diasporas within the target country. Similar reasoning leads Clarke and Newman to conclude that “externally based terrorists will mount their attacks from locations that are as close as possible to the target.” [21] Put in another way, foreign terrorist groups need locals. Thus a recent report by the US State Department [22] stresses the importance to al Qaeda of local recruits, especially in the West. More generally, the results underscore both the atypicality and the lethal ingenuity of the 9/11 attacks. Al Qaeda was able to engineer 9/11 attacks without using locals, but instead relied on specially trained and highly qualified foreign operatives. Thus far the ability to commandeer such assets has been exceedingly rare.

Because of the seeming irrationality of high profile Al Qaeda attacks in recent years, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that a large number of terrorist attacks involve political disputes over territory. In Table 3, we list the 20 most active terrorist groups in terms of attack frequencies and fatalities.[23] Notice how many of these groups are organized around disputes having to do with political control over territory. Although there are major differences in terms of their orientation, this explain in large part virtually all of the top 20 groups, including Shining Path, ETA, the IRA, FARC, Hamas, and the LTTE.

Table 3. Twenty Most Active Terrorist Organizations in terms of Attack Frequency and Fatalities, 1970 to 2006.

Rank	Most Frequent Perpetrators		Most Fatalities	
	Organization	Frequency	Organization	Fatality Count
1	Shining Path (SL)	2817	Shining Path (SL)	6057
2	Basque Fatherland and Freedom (ETA)	1378	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)	4038
3	Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN)	1249	Al Qaeda	3460

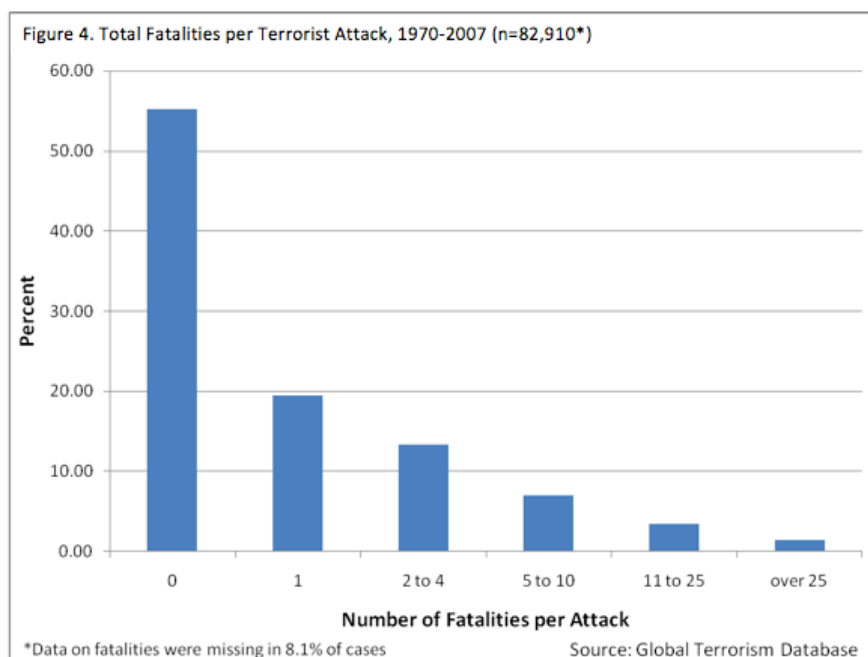
4	Irish Republican Army (IRA)	1165	Hutus	3222
5	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)	1066	Mozambique National Resistance Movement (MNR)	2247
6	National Liberation Army of Colombia (ELN)	784	Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN)	1856
7	Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)	608	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)	1791
8	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)	569	Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn	1646
9	Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (FPMR)	568	Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN)	1342
10	Kurdish Workers Party (PKK)	535	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)	1151
11	New People's Army (NPA)	472	New People's Army (NPA)	1084
12	Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC)	455	Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	1071
13	Taliban	438	Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)	1060
14	Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA)	412	Hizballah	899
15	Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M)	403	Taliban	876
16	M-19 (Movement of April 19)	321	Tutsi	858

17	Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN)	287	Armed Islamic Group (GIA)	807
18	People's Liberation Front (JVP)	274	Irish Republican Army (IRA)	728
19	Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) (Chile)	257	National Liberation Army of Colombia (ELN)	646
20	al-Fatah	243	Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)	630

The Lethality of Terrorism and the Resilience of Terrorist Groups

Again, because highly lethal terrorist strikes are the ones that grab the headlines, it is easy to suppose that most terrorist attacks are incredibly lethal. In Figure 4, we examine total fatalities attributed to the 82,910 attacks in the GTD.

Figure 4: Total Fatalities per Terrorist Attack, 1970-2007 (n=82,910*)



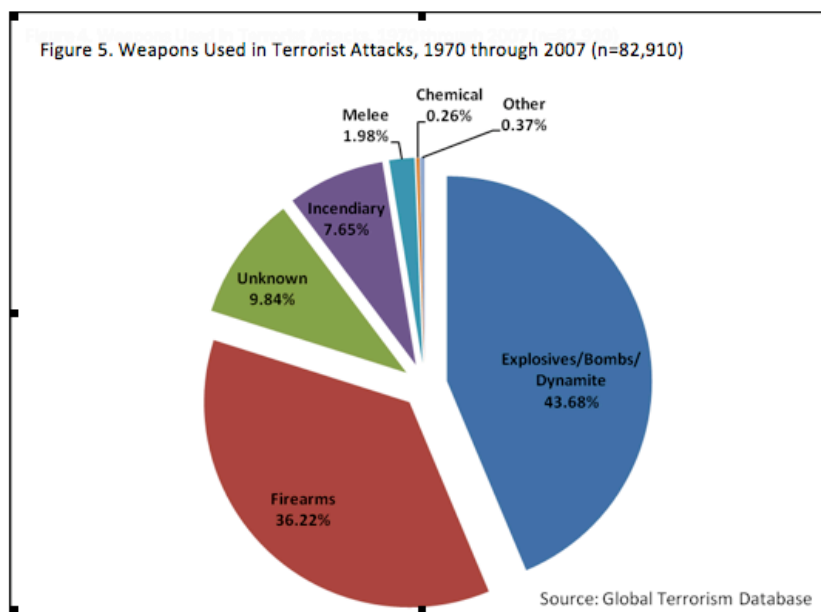
According to Figure 4, more than half of all terrorist attacks since 1970 involved no fatalities. Many incidents are directed at property. Others attacks are aimed at civilians, but they fail. And in many other cases terrorist groups provide a warning to civilians before striking. This has been

a common practice for ETA and the IRA and used to be a common practice for the Weather Underground. Thirty years ago these considerations led terrorism researcher Brian Jenkins to suggest that "terrorists want a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead." [24]

Of course, it is still the case that 45 per cent of the attacks in the GTD (or more than 34,000 attacks) involved at least one fatality. Incidents that are especially worrisome are the 1.5 per cent (or 1,138) that produced more than 25 fatalities. And in fact, Jenkins (2007) has recently revisited his earlier statement and after reviewing the stated plans of terrorist groups operating in the early twenty-first century, he concluded that indeed "many of today's terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people dead." But nevertheless, the majority of terrorist attacks since 1970 produced no fatalities.

Terrorism-related plots covered in the electronic and print media are often portrayed as incredibly complex operations relying on split second timing and intricate weaponry. These images no doubt encourage us to think that most terrorist strikes depend on sophisticated weaponry. In Figure 5 we show the weapons used in terrorism attacks from the GTD from 1970 to 2007.

Figure 5: Weapons Used in Terrorist Attacks, 1970 through 2007 (n=82,910)

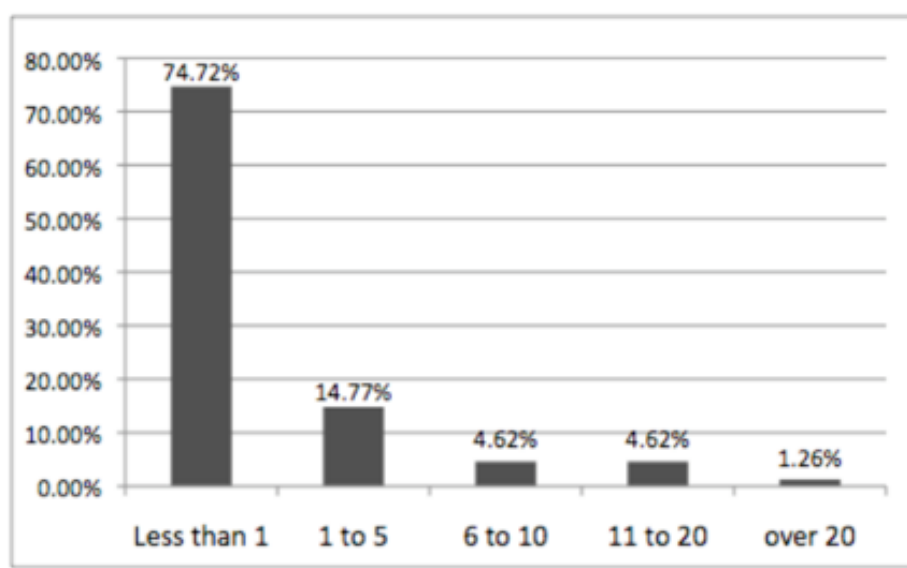


Contrary to the view of terrorism that we commonly get from the media, the vast majority of terrorist attacks rely on readily accessible weapons. According to Figure 4, the most common weapons in the GTD database were explosives and firearms. These two categories account for nearly 80 per cent of all attacks. For the most part, the explosives used were readily available, especially dynamite, grenades, mortars and improvised devices placed inside vehicles ("car bombs"). Similarly, the most common firearms were also widely available, especially automatic

weapons, shot guns, and pistols. After explosives and firearms, incendiaries (fire or firebombs) account for nearly eight per cent of the incidents. Melee attacks, which include assaults with weapons such as blunt objects, knives, and ropes, account for fewer than two per cent of all attacks. Weapons included in the “other” category were diverse, including items such as sabotage equipment, vehicles (not vehicle-borne explosives), biological, radiological, and fake weapons. Among the more sophisticated weapon types were 523 attacks using remote-detonated devices, 213 attacks using chemical agents, 26 attacks involving biological agents, and 15 attacks involving radiological materials. Note that chemical agents were responsible for about one-quarter of one per cent of all incidents and biological and radiological agents were each present in less than three-one hundredths of one per cent of all attacks. The remote-detonated explosive devices were usually left on the roadside or attached to vehicles. Chemical agents range from letters containing rat poison to tainted water supplies. Ten of the 26 biological weapons cases were the US anthrax attacks of 2001 in which seven people died. Likewise, 10 of the 15 cases involving radiological materials were related to attacks in which an individual sent envelopes containing monazite to Japanese government officials, causing no injuries.

Terrorism is the tool of the politically weak. It is used precisely because the groups involved do not have a lot of sophisticated weaponry. If they did, they would probably use it in more conventional military ways. Typical terrorist attacks use readily available weapons. In contrast to high profile media reports, sophisticated weapons, including chemical, biological or radiological materials, are the rare exception.

Given the persistence of high profile, long lasting groups like Al Qaeda, the Tamil Tigers or the IRA, there is also a common perception that most terrorist groups have long life spans. The GTD identifies more than 1,500 separate terrorist groups. We gauged their longevity by the amount of time from their first strike to their last. In Figure 6, I show the average length of time during which these organizations have mounted attacks, based on a recently completed analysis of an earlier version of the GTD.[25]

Figure 6: Years of Operation for Terrorist Groups, 1970-1997

Source: Global Terrorism Database

According to Figure 6, nearly 75 per cent of the terrorist organizations identified in the GTD from 1970 to 1997 lasted for less than a year. These results suggest that most terrorist groups are like most business start ups, very likely to disappear during their first year of operation. Forming and maintaining groups is not easy, despite impressions to the contrary from the media. Why do we have the impression that terrorist groups are long-lasting and difficult to eradicate? Probably because we hear so much about the few groups that are successful. But for Al Qaeda and ETA, there are many more short-lived, relatively unknown groups such as the Anti-Capitalist Brigades and the Revolutionary Flames.

Counterterrorism

Just as some researchers and policy makers are overly optimistic about the abilities of governments to use deterrence measures to stop terrorist groups, other researchers and policy makers are overly pessimistic about the chances that terrorist organizations will make mistakes and miscalculations that can be exploited. Although research on the desistance of terrorist groups has been neglected for a long time, the topic has been receiving increased research attention in recent years.[26]

Dugan, Huang, LaFree and McCauley [27] recently used the GTD to examine the targeting strategies of two terrorist groups – the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) and the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG) –that were based in Turkey and were especially active during the 1970s and 1980s. At the end of the World War I, the Armenian Diaspora included roughly 1.4 million people in 34 countries. Armenians worldwide

had been traumatized by the brutal attacks that killed approximately one million Armenians in Turkey in 1915. Fifty years after these mass attacks, many Armenians felt considerable impatience with their traditional leadership groups who had been unable to advance recognition of the attacks, let alone advance national liberation for Armenians remaining in Turkey and the USSR. This discontent laid the foundation for ASALA and JCAG.

In Figure 7, I show total terrorist attacks committed by ASALA and JCAG from 1975 to 1988 according to data from the GTD. As evidenced in Figure 7, there was a dramatic increase in attacks by both groups, peaking in 1980 for JCAG and 1981 for ASALA. Following these peaks, attack levels fell off dramatically, especially for ASALA. While ASALA staged 46 attacks in 1981, by 1984 the annual total had dropped to only five attacks and four years later, ASALA had stopped attacking altogether. While JCAG never had as many attacks as ASALA, the number of attacks launched by JCAG also fell dramatically after 1982. Our goal in this research project was to figure out what explained the sudden desistance in violent attacks of ASALA and JCAG after the early 1980s.

Figure 7: Attacks by ASALA and JCAG, 1975 to 1988



Source: Dugan, Huang, LaFree and McCauley (2009)

After modeling many possible explanations for this sudden desistance, our conclusion was that the most convincing explanation was a strategic shift by ASALA in its targeting strategy. Before the early 1980s, ASALA was careful to target Turks and avoided non-Turkish and especially Armenian casualties. But starting in the early 1980s, they became far less discriminate in their

targeting methods. The pivotal historical event in our analysis was an especially brutal attack on Orly Airport of Paris, in 1983. An explosive device detonated prematurely in the terminal area near the Turkish Airlines counter, killing eight people (four French, two Turkish, one American, one Swedish) and wounding over 50 more. The expansion of increasingly inept attacks such as the one at Orly created a polarized and hostile climate within ASALA and in Armenian perceptions of ASALA. We concluded that this change in targeting strategy seriously undermined the legitimacy of ASALA among its supporters in the Armenian diaspora and in the West. Interestingly, although JCAG was not involved in the Orly bombing and in general had a much more disciplined approach to the use of terrorist violence, JCAG attacks also declined rapidly following Orly. These results suggest that when a terrorist organization that depends heavily on a diaspora over-reaches in terrorist targeting, this may offer a strong opening for discrediting terrorism as a tactic, even discrediting terrorist groups that have not over-reached.

The belief that the credible threat of severe punishment deters crime and other objectionable behavior is as old as criminal law itself and has broad appeal to both policy makers and the public. Deterrence models generally assume that human beings are rational, self-interested actors who seek to minimize personal cost while maximizing personal gain.[28] An important implication of such perspectives is that individual behavior can be altered by the threat and imposition of severe punishment. Deterrence models would seem to be especially appropriate for understanding terrorist violence, given that many terrorist attacks are carefully planned and appear to include at least some consideration for risks and rewards. Indeed deterrence-based thinking has dominated counter terrorist policies in most countries since the origins of modern terrorism in the late 1960s [29] and there is substantial research support for the argument that deterrence-based policies can reduce terrorism.[30]

However, research on terrorism [31] and more generally, research from criminology [32] and psychology [33] suggests that the threat and/or imposition of punishment does not always deter future acts of violence and may in some cases, actually increase violence. Thus, it is useful to contrast *deterrence effects* (i.e., the extent to which government threats or imposition of punishment reduces the future incidence of prohibited behavior) from *backlash effects* (i.e., the extent to which government threats or imposition of punishment increases the future incidence of prohibited behavior).

My colleagues and I [34] recently used GTD data to contrast deterrence and backlash perspectives based on the efforts of the British to stop terrorist violence in Northern Ireland committed by the IRA and their allies. Based on a region about the size of Connecticut, with a population of about 650,000, the Republicans launched nearly continuous strikes from the 1960s through the early 1990s that made Northern Ireland the most politically violent region in the European Community (later the European Union) during this period. We identified six high profile counter-terrorist interventions used by the British from 1969 to 1992 to reduce republican violence in Northern Ireland and then we used statistical tests to determine whether the future

risk of attacks during this period increased, decreased or remained the same after each of the major interventions.

Figure 8: Violent Attacks in Northern Ireland, 1969-1992

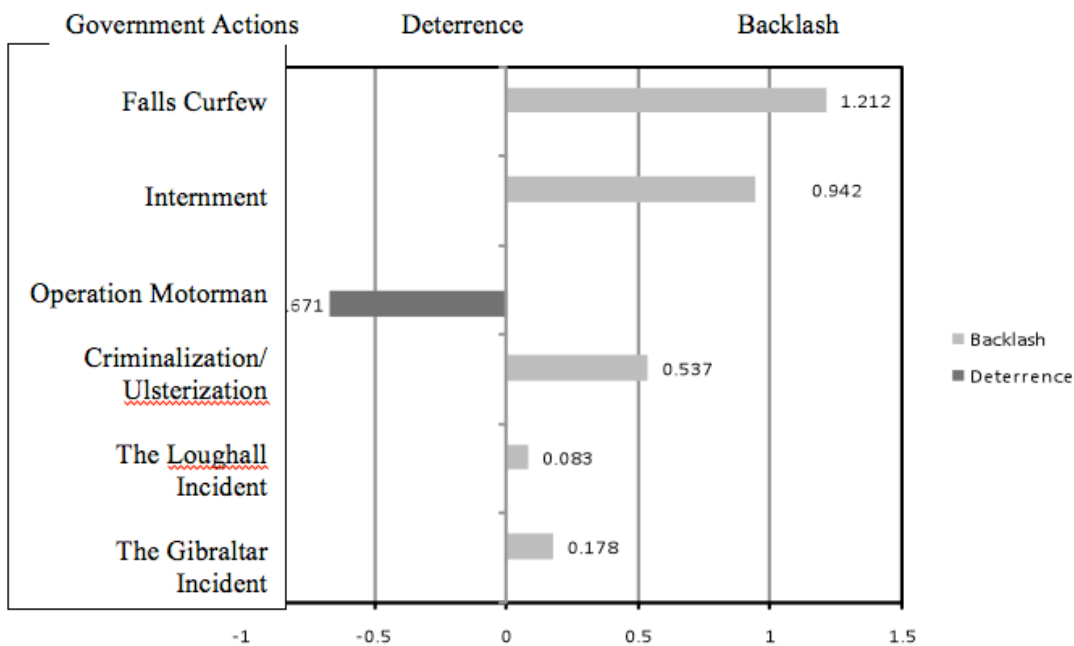


Figure 8 shows that the results of these British interventions were more consistent with backlash than deterrence explanations. Three of the six British interventions produced significantly higher risks of future terrorist strikes by Republicans and two interventions had no significant effects. The five interventions that were either followed by no change in terrorist strikes or significantly more terrorist strikes included two targeted assassinations of terrorist leaders (Loughall and Gibraltar incidents), attempts to treat terrorists more like common criminals than politically-motivated activists (criminalization), a military curfew (Falls), and a partial suspension of due process rights for those suspected of terrorism (internment). The only clear cut-support for the deterrence thesis among these six interventions was the use of a major military surge called Operation Motorman which significantly reduced the risk of new attacks.

I should hasten to add that this is the result found is a single case study. We do not know whether government counter-terrorist strategies have had similar effects in other regions of the world, on different groups or individuals, or indeed, even in this region of the world during different time

periods. Nevertheless, our results strongly suggest that in terms of the operation of the IRA in Northern Ireland at least, many deterrence-based measures adopted by the British either had no effect on future terrorist strikes or actually increased their likelihood. We need a great deal more careful analyses of the deterrent and backlash effects of various counter-terrorist strategies in different countries and contexts.

The Future of Terrorism Event Data

In recent years, there have been major new efforts to broaden open source terrorism event databases by systematically collecting domestic as well as transnational event data. Most notably, the US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) has recently begun releasing its terrorism event data known as the Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (WITS, see John Wigle article in this issue). The NCTC was established in August 2004 by Presidential order as the primary organization in the United States government for collecting, integrating and analyzing data on terrorism and counter-terrorism. In December 2004, Congress codified the NCTC in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act and placed the NCTC in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. The WITS data now provide an important new unclassified, publicly available data source on terrorism. [35] NCTC began reporting event-based data on terrorism in 2004 and substantially improved the comprehensiveness of their data collection efforts.

Now that we have access to increasingly comprehensive terrorism event databases like GTD and WITS, it is possible to think constructively about ways to further improve their quality and to expand the types of analysis being conducted with the data. I recommend three avenues for additional research – (i) validation studies, (ii) expanding databases beyond completed terrorist attacks, and (iii) geospatial analysis. First, as event databases improve, new avenues for validating them become feasible. An important method for assessing the quality of event databases on terrorism will be to do systematic comparisons between different sources of event data and between terrorism data drawn from other sources. Thus far there have been very few comparative studies of this type owing to many of the methodological problems encountered in defining and measuring terrorism such as no universally accepted definition of terrorism, the absence of international data from official sources, and difficulties in conducting victimization or self-report surveys. Still, much more can be done. In some situations, it is possible to compare event data to police or court data, including corrections statistics on terrorism from individual countries. It is also possible to examine media sources used in the GTD and WITS to look for differential patterns of bias and incorrect or incomplete reporting.

Second, an important limitation of event databases is that they often exist in a vacuum, only providing information on actual attacks without any context for failed plots or for situations when a group decided to use an approach other than terrorism to pursue their goals. The utility of databases like GTD and WITS could be greatly increased by combining them with databases that provide a more complex range of independent and dependent variables. For example, START is

embarking on research that allows analysts to compare terrorist attacks to non-terrorist actions taken by extremist groups. [36] This could include a wide variety of activities ranging from legitimate political participation to social service functions to crime and piracy. This approach can also be applied to analyses designed to provide insights on terrorist target selection. In this realm, START is conducting a project to examine why terrorists employ IEDs against specific targets while not launching such weapons at other similar targets. [37] By expanding and applying event databases in this way, we can begin to address the question of when and why individuals and groups choose terrorist methods instead of other methods. When examined in a longitudinal framework, such analysis strategies may also give us insight into behavior that precedes terrorist attacks, such as crimes committed before terrorist attacks occur.

And finally, perhaps the two most salient characteristics of comprehensive event databases like GTD and WITS lie in their longitudinal and spatial dimensions. Thus far, the longitudinal characteristics of these databases have been exploited much more frequently than their spatial characteristics. Descriptive point maps can be useful for identifying locations of attacks and groups claiming responsibility. But more sophisticated analysis can be done using exploratory spatial data analysis techniques. For example, such methods are useful for distinguishing between random and non-random spatial patterns of events such as how a specific type of terrorism like suicide bombings spreads across regions. Even better would be more analyses that extends static cross-sectional views of the spatial distribution of events to consider dynamic features of changes over time in spatial dependencies.

One of the most important innovations in Open Source databases in the past four decades is the increasing availability of event data to the research community. As psychologist Donald Campbell has pointed out, there is nothing that moves knowledge ahead faster than a “disputatious community of truth seekers.” [38] Making data publicly available provides an important mechanism for critical feedback. Openness adds oxygen to the flame of scientific inquiry.

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Endnotes

- [1] Interested readers can access the GTD directly at <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>.
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- [3] Gary LaFree, Sue-Ming Yang and Martha Crenshaw. (2009). "Trajectories of Terrorism: Attack Patterns of Foreign Groups that have Targeted the United States, 1970 to 2004," *Criminology and Public Policy* 8:445-473.
- [4] Systematic recording of sources evolved over time for the PGIS data collectors. Thus, in 1970 the original PGIS data included a source in only 32 per cent of the recorded terrorist incidents. By 1978, PGIS data collectors recorded specific sources for the events recorded in 95 per cent of the cases. By the early 1980s, nearly all incidents had at least one source recorded.
- [5] However, we were able to reconstruct total numbers of events by country from original PGIS reports. In 2006, we undertook an exhaustive search for the missing 1993 cases in an effort to restore them, but were never able to come close to reproducing the number of cases in the original PGIS data. While we do not know all the reasons for this outcome, one likely possibility is that many open sources, particularly those originating from regional and local newspapers, are likely to no longer be available over time.
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- [11] However, verifying these results is challenging given that many of the original media sources no longer exist and because the PGIS was the only Open Source database during this period to collect data on domestic attacks. One reason to expect that compared to more recent attacks, PGIS may have been more likely to miss early attacks is that the number of sources they relied on increased over time.
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- [15] The 1993 World Trade Center bombing was not included in the analysis because the perpetrators of this attack were not affiliated with any of the 53 terrorist groups identified by this study at the time when the attack occurred.
- [16] The GTD excludes attacks related to open combat between opposing armed forces, both regular and irregular. However, the GTD includes attacks against the military if the military is there as an internationally recognized peacekeeping force, if the attack is against military forces on leave away from their area of operation (as in the attack on the *USS Cole*), or if the attacks are against military personnel who are in their place of residence (LaFree and Dugan, 2007).
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Trends in Terrorist Activity and Dynamics in Diyala province, Iraq, during the Iraqi Governmental Transition, 2004-2006

by Aaron L. Greenwald

Abstract

This descriptive study explores the evolution of the Iraqi insurgency in the dynamic strategic environment between 2004 and 2006. In these three years, insurgents in Iraq sought to exploit terrorism as a tactic to induce fear and advance their regional and political agenda in the volatile Iraqi province of Diyala. Their geopolitical agenda was primarily aimed towards derailing the interim political process and reconciliation efforts throughout Iraq. This article draws its analytical conclusions from quantitative data of terroristic incidents, focusing on insurgents' tactics, targeting of victims, and areas of activity. It examines trends of insurgent activity between 2004 and 2006 as well as the evolution of their strategy against the Iraqi Government and its people.

Introduction

A fierce insurgency existed in Iraq between 2004 and 2006. Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, once cited conditions in Iraq to be “much worse than a civil war.”[1]. The central pillar of this research rests on the notion that the Iraqi insurgency was adaptive and highly evolutionary in the dynamic strategic environment between 2004 and 2006. Shifting dynamics inside the insurgency successfully degraded the institutions of Iraqi governance, and widened the rift among Sunnis and Shiites to the point where a civil war erupted. As this was occurring, the insurgency itself fractured and serious problems emerged regarding its legitimacy, contributing to its eventual breakdown. This central thesis is supported by five key findings:

1. Minority Sunnis rejected the legitimacy of the Iraqi political institution and formed a resilient insurgency – fused with terrorist organizations – in an attempt to degrade the Iraqi government, expel American forces, and install a Sunni government. As the Iraqi political institution strengthened, insurgents shifted their dynamics and began employing terrorism as a tactic by attacking civilians in order to achieve their objectives.
 2. Insurgents employing terrorism as a tactic, while initially fixated on suicide bombing campaigns, became less concerned with advancing religious extremism through martyrdom and more interested in pursuing their own political and regional agendas.
 3. Terrorists who once targeted political and religious figures shifted their dynamics and became more determined to target civilians with opposing political views, religious
-

views, or both.

4. The link between military intervention and spatial displacement in urban hot spots was evident in that intense military operations drew the enemy out of terrorist strongholds and combatants dispersed into outlying cities throughout Diyala province. As insurgents relocated, the Iraqi government strengthened, which forced the insurgents to shift their strategy in order to create the perception that the new Iraqi government was incapable of protecting its populace.
5. In early 2006, Sunni insurgents – in an attempt to inflame tensions and rekindle the civil war – attacked the al-Askari “Golden Dome” Mosque. This incident proved that the insurgency was suffering from its shift in dynamics and desperately sought to renew infighting throughout Iraq.

The implications of this study indicate that the Iraqi insurgency was mainly composed of insurgents who utilized terror to achieve their political objectives. As the insurgency weakened, they sought new ways to revitalize their movement by introducing campaigns of terror throughout Iraq. This is important to understand and has future implications for other security situations throughout the region.

In the following sections, I will detail the study’s research methodology, identify how coalition-insurgent engagements were directly correlated to population shifts and spatial displacement in Diyala province, Iraq, and describe the security situation in Diyala with special attention paid to national and regional demographics. I will also define and describe trends in tactics, victimizations, and localized violence, and delineate the importance of Iraq’s key political developments between 2004 and 2006 as they related to the insurgency over this time. Additionally, I will highlight the tactical inspiration that those key political events posed for the insurgency.

Methodology

U.S. Military Joint Doctrine defines an insurgency as “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict.”[2] General David Patraeus, former Commanding General of Multi-National Forces – Iraq, has explained an insurgency to be “...an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control.”[3]

There are many definitions of terrorism. An Academic Consensus Definition from 1988 defines terrorism as:

...an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individuals, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby - in contrast to assassination - the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought.[4]

Both insurgents and terrorists exist in Iraq but their motivation to commit violent acts against the Iraqi population differs with respect to their prescribed agenda. Often, insurgents and terrorists exist as two distinct bodies; however, insurgents in Iraq employed terrorism as a tactic in the dynamic strategic environment to induce fear among the population in order to advance their regional and political agenda. Because of the importance associated with this dynamic, the aim of this research was to study the evolution of insurgents in the volatile Diyala province who were focused on derailing the political process and reconciliation efforts throughout Iraq.

The study analyzed quantitative data on terrorist activity in Diyala province, Iraq between 1 January 2004 and 31 December 2006. The data recorded 82 total incidents in 2004, 303 total incidents in 2005, and 1,216 total incidents in 2006. The absolute total number of incidents was recorded at 1,601. The quantitative data excluded all incidents that involved direct attacks against coalition forces. Moreover, the data itself did not necessarily distinguish between incidents perpetrated by Sunni insurgents, Shiite militias, Ba'athists, Islamists, or any other types of extremists. This was a significant obstruction in the data reporting that the study recognized and sought to overcome through qualitative analysis.

The empirical claims contained in this study were limited to those incidents involving solely the population of Iraq. Because of this, the study's principal objective was to analyze the activity and dynamics of those who were focused on derailing the political process and reconciliation efforts throughout Diyala province. The intent of the study was not to assess insurgent-coalition engagements, but rather analyze the motivation and evolution of insurgents employing terrorism as a tool directed against the Iraqi governmental institution and the Iraqi people. Because insurgents employed terrorism as a tactic, this particular research sought to assess Sunni insurgents' interaction with Sunni terrorist organizations like al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).

Spatial displacement is defined as the forced change in position and movement of an individual or individuals in reference to a previous position as the product of local or regional violence. In Diyala province, Iraq, spatial displacement and enemy migration patterns were linked with

individual insurgent behavior. Between 2004 and 2006, the U.S. military presence in high-violence cities like Baghdad resulted in spatial displacement and enemy migrations into Ba'qubah, the capital of Diyala province. "Diyala, with its volatile mix of Sunni and Shiite Arabs and ethnic Kurds, has long been a hotbed of violence. U.S. officers say Al Qaeda-linked militants have streamed into the province in recent months, displaced by the troop buildup in Baghdad and mounting pressure in al Anbar province in the west, where Sunni tribesmen have allied with U.S. and government forces." [5]

Similarly, a U.S. military presence in Ba'qubah has resulted in enemy migrations toward Al Miqdadiyah and other previously unsecured cities nearby. Between 2004 and 2006, there was a direct correlation between military intervention and spatial displacement in urban hot spots throughout Diyala province. Large-scale military operations contributed to a reduction in violent terrorist activity within each city, mainly because insurgents, as well as significant numbers of non-combatants who were internally displaced, [6] abandoned their positions and dispersed into outlying towns and villages to regroup. According to the Iraqi Red Crescent Organization, "The governorate witnessed many conflicts between armed people, Iraqi forces and multi-national forces, which had escalated the displacement problem inside and outside the governorate." [7] Displaced insurgents exploited population shifts and relocation patterns to reshape their tactical strategy. By early 2006, insurgents reshaped their strategy and sought to draw legitimacy away from the newly established Iraqi government by targeting civilians in large numbers. This created the perception that the Iraqi governmental institution was unable to protect its populace.

The intervention discussed here, relates to U.S. military enforcement operations in high-violence Iraqi cities such as Ba'qubah, Al Miqdadiyah, and Balad Ruz. These enforcement operations secured each city and shifted violent terrorist activity to other regions. Consistent with early criminological research [8] on crime hot spots and spatial displacement, direct intervention efforts impacted violent terrorist activity and triggered enemy migrations out of cities and into outlying areas. Concentrations in enemy activity were inversely related to military intervention, where the intent was aimed at clearing and holding cities occupied by insurgent- and terrorist-related threats. Simply put, as U.S. military enforcement operations increased in high-violence Iraqi cities, enemy activity decreased, but only because those responsible for conducting attacks simply picked up and moved to an area where there was less military activity.

Diyala province, Iraq

Between 2004 and 2006 Diyala province in Iraq experienced high-intensity violence, regional destabilization, and the vulnerability for future terrorist activity. Despite this, provinces throughout Iraq provided different advantages. Although Baghdad province provides important outlooks on political and government stability, Al Anbar province, which includes Fallujah and Ramadi, has been cited as one of the deadliest regions [9] [10] in the country between 2004 and 2006. Almost all deaths in Al Anbar, however, resulted not from terrorist activity per se, but

from insurgent-coalition engagements in and around Fallujah and Ramadi, and were therefore not included in this assessment.

The Republic of Iraq has traditionally been comprised of Arabs and Kurds with an overwhelming majority of devout Muslims. In 2005, the total population of Iraq was approximately 26,074,906.[11] There were two dominant ethnic groups in Iraq: Arabs (75% to 80%) and Kurds (15% to 20%). The remaining 5% was split between Turkmen, Assyrians, or other ethnicities. The majority of the population was Muslim (97%) with an uneven divide among Shi'a and Sunni at 60% to 65% and 32% to 37%, respectively. The remaining 3% was comprised of Christians or other religions. In 2006, the total population in Diyala province was 1,418,455.[12] According to the United Nations, the main ethnic groups in Diyala province are Arabs, Kurds, and Turkmen. Similarly, the major religious groups are Muslims (Sunni and Shiite), Christians, Yezidis and *Ahl Al-Haqq* ('People of Truth').[13] As indicated by the United Nations, "The situation in the Governorate in terms of its population is considered highly complex and sensitive...The Governorate has a history of ethnic mixing but also has seen periods of tension between various sectarian groups." [14] Although Diyala province is highly diverse, the Governorate is mainly dominated by Sunni Arabs. David Bellavia, author of "Diyala Surge," noted that the province was approximately 85%[15] Sunni. Despite these figures, the insurgency remained highly diverse between 2004 and 2006, as indicated by inconsistent threat levels throughout the province. According to the United Nations:

The security situation in the Governorate varied between different districts, with some districts specifically targeted by insurgents, and others remaining relatively calm. This is thought to be linked to the influence of different religious and ethnic groups in different areas of Diyala. Ba'aqubah, Al-Miqdadiyah and Imam Weiss, and to a lesser degree Khan Bani Sa'ad and Al-Khalis, were regarded as highly tense areas. Balad Ruz and Khanaqin have also seen major terrorist attacks, while Madeli, Jalaqlah, Kifri, Kan'an, Al-Wajhiya and Wali Abbas experience less insurgent activity.[16]

Diyala was attractive to insurgents because the region was mainly populated with predisposed, motivated Sunni Arabs in a quest to transform their Shiite-led Government into one of Sunni majority. In addition, early spatial displacement patterns indicated that there was a large Sunni insurgent spillover from neighboring provinces like Baghdad into Diyala. Between 2004 and 2006, the migration of Sunni insurgents into the predominately Sunni province provided a true force multiplier for the insurgency. As such, Diyala province served as fertile ground for insurgent activity because of its suitability for training and recruitment.

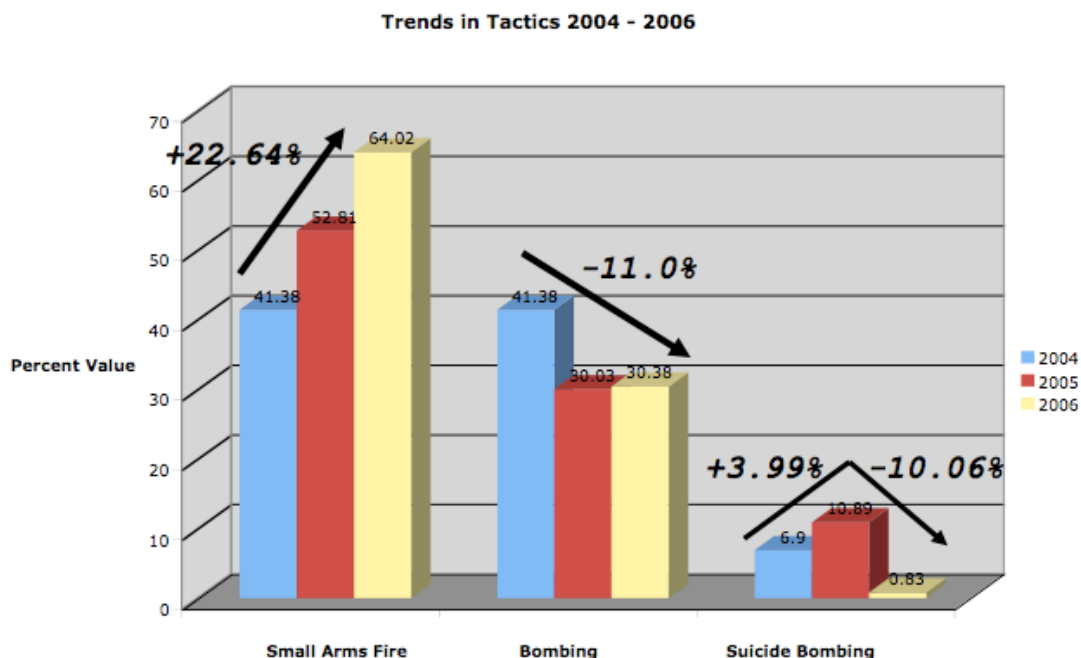
If Diyala were to have remained unsecured, it is likely that al Qaeda would have exploited the province's geographical proximity to Baghdad in order to plan and coordinate attacks aimed at

disrupting the government. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that AQI moved its base of operations from Baghdad province to Diyala province in 2006. According to The Iraq Report, [17] defeating al Qaeda in Diyala was especially important because the province had political as well as military significance for al Qaeda. In addition to the presence of al Qaeda in Diyala, well-coordinated U.S. military operations aimed at securing the Iraqi capital forced a significant portion of the insurgency into the city of Ba'qubah. Likewise, since the insurgency was also largely Sunni, it seemed inevitable that both factions would eventually merge into a larger network attempting to expel American influence and install a Sunni leader in the predominately Shiite nation-state. These two groups were initially allied together through a mutual objective to expel American influence in the region; however, the insurgency began opposing al Qaeda's brutality and began fighting against the terrorist group when the two groups' regional and political agendas began to splinter.

Tactical Trends

Between 2004 and 2006, the most prevalent tactics as utilized by insurgents were small arms fire attacks, bombings, and suicide bombings. In 2004, there were equally proportionate incidents involving small arms fire and bombings at 41.38%, while suicide bombings were recorded at 6.90% of the total incidents. Other tactics included assassinations, kidnapping, and theft. In 2005, small arms fire increased from 41.38% to 52.81%, while bombings decreased from 41.38% to 30.03%. Suicide bombings increased from 6.90% to 10.89%, and remained the third most likely tactic. In 2006, small arms fire increased from 52.81% to 64.02% of the total incidents, while bombings slightly increased from 30.03% to 30.38%. In 2006, suicide bombings significantly diminished by approximately 92.4%, but continued to remain a small threat. While suicide bombings increased from 2004 to 2005, they became almost non-existent by 2006. Insurgents exploiting terrorism as a tactic were initially fixated on suicide bombing campaigns, but became less concerned with religious extremism through martyrdom and more interested in advancing their own geopolitical agendas by conducting armed attacks and traditional bombing campaigns. This is an important point, because it illustrates that serious problems emerged, which likely resulted in the observed rupturing of the foundation underlying the religious extremist movement against the Iraqi population.

Armed attacks and bombings were equal threats in 2004. However, armed attacks dramatically increased in 2005 and again in 2006, while bombings remained at the same level of intensity throughout 2006. It would appear that the increase in sectarian violence was a direct result of conflicts arising from opposing groups whose mission was to advance their own regional agendas. This sectarian violence throughout the region inhibited the reconstruction process as opposing religious and ethnic bodies fought for control over the political institution.



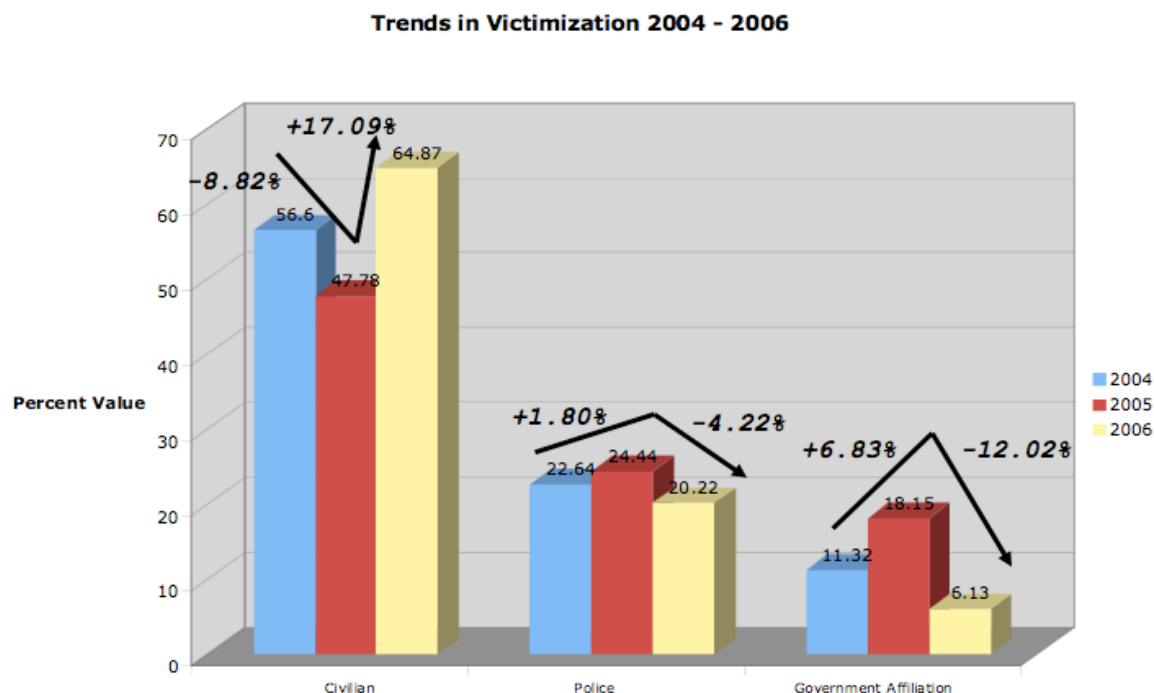
Victimization Trends

In 2004 civilians were the most targeted victims; they formed 56.60% of the total targets, followed by the police at 22.64%, and then other government affiliated individuals at 11.32%. Other victims included politically affiliated individuals, student victims (2004), business victims, and religiously affiliated individuals (2005, 2006). In 2005, civilian targets decreased from 56.6% to 47.78%, but still remained the most victimized target. Police targets slightly increased from 22.64% to 24.44%, while other government affiliated individuals increased from 11.32% to 18.15%.

Beginning in July 2005, insurgent groups began to attack civilians in increasing numbers. In 2006, civilian targets dramatically increased from 47.78% to 64.87%. Police targets decreased from 24.44% to 20.22% and government affiliated targets decreased from 18.15% to 6.13%. It also is important to note that politically and religiously affiliated targets both decreased between 2005 and 2006, and remained at 0.91% and 1.01%, respectively. Terrorists who once targeted political and religious figures shifted their dynamics and became more determined towards targeting civilians with opposing political views, religious views, or both. While business targets increased throughout the entire period, attacks on political leaders and religious clergy declined. Between 2004 and 2006, the number of civilian attacks increased overall, while police and government affiliated targets both decreased.

The targeting of police and governmental figures decreased because of three reasons:

1. Police and governmental figures decreased as targets because the insurgents identified better means to achieve their political goals; this included eliminating civilians who represented opposition to the advancement of the insurgents' political objectives.
2. Since the reconstruction, there has been a significant effort to increase proficiency among the Iraqi police force. While initially vulnerable to attack, the aggressive steps made by the Multi-National Forces hardened these targets and may have also contributed to a decrease in attacks against them.
3. In 2006, insurgents downgraded efforts to target police and governmental figures and shifted their dynamics, as evidenced by the targeting of opposing religious clergy and political groups and their supporters.[18][19] Insurgents employed terrorism as a tool to induce fear and intimidate the population so that they would be able to coerce the constituents of opposing political groups and garner support for their goals in the new democratic Iraq.



Localized Violence Trends

Terrorist dispersion patterns directed from high intensity coalition-terrorist fighting in hot spots throughout Diyala province severely impacted the cities of Ba'qubah, Al Muqdadiyah, and Balad Ruz. Other cities affected by the violence in Diyala included Al Ghalibiyah, Mandali, Al Khalis, and Khanaqin. These high-danger cities served as fertile ground for terrorist activity in Diyala, and formed the Diyala "Triangle of Terror." [20]



In 2004, the city of Ba'qubah constituted a significant threat in Diyala province, accounting for 89.00% of the total level of violence. Al Muqdadiah contained 0.83% of the total violence, while 0.50% of the total incidents in 2004 occurred in Balad Ruz. In 2005, violence in Ba'qubah decreased from 89.00% to 68.25%. Violent terrorist acts in Balad Ruz increased from 0.50% to 7.20% and violence in Al Muqdadiah increased from 0.83% to 2.45%. In 2006, violence in Ba'qubah decreased from 68.25% to 62.24%. Violence slightly decreased from 7.20% to 5.29% in Balad Ruz, but significantly increased in Al Muqdadiah from 2.45% to 20.06%.

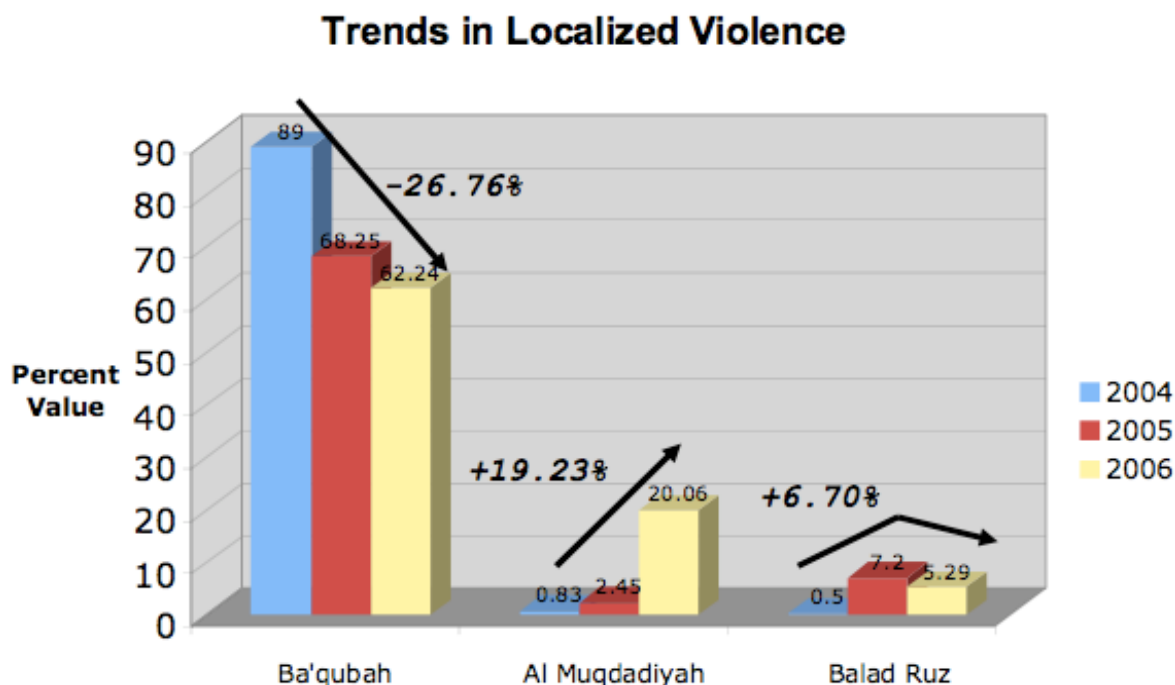
Evidence suggests a causal relationship between military intervention and spatial displacement. Clearly, a U.S. military presence in Baghdad set off widespread population shifts into Diyala province. Insurgents fused into the general population and concealed their movement into Diyala province. The overall population displacement resulted in a displacement of violence, due to the relocation of insurgents.

Beginning in 2004, the U.S. military presence in Baghdad resulted in enemy migrations towards Ba'qubah. "U.S. officers say Al Qaeda-linked militants have streamed into the province in recent months, displaced by the troop buildup in Baghdad and mounting pressure in al Anbar province in the west..."[21] Sources indicate that Ba'qubah is also home to many loyalists of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party.[22] There is also evidence showing that military and intelligence officers who served in his Government have aligned themselves with insurgent groups in the region.[23] In addition, Sunni insurgents have used Ba'qubah to establish a base of operations

from which to launch attacks. Following 2004 enemy migrations into Ba'qubah, military operations drew insurgents out of Ba'qubah and into surrounding cities such as Khanaqin and Balad Ruz.

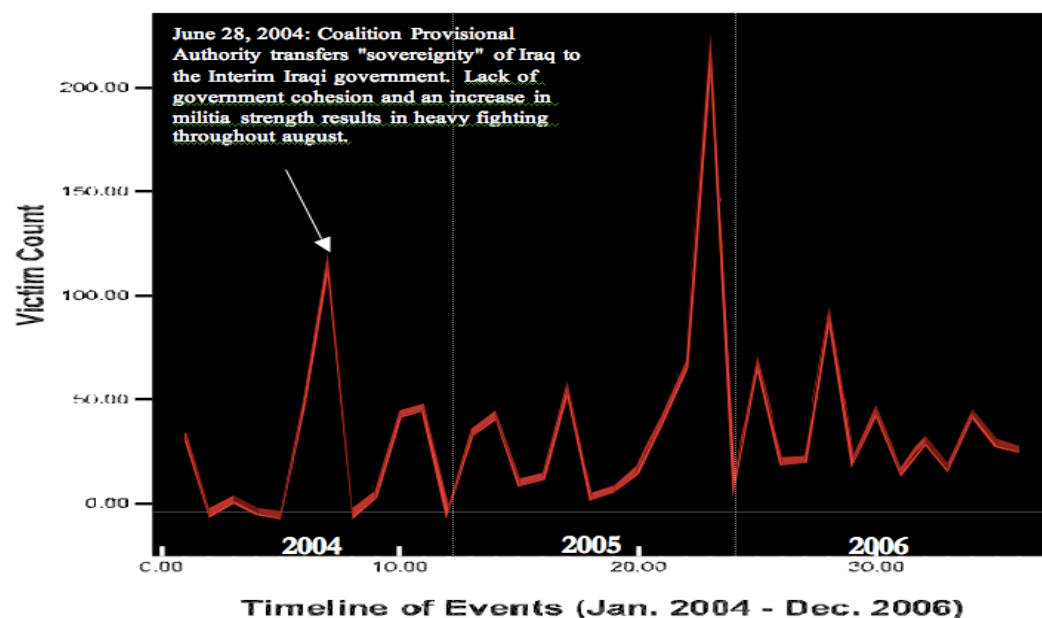
The enemy that fled Ba'qubah in June dispersed into traditional safe havens outside the provincial capital. By June 26, Colonel Townsend had intelligence reports identifying al Qaeda's concentration points as Samarra, Khalis, and Khan Bani Sa'ad, reflecting recent activity in these areas.[24]

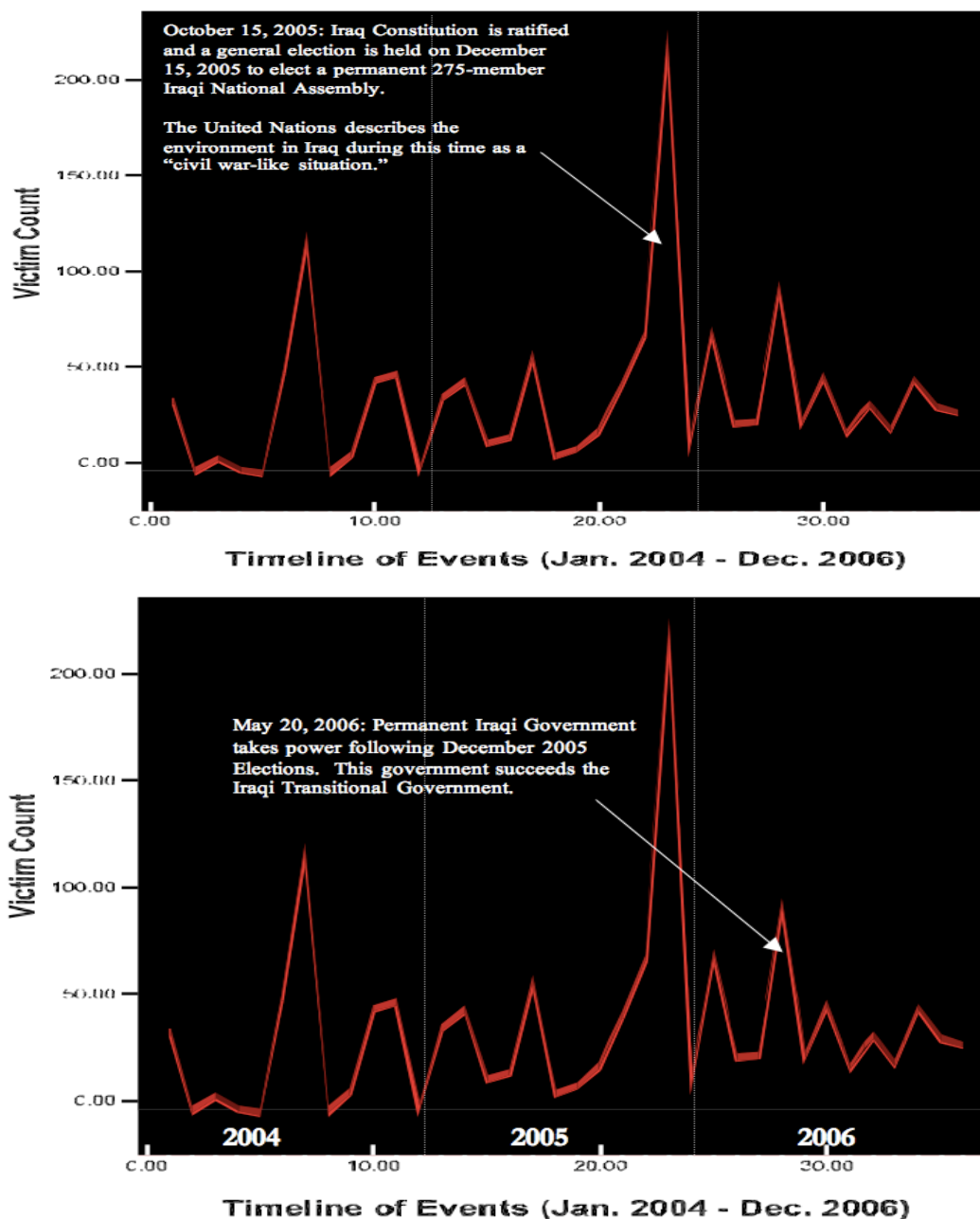
During 2006, more coordinated and intense operations further drew the enemy out of Ba'qubah, a former terrorist stronghold, and the enemy dispersed into outlying cities including Al Khalis and Al Muqdadiyah. "Those that we didn't kill or capture [headed] further north, into the Muqdadiyah area; and we began conducting operations inside Muqdadiyah." [25] Throughout 2006, insurgent activity remained concentrated in highly populated areas like Ba'qubah and Al Muqdadiyah. During this time, Ba'qubah suffered the most terrorist-related violence in Diyala province, followed by Al Muqdadiyah. "Muqdadiyah is significant because it controls movement from Ba'qubah to the Iranian border; Sunni insurgents present might have been attempting to prevent the facilitation of weapons from Iran to Ba'qubah." [26]



Timeline of Events

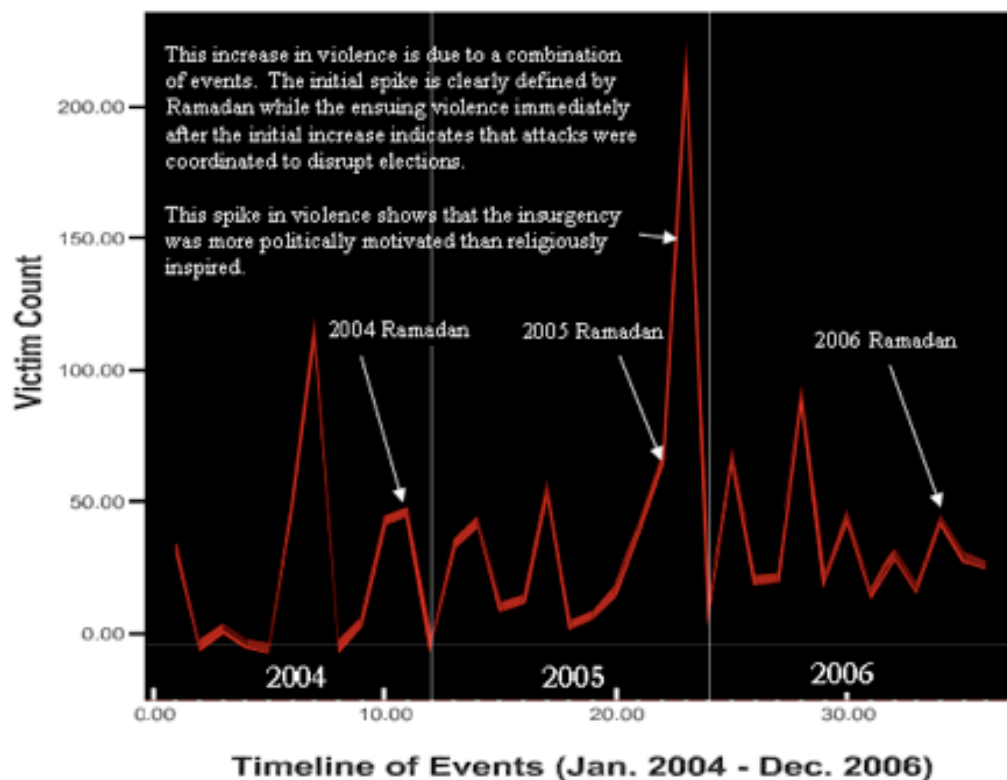
During the dramatic and crucial time period between 2004 and 2006, at least one significant governmental transition event occurred each year that acted as a catalyst for terrorist activity and violence. On June 28, 2004, the Coalition Provisional Authority transferred sovereignty of Iraq to the Interim Iraqi Government. Between October 15, 2005 and December 15, 2005, the Iraq Constitution was ratified and a general election was held to elect a permanent national assembly. On May 20, 2006, the permanent Iraqi government assumed power following the December 2005 elections. Despite accompanying high levels of violence, these important benchmarks were instrumental in moving Iraq towards democracy.





Terrorist attacks increased during religious and political events, such as Ramadan and the December 2005 elections.[27] Similarly, retaliatory efforts between opposing groups were common when sporadic, high-profile attacks like political assassinations or religious attacks took place. On February 22, 2006, the al-Askari "Golden Mosque" in Samarra, Iraq, was attacked. During this time, unknown perpetrators, most likely a Sunni sub-terrorist group like Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)[28] acting under the auspices of a larger terrorist network focused on creating

widespread violence and panic, bombed the holy Shiite mosque in Samarra.[29] This attack sparked a significant resurgence in violence and caused Shiites to respond with massive retaliatory efforts that destroyed Sunni mosques and targeted members of opposing religious parties. "Sectarian violence spiraled in early 2006 following the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, one of the holiest Shiite shrines." [30] The incident at Samarra proved that waves of violence are common following a high-profile attack on high-value targets. The attacks on places of worship... regardless of whether they are Shiite, Sunni or Christian is done to inflame sectarian division and start a civil war.[31] These attacks typically dismantle the reconciliation process and shatter unity.



Conclusion

Between 2004 and 2006, the Sunni-led insurgency consisted of an assortment of diverse fighters, previously bound together to drive out coalition forces and eliminate U.S. authority in Iraq. More recently, the insurgency has been focused on eliminating opposing religious and ethnic groups who support the Shiite-controlled Iraqi Government. This opposition movement led to an all-out civil war between opposing religious factions. Sunni terrorist networks in Iraq, like AQI, formerly consisted of regional elements with similar political and religious ideologies that paralleled the insurgency. Similar to the insurgency, these terrorist networks were actively engaged in operations that aimed to dismantle and disrupt the Iraqi democratic governmental

transition process between 2004 and 2006. This effort linked Sunni insurgents with Sunni terrorist groups until more recent years, when the insurgent-terrorist divide became more pronounced amidst growing rivalries. While overall attacks began to decline, levels of violence throughout the region remained high well into 2007.

Continued security efforts in the region and large-scale military operations focusing on clearing and holding Iraqi cities are likely to drive out major insurgent groups in the end. However, elements of terrorist cells and insurgents might remain localized in small villages. In addition, terrorist groups focused on derailing the political process will most likely establish planning bases in outlying countries that provide a safe-haven for terrorists, such as Syria or Iran. Nevertheless, working with Diyala tribal leaders to promote peace and form alliances may facilitate political reconciliation and further reduce violence in Diyala.

The period of the Iraqi governmental transition between 2004 and 2006 was a momentous time not just for Iraq but for the Middle East and beyond. The once-oppressive state – ruled under a brutal dictator – was transformed into a democratically elected nation with a permanent national assembly, a legal constitution, and the people’s entitlement to liberty and freedom. Despite the eager critics, Iraq’s new freedom of government was a true milestone in the region. Nevertheless, the period in Iraqi history between 2004 and 2006 remains traumatic. This was a period when armed militias aligned with various terrorist networks or insurgent groups and killed innocent civilians for cooperating with the new government. This was a period when violence spiked during the holy month of Ramadan and resulted in thousands of senseless deaths. This period of transition was a time when Iraqis turned on each other in frantic despair, bombed holy mosques and markets, and carried out horrendous kidnappings and beheadings to intimidate the opposition members within the population and to break the will of the people in the opposite camp. The armed groups in Iraq want to inflame sectarian divisions because they provide the best environment for the resurgence and survival of the terrorist and the armed groups. With the objective of preventing diplomacy in Iraq, the armed groups have been targeting all those working and cooperating with [the] new Iraqi government.[32]

Between 2004 and 2006, many of the insurgents viewed the Iraqi governmental institution as illegitimate and an instrument of the West. As such, they continued their attempts to break the will of the people, subvert the elected Iraqi government, and insert their political ideal. Religious extremists also conducted attacks during Ramadan. Violence consistently spiked during the holy month of Ramadan, indicating that religious motivation remained a key driving force factor in the insurgency between 2004 and 2006. Yet the enormous and overwhelming spike during the 2005 elections indicates that the enemy at that time was more politically motivated than religiously inspired.[33] In 2004, a religiously motivated insurgent targeted opposing religious bodies, while in 2006, that same insurgent evolved to victimize opposing ethnic bodies and citizens whose political views were not in line with those of religious leaders. Moreover, several

key political developments strengthened the Iraqi governmental institution between 2004 and 2006 and forced the insurgency to adopt a new tactical strategy aimed at delegitimizing the government. This strategy included the targeting of civilians and other soft targets to make it appear as if the newly established government was incapable of protecting its own people. This can be seen as proof that the insurgents' ideology suffered serious setbacks and weaknesses between 2004 and 2006. The insurgency, while clearly adaptive and highly evolutionary, suffered significant blows that reduced its legitimacy among key sectors of the Iraqi people. In the end, this inhibited the insurgency to garner support for its subversive tactics and undermined its overall foundation. The downfall of the insurgency within Iraq in turn increased the legitimacy of the government, which to many was the only guarantee for a safe and free Iraq.

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- [17] Kagan, K. "The Battle for Diyala." *The Iraq Report*, 4 (2007): 1-18.
- [18] Cordesman, Anthony H. Key excerpts from "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, November 2006," Report to Congress In accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2007, (Section 9010, Public Law 109-289), November 30, 2006, p. 20-21.
- [19] Walker, David M. "Stabilizing Iraq An Assessment of the Security Situation," GAO Report to Congress, September 11, 2006, p. 15-16
- [20] The "Triangle of Terror" is an area in Diyala province that has been identified as a perpetual high-intensity violence zone. It has served as fertile ground for terrorist training and recruitment, and includes five major cities, including Ba'qubah, which is a former terrorist stronghold. See the associated figure for satellite imagery of the "Triangle of Terror."
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- [22] Partlow, Joshua. "Troops in Diyala Face a Skilled, Flexible Foe."
- [23] Ibid.
- [24] Kagan, K. "The Battle for Diyala." *The Iraq Report*, 4 (2007): p. 9.
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[32] Ibid., p. 14.

[33] See the associated figure for a diagram of how the enemy was more politically motivated than religiously inspired.

Democracy and Terrorism

by James M. Lutz and Brenda J. Lutz

Abstract

It has been suggested that democratic political systems provide greater opportunities for terrorist groups and create permissive environments in which terrorist networks can operate more easily. While the argument has a solid logical grounding that has been widely accepted, empirical tests of the connection between democracy and terrorism have been few and not very comprehensive in scope. The analysis below will consider the relationship between the degree of openness (democracy) and international terrorist activity from 1972 to 1995 in approximately 100 countries. The results should shed light on whether democratic political systems actually contribute to the activities of terrorist groups.

Terrorism and Democratic Systems

Although there is no commonly accepted definition of terrorism, there has been widespread agreement on many of its key characteristics. Terrorism consists of the use of violence or the threat of violence by an organized group to attain political objectives. The victims of terrorism are important as a means for influencing a wider target audience. The victims are normally civilians because attacks on them increase the impact of the violence on the target audiences. Terrorism is also a weapon of the weak. Groups that are able to obtain their desired political objectives by other means such as victory in an election, intra-elite maneuverings, military coups, bribery, rebellion, or civil war, are much less likely to rely on terrorism as the primary means of trying to achieve their goals. The last characteristic is that terrorism involves non-governmental actors on at least one side. Either the targets, or the terrorists, and sometimes both are non-governmental actors. [1]

One indirect indication of democratic vulnerability to terrorism is the general absence of non-state terrorism in totalitarian societies. These most repressive systems have been relatively free of such terrorist activity. [2] Totalitarian governments have advantages in dealing with potential terrorist groups. They do not have to worry about collecting evidence for a trial or presenting credible or compelling evidence. They can also use more extreme methods of interrogation or even threaten family members as a means of gaining leverage with suspects. [3]

Totalitarian regimes have also been willing to track down dissidents abroad in order to eliminate them. The security services in Nazi Germany proved to be quite capable of dealing with opponents by using such techniques. The KGB in the Soviet Union was also notoriously effective in dealing with dissidents or presumed dissidents, and outbreaks of terrorism were noticeably absent in the Soviet Union before its collapse. Terrorist actions were also few in numbers in Saddam Hussein's Iraq under the Ba'ath regime. By contrast, the break-up of the Soviet Union and the end of the Ba'athist regime in Iraq have been accompanied by noticeable

increases in terrorist activity. However, the absence of terrorism in the totalitarian societies does not mean that democracies are uniquely vulnerable. Weaker states of all types have provided opportunities for terrorism, including weaker authoritarian states. [4]

It has also been suggested that political systems in transition may be more vulnerable. [5] When political systems are in transition, police and security forces are often in disarray and control mechanisms are weaker. The states formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the current Iraqi government qualify as weaker states compared to their predecessors and also as political systems currently in transition or at least in transition in the recent past. Societies in transition from a non-democratic regime to a democratic government may be particularly vulnerable since the grip of the old security forces on society is diminished while the new freedoms provide opportunities for violent dissidents. [6]

Democratic regimes, by contrast, are assumed to provide more tempting locations for terrorist activities than totalitarian states. Democracies are by definition more open politically, and there are protections that come with respect for civil liberties. Furthermore, restrictions on surveillance and investigations by the security forces and police agencies are in force. Weaker intelligence gathering capabilities mean that the ability to pre-empt terrorist groups before they strike is more limited. [7] Checkpoints, where identity papers need to be presented, are unusual and infrequent. Moreover, democracies also have relatively weaker control of their borders, thereby providing opportunities for in- and ex-filtration. [8]

Recent debates about immigration policies in the United States and Western Europe reflect some of the concerns that can exist with more open borders (notwithstanding recent practices in the US for dealing with enemy combatants). Moreover, even when terrorists are arrested, there are usually limits to the length of detention and clear limits on the mechanisms that can be used in the interrogation of suspects. In democracies, suspects are generally given fair trials and have the opportunity of gaining an acquittal if the evidence is insufficient or poorly presented. [9]

In general, judicial proceedings will be fair, although there are occasions in which there can be miscarriages of justice and rushes to judgment. [10] Such rushes to judgment may be more likely with terrorism suspects when compared to those tried for ordinary crimes. Democracies also provide opportunities for terrorist groups since the presence of a free press provides opportunities for greater publicity that permits groups to reach their target audiences more easily. [11] The presence of a free press also provides opportunities for terrorist groups during trials since it can provide another platform for the terrorist organization to publicize its views to the public. More disturbing for the authorities but useful to terrorist groups is the fact that the media have been quite important in carrying messages about terrorism that can encourage more political violence. [12]

There have been some indications that terrorism has been more likely in democratic societies. In his study, Engene concluded that political openness facilitated terrorism in Western Europe.[13]

Democracy made West Germany more vulnerable to outbreaks of terrorist incidents that occurred in that country.[14] It is perhaps most telling, however, that the violence by the Basque nationalists increased when a democratic system was created even though it was initially present under an authoritarian regime and that the violence continued into the twenty-first century after more than two decades of democracy. Sandler says that when analyses took into account the intensity of terrorist incidents, democracies appeared to suffer more from such political violence. [15]

Pape in his study of suicide terrorism has suggested that this particular form of violence has been virtually restricted to democratic states. While suicide attacks have occurred in less open political systems such as Pakistan and Lebanon (when the country was in disarray), these kinds of attacks do appear to have been more prevalent in democracies. [16]

Other empirical studies have provided mixed results. Eyerman found that democracies were less likely to experience terrorist acts than non-democracies between 1968 and 1986 unless they were new democracies. Such new democracies appeared to be especially vulnerable among all the states surveyed. [17] Li assessed the effects of democracy on terrorism from 1975 to 1997 and concluded that it varied according to the characteristics of the democratic system. Some systems appeared to be more vulnerable as compared to others. [18]

Democratic states may be the scenes of terrorism for reasons unrelated to their domestic politics. Because of weaker security forces, concerns for civil liberties, and a free press, these countries may be chosen by dissidents for attacks against their home governments. [19] Security precautions may be too great in their homeland, while democratic states may be more vulnerable and at the same time offer better opportunities to gain greater publicity for terrorist attacks. Expatriate dissidents can target diplomatic personnel, trade centers, corporations or businesses, or even tourists from their home countries. Thus, there may be “transient attacks” against foreigners in democracies that are meant for audiences in the countries of origins rather than the host country. [20]

International attacks in third countries, in fact, may be quite frequent. In the case of the US, for many years there were few attacks on the American soil. Instead, attacks against the US targets principally occurred aboard. [21] Palestinian groups and other Middle Eastern dissidents have often chosen to launch attacks in West European countries because Israel's defenses were too strong. In addition, Western Europe was geographically close to their home countries and they were able to draw upon expatriate communities or locals who sympathized with them. [22]

Past experiences have not indicated that terrorism decreases because of democracy. Democratization in the 19th century, for example, led to increase in terrorism. [23] This finding also suggests that the spread of democracy will not be an immediate solution to the problem of terrorism. In fact, there may be a period in which democratization led to an increase in acts of terrorism.

Given these experiences and observations, it is not surprising that several studies have reached the general conclusion that democracies continue to be more prone to terrorist violence when compared to non-democratic states. [24] The above considerations have led to conclusions that democratic states are among the more vulnerable to terrorism. In the following, we shall try to test the hypothesis of greater vulnerability of democracies to international terrorism.

Data

Data on international terrorist attacks and democracy were collected for countries for the years from 1972 to 1995. The measure of political openness was based on the Freedom House rankings for civil and political liberties for each of those years. The first year for which the data were available was 1972. Rankings for countries ranged from 1 for countries that were politically completely free to 7 for states that were totally dictatorial with no freedoms with many countries being partially free. [25]

The use of such a scale for distinguishing among states is quite important. Both Eyerman and Li used dichotomous variables rather than ones based on a continuum. [26] The variation present is relevant since it would be possible that more democratic states could be more vulnerable than partially democratic ones. While other, more complex measures of democracy have been developed, the Freedom House rankings provide a consistent ranking available for virtually all countries for a relatively long period of time.

The data on terrorism were derived from information available from the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT). [27] These data are available from 1968, but they are incomplete for this year. From 1969 to 1997 reasonably complete data on occurrences of acts of international terrorism exist. The data include the number of incidents, number of dead, and number of injured which in the analyses to follow was made proportional to population figures. From 1998 onward, data on both domestic and international terrorism are available, although the data for sub-Saharan Africa may not be accurate. There is a lack of any domestic terrorist incidents for places such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Zaire, notwithstanding the endemic nature of political violence there. Information in the MIPT database was derived from media reports. The press is weak in many parts of Africa, and the dangers involved in accurately reporting on such violence in near-anarchic societies would also explain the incompleteness of data. Therefore, sub-Saharan African countries were not included in the data utilized here. The countries included were in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. Only countries with populations of half a million people for at least part of the period were included. In countries smaller than this, a few incidents or casualties from one attack would have a disproportionate impact on the dataset. In addition, in states with small populations, terrorism may be less likely since there would be less anonymity possible, meaning that the terrorists would find it more difficult to operate. [28]

Even with the exclusion of the smaller countries, there was a great range in population. All other things being equal, larger countries could expect more terrorist violence than smaller ones. As a consequence, the numbers of incidents and wounded and dead people were divided by population. For a number of years for many countries, there were no international incidents or, while there were incidents, there were no casualties. Therefore zero entries were actually coded .01 to reflect the fact that no incidents or casualties in a country with a larger population (e.g. India) were more important than the absence in a smaller country (e.g. Singapore).

While only international incidents are used in the present analysis, we assume that these are sufficient for an initial test of the vulnerability of democracies thesis. The use of international incidents does provide an opportunity to detect one aspect of the potential vulnerability of democratic societies — the chance to serve as a location for attacks by groups targeting interests of their home countries or other transients. The following analysis should provide a preliminary step in the empirical study of connections between democracy and the occurrence of terrorist attacks.

Results

The results of our test for the whole range of countries were only mildly supportive of the basic hypothesis that democratic political systems are more prone to outbreaks of terrorism. While the correlations for levels of democracy with incidents of international terrorism, injuries, and fatalities were invariably negative, only about 30 per cent of the correlations achieved even a minimal level of significance (see Table 1). The overall number of incidents per capita was most frequently negatively associated with the level of political democracy at a significant level, while there were only a few indications that casualties were heavier in more democratic societies.

Given the weaknesses of these results, the countries were analyzed by region to see if democracy facilitated terrorism once geographic area was considered as an intervening variable.

Table 1: Pearson's Correlations for Terrorism and Democracy: All Countries

Year	<i>n</i>	Incidents	Injuries	Deaths
1972	94	-.102	-.085	-.139 ⁺
1973	94	-.104	.076	-.101
1974	94	-.156 ⁺	-.076	-.079
1975	97	-.215 ⁺	-.091	-.098
1976	97	-.230 ⁺	.055	.039
1977	97	-.108	-.107	-.045
1978	97	-.086	-.112	-.106

1979	97	-.112	-.112	-.125
1980	97	-.112	-.143 ⁺	.038
1981	97	-.281**	-.206*	.044
1982	97	-.323**	-.119	-.039
1983	97	-.146 ⁺	-.042	-.003
1984	97	-.151 ⁺	-.133	-.175*
1985	97	-.186*	-.023	-.150 ⁺
1986	97	-.166 ⁺	-.093	.123
1987	97	-.165 ⁺	-.117	-.083
1988	97	-.185*	-.165 ⁺	-.197*
1989	95	-.162 ⁺	-.094	-.096
1990	96	-.097	-.124	-.061
1991	95	-.136 ⁺	-.133 ⁺	-.082
1992	111	-.004	.034	-.035
1993	112	-.071	-.040	.025
1994	113	-.016	-.043	-.018
1995	113	-.039	-.132 ⁺	-.023

⁺ $\alpha = .10$ * $\alpha = .05$ ** $\alpha = .01$

In case of Asia and Latin America, there was very little evidence that the more democratic states were more likely to suffer terrorist attacks. For the Asian countries there were only a handful of marginally significant associations and the same was true for Latin America. The handful of significant associations were scattered throughout the time period used in the case of the Asian countries. The few significant negative associations for Latin America were concentrated in the 1970s, indicating that perhaps there was something unique to this time period wherein democratic regimes were more prone to international terrorism. The overall results for these two regions, nevertheless, were even less supportive of the basic hypothesis than was the case when all of the countries were considered.

The results for countries in the Middle East and North Africa were much more robust (see Table 2). It should be noted that Lebanon was not included in the analysis. The civil war and long period of unrest, as well as the fact that there was effectively no government for many years, made its exclusion necessary. Lebanon actually serves as a better example of the links that can exist between a failed or weak state and the prevalence of terrorist violence. For the rest of the Middle Eastern countries, the negative correlations between democracy and terrorism that were predicted were invariably present, and often at high levels of significance. All three variables had the anticipated negative associations with levels of democracy and they were quite strong.

Thus, the higher prevalence of both incidents and casualties was linked with more open political systems. Clearly the more authoritarian states in the region had been much more effective in their ability to control international terrorism. These results support the conclusion reached by an analysis of the attempt to democratize Algeria in the 1990s.

Democracy is not the panacea to political violence that many argue it is. Democracy does not ensure against terrorism and does not protect the country from domestic violent challenges. Thus, it would be mistaken to argue that the arrival of democracy in Algeria and elsewhere in the Arab world would lead to the immediate dismantling of terrorist networks. [29]

Table 2: Pearson's Correlations for Terrorism and Democracy: Middle East and North Africa

Year	<i>n</i>	Incidents	Injuries	Deaths
1972	20	-.350 ⁺	-.426 [*]	-.437 [*]
1973	20	-.022	0.64	.130
1974	21	-.278	-.296 ⁺	-.297 ⁺
1975	21	-.501 ^{**}	-.412 [*]	-.410 [*]
1976	21	-.357 ⁺	-.020	.073
1977	21	-.381 [*]	-.479 [*]	-.382 [*]
1978	21	-.495 [*]	-.470 [*]	-.450 [*]
1979	21	-.462 [*]	-.468 [*]	-.476 [*]
1980	21	-.521 ^{**}	-.497 [*]	-.472 [*]
1981	21	-.483	-.185	.045
1982	21	-.521 ^{**}	-.516 ^{**}	-.541 ^{**}
1983	21	-.184	-.345 ⁺	-.328 ⁺
1984	21	-.389 [*]	-.486 [*]	-.377 [*]
1985	21	-.452 [*]	-.037	-.013
1986	21	-.455 [*]	-.366 [*]	.092
1987	21	-.437 [*]	-.455 [*]	-.416 [*]
1988	21	-.408 [*]	-.462 [*]	-.397
1989	19	-.439 [*]	-.412 [*]	-.426 [*]
1990	20	-.431 [*]	-.437 [*]	-.449 [*]
1991	20	-.535 ^{**}	-.467 [*]	-.515 ^{**}

1992	20	-.306 ⁺	-.171	-.420*
1993	20	-.586**	-.580**	-.528**
1994	20	-.525**	-.557**	-.513*
1995	20	-.366 ⁺	-.833***	-.488*

⁺ $\alpha = .10$ * $\alpha = .05$ ** $\alpha = .01$ *** $\alpha = .001$

The results for Europe were somewhat intriguing. When the countries in the West European region (plus the culturally West European countries of Canada, the US, Australia, and New Zealand) were analyzed separately, there was no indication that there was any association between terrorism and political openness (see Table 3).

Except for Spain, Portugal, and Greece early in the period under analysis, all the countries were democratic and had open societies, therefore, there was relatively little variation in the Freedom House rankings. The rankings were invariably 1.0, 1.5, or 2.0 on the seven point scale that was used. Perhaps more importantly, even with the lack of variation, there were strong positive correlations between 1985 and 1994, which suggest that those countries that were slightly less democratic were the ones suffering more from terrorism.

What is perhaps the most logical explanation for this relationship is that the countries facing greater levels of international terrorist activity adopted slightly more stringent security procedures to deal with these threats as has been the case with the United Kingdom after the IRA bombings in 1974 and the US with the Patriot Act in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

Table 3: Pearson's Correlations for Terrorism and Democracy: West and East Europe

Year	<i>n</i>	West Europe			<i>n</i>	West and East Europe		
		Incidents	Injuries	Deaths		Incidents	Injuries	Deaths
1972	20	.075	-.123	-.134	28	-.353*	-.233	-.196
1973	20	.567	.582	.317	29	.039	.183	-.043
1974	20	-.028	-.111	.093	29	-.318*	-.202	-.100
1975	20	-.058	-.207	-.186	29	-.414*	-.340*	-.336*
1976	20	.265	.194	.186	29	-.328*	-.250	-.130
1977	20	.332	.363	-.142	29	-.304 ⁺	-.184	-.142
1978	20	.261	.227	-.040	29	-.266 ⁺	-.171	-.298*
1979	20	.064	-.079	-.163	29	-.528**	-.239	-.214
1980	20	.087	.113	.266	29	-.402*	-.240	-.239
1981	20	-.070	-.124	-.240	29	-.378*	-.282 ⁺	-.298 ⁺

1982	20	.191	.280	.293	29	-.302 ⁺	-.218	-.246 ⁺
1983	20	.060	.330	.332	29	-.369 [*]	-.173	-.154
1984	20	.242	.159	.300	29	-.310 ⁺	-.255 ⁺	-.269 ⁺
1985	20	.425	.346	.127	29	-.335 [*]	-.234	-.170
1986	20	.560	.349	.436	29	-.332 [*]	-.184	-.258 ⁺
1987	20	.346	.705	.627	29	-.276 ⁺	-.125	-.316 [*]
1988	20	.743	.667	.077	29	-.225	-.080	-.164
1989	20	.155	.185	-.139	29	-.372 [*]	-.166	-.203
1990	20	.371	.233	-.202	29	-.057	-.168	-.251 ⁺
1991	20	.497	.525	.515	34	-.098	.264	-.042
1992	20	.500	.194	.469	36	-.113	-.132	-.099
1993	20	-.080	-.164	-.005	37	-.147	-.201	-.253 ⁺
1994	20	.657	.605	.528	38	.020	.085	.148
1995	20	.178	.169	-.054	38	-.231 ⁺	.147	-.094

⁺ $\alpha = .10$ ^{*} $\alpha = .05$ ^{**} $\alpha = .01$

The second part of Table 3 combines the data from the West European subset with the data for the East European countries and the Soviet Union (and then the European successor states to the Soviet Union, as well as the successor states to Yugoslavia). As expected, the combination of the closed Communist systems with the very open Western systems yielded many significant negative correlations for the data set in the years before 1990. The conventional wisdom that the advanced Communist countries with effective means of control were much better able to deter terrorist activities was well demonstrated in this comparison. In the initial years of democratization (or lack thereof in countries such as Belarus) the expected negative relationships were still present, although not nearly as often or at the same levels as had been the case in the earlier years.

Conclusions

Overall, the above analysis did not provide strong support for the idea that democracies have been more prone to terrorist violence — or at least international terrorism. The conventional wisdom of such a connection, however, cannot be discounted. Globally, the presence of democratic systems was at least at times negatively associated with more terrorism at marginal levels. The regional analysis indicated that in the Middle East the connection was very much stronger indeed. In addition, it was also obvious that the communist systems in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were much more effective in preventing these kinds of attacks than the democracies of West Europe as was expected.

A number of factors may help to explain these mixed results. Somewhat limited number of international incidents, compared to domestic attacks (which outnumber international incidents by a factor of seven or more), has meant that singular events with high casualties are statistical outliers that could have affected the results. In addition, if regimes in transition are actually more vulnerable, the presence of changes in the political system could be a confounding factor. A transition from one authoritarian regime to another (military regime to a one-party system or vice versa) could increase opportunities for terrorism that would not necessarily be associated with democratization. Iran, for example, underwent a period of terrorism initiated by secular and leftist groups that lasted for 18 months. The clerical regime of the new Islamic Republic was vulnerable since it was making the transition from the partial authoritarianism of the old monarchy to the totalitarianism of the new theocracy. [30]

Similarly, if new democracies are indeed more prone to terrorism, the association between terrorism and democracy could be more variable since not all democracies are equally vulnerable.

Clearly, additional analysis will be necessary to further explore the extent and the nature of the linkages between political openness and terrorism. An extension of the analysis to include both international and domestic terrorist acts between 1998 and later years is one obvious step, although this extension does not solve the problem that there will remain inadequacies of data for the earlier years.

Another option would be selected comparisons of countries, before, during and after transitions to more democratic systems. It might also be possible to compare the vulnerability of countries dealing with democratic transitions to countries facing transitions from one type of authoritarian regime to another. Since it would appear that democracies do indeed suffer somewhat more from international terrorism, such further analysis would help to clarify how much more vulnerable democracies really are to this particular form of political violence.

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Book Review

Alex P. Schmid & Garry F. Hindle (Eds.) *After the War on Terror: Regional and Multilateral Perspectives on Counter-Terrorism Strategy*. London, RUSI, 2009. 151 pp.
ISBN: 0-85516-142-6 (pbk.) Reviewed by Anil Karaca.

After the War on Terror is a conference volume, containing a series of evaluations of terrorist manifestations and counter-terrorism strategies from various hotspots around the globe. It highlights current flaws in strategies used to counter terrorism and suggests options for change. Even though this work fulfills its promise, it is not flawless. Policy options are often not supported with enough empirical data and critiques of current strategies also suffer from the same.

The book opens with a clear explanation of ‘what work against terrorism’ by an old hand - David Veness, until June 2009 UN Under-Secretary General for Safety and Security and former Assistant Commissioner of Scotland Yard. International cooperation and a multi-disciplinary approach to counter-terrorism strategies are highlighted as crucial for success. Richard Barrett, the Co-ordinator of the UN Security Council’s al-Qaeda and Taliban Monitoring Team, offers an original analysis of Al-Qaeda, taking credibility, legitimacy and relevance as yardsticks for success for both sides of the conflict. Alex Schmid’s and Rashmi Singh’s chapter “Measuring Success and Failure in Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism” is, in the view of this reviewer, the most significant in the book. They emphasize the importance of developing clear metrics, outlining solid criteria and show that the Bush administration failed to do so. They also highlight some of the problems associated with acquiring high quality data for the empirical study of terrorism. Regional terrorism analyses for Somalia, the Maghreb, the Caucasus and Central Asia constitute major portions of the book. The authors – Max Taylor, Lianne Kennedy Boudali and Ekaterina Stepanova - explain the current crises in terms of local history and question some of the strategies applied by incumbent authorities. The closing article by Abdel Bari Atwan, Editor-in-Chief of *Al Quds Al-Arabi*, the pan-Arab newspaper published in London, offers a detailed political account of al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, also shedding light on the role of India. Atwan also explains the difference between the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Overall, this work provides valuable summaries on the background of various regional conflicts. Perhaps understandably, the volume places Al-Qaida’s role around the globe under the magnifying glass rather than focusing on regional insurgencies and terrorism in their own right. It offers situational analyses rather than a series of comparable case studies – a weakness inherent in the volume’s origin as a series of conference presentations organized by the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV) of the University of St. Andrews and the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in London in 2008. The most powerful element of this book is, in the eyes of this reviewer, that it offers a strong stimulus for new researchers entering the field as its authors are mostly seasoned academics and practitioners in their

respective fields who have much to say to a new generation of scholars and counter-terrorism officials.

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New Literature on Terrorism and Political Violence

by Eric Price

Monographs and Edited Volumes published in 2010, selected by Eric Price (Professional Information Specialist)

- Afong, M.S. (2010) *Hunters: U.S. snipers in the War on Terror*. New York, Berkley Caliber.
- Alam, S. M. (2010) *War on terrorism or American strategy for global dominance*. New York, NY., Vantage Press.
- Aly, A. (2010) *A study of audience response to the media discourse about the 'other ': the fear of terrorism between Australian Muslims and the broader community*. Lewiston, The Edwin Mellen Press.
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Studies in Conflict & Terrorism Vol.33 (3) 2010
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Studies in Conflict & Terrorism Vol.33 (2) 2010
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Conference Calendar

by Benjamin Freedman

CONFERENCE	LOCATION	DATE	ORGANISER	WEBSITE
International Security and National Resilience Exhibition & Conference	Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, U.A.E.	1-3 March 2010	UAE Ministry of the Interior	http://www.isnrabudhabi.com/conference-program-2010.aspx
Indonesia: What Role As A Contemporary Global Actor?	Wilton Park, West Sussex, England	1-4 March 2010	Wilton Park, with support from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London	http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/themes/regions/conference.aspx?confref=WP1019
Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights Conference 2010: Recent Developments and Future Directions	Holiday Inn London Bloomsbury, London	11 March 2010	JUSTICE	www.justice.org.uk/images/pdfs/Counter-Terrorism%20Conference%202010.pdf+Counter-Terrorism+and+Human+Rights+Conference+2010:+Recent+Developments+and+Future+Directions&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=il&client=firefox-a
5th Annual Conference on the Ethics of National Security Intelligence	Georgetown University Hotel and Conference Center, Washington, DC	11 March 2010	International Intelligence Ethics Association	http://intelligence-ethics.org/

Winning 'Hearts and Minds' in Afghanistan: Assessing the Effectiveness of Development Aid in COIN Operations	Wilton Park, West Sussex, England	11-14 March 2010	Wilton Park and the Feinstein International Center, Tufts University	http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/themes/defence/conference.aspx?confref=WP1022
Irregular Warfare -- Impact of the New Warfighting Paradigm	Sheraton National Hotel, Arlington, VA	17-18 March 2010	Technology Training Corporation	http://www.ttcus.com/view-conference.cfm?id=136
Re-thinking the Middle East: Values, Interests and Security Concerns in Western Policies toward Iraq and the Wider Region 1918-2010	The British Academy, London	17-19 March 2010	University of Salford, England	http://www.salford.ac.uk/events/details/1105
Cyber Security - Legal and Policy Issues for National Security, Law Enforcement, and Private Industry	St. Mary's University, San Antonio, TX	18-19 March 2010	The Center for Terrorism Law	http://www.stmarytx.edu/ctl/index.php?site=centerForTerrorismLawCyberSecurity
GovSec/U.S. Law 2010 Conference	Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington, DC	23-24 March 2010	GovSec/U.S. Law	http://govsecinfo.com/events/govsec-2010/information/conference-intro.aspx
The Globalization(s) of the Conflict in Somalia	University of St. Andrews	24-25 March 2010	The Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence	http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~cstpv/somalia/
Stepping out of Criminal Organizations	University of Amsterdam	8 April 2010		

5th International Conference on Information Warfare and Security	The Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio	8-9 April 2010	Air Force Institute of Technology	http://www.academic-conferences.org/iciw/iciw2010/iciw10-home.htm
2010 Project on Nuclear Issues Spring Conference	Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC	8-9 April 2010	CSIS Project on Nuclear Issues	http://csis.org/event/2010-poni-conference-washington-dc
Global Security India 2010: International Exhibition & Conference on Homeland Security	The Ashok Hotel Convention Centre, New Delhi India	28-30 April 2010	Global Security Asia	http://www.globalsecindia.com/default.asp?pid=176
Counter Terror Expo 2010	National Hall, Olympia, London	14-15 April 2010		http://www.counterterrorexpo.com/page.cfm/Link=47/t=m/goSection=1
2nd Annual ACAMS Anti-Money Laundering & Counter-Terrorism Financing Conference	Shanghai, China	26-28 April 2010	Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists	http://www.amlasia.org/
9th Annual Forum on Anti-Money Laundering: Practical Strategies to Reduce Risk and Ensure Compliance	Toronto, Ontario	28-29 April 2010	The Canadian Institute	http://www.canadianinstitute.com/AML/workshop.htm
18th Annual Terrorism Trends & Forecasts Symposium	Fairleigh Dickinson University, Hackensack, NJ	6 May 2010	The International Association for Counterterrorism and Security Professionals	http://www.iacsp.com/conference_agenda.php

7th International Conference on Asian Organized Crime & Terrorism	Crowne Plaza St. Paul Riverfront, St. Paul, MN	16-21 May 2010	International Organization of Asian Crime Investigators and Specialists	http://icaoct.com/
Intelligence and Security Information 2010 IEEE Intelligence and Security Informatics Public Safety and Security	Vancouver, BC	23-26 May 2010	The IRMACS Centre and Simon Fraser University	http://conferences.irmacs.sfu.ca/isi2010/index.html#
The IACSP Midwest Terrorism Trends & Forecasts Conference	Columbus, Ohio Division of Police Training Bureau	26/05/2010	The International Association for Counterterrorism and Security Professionals	http://www.iacsp.com/conference_agenda_ohio.php
Review Conference of the Rome Statute	Kampala, Uganda	31 May-11 June 2010	Assembly of States Parties to the ICC	http://www.icc-cpi.int/Menus/ASP/ASP+Events/ASP+Calendar+2010/Review+Conference.htm

About 'Perspectives on Terrorism'

The Editorial Team of *Perspectives on Terrorism* consists of

Alex P. Schmid (Editor) and Director of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI). He is a former Editor of *Terrorism and Political Violence*. Until 2009, he was Director of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV) and held a chair in International Relations at the University of St. Andrews. Between 1999 and 2005 he was Officer-in-Charge of the UN Terrorism Prevention Branch. He is Member of the European Terrorism Expert Networks EENeT and NEET.

Shazad Ali (Assistant Editor) is a journalist who writes on international affairs with a focus on counter-terrorism, Asia and Europe. He has a Masters in International Relations and is pursuing an MPhil leading to a PhD in European Studies at the University of Karachi. His research is related to European concerns on rising religious extremism and terrorism, focusing on Pakistan.

Tim Pippard (Assistant Editor) is a Consultant with the Security and Intelligence Practice of IHS Jane's Strategic Advisory Services (JSAS). From December 2006 to June 2008, Mr. Pippard was managing editor of *Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre (JTIC)*, an online terrorism threat assessment service.

Joseph J. Easson (Assistant Editor for IT) has been the Data Manager of CSTPV since September 2006. After completing an MA General (Hons) in Classics and History from the University of Edinburgh he obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Information Systems at Napier University. Since then he has worked on the development and implementation of IT systems for both commercial and educational institutions.

Brad McAllister (Assistant Editor) is lecturer at the University of Georgia's School of Public and International Affairs. Until 2009 he was a Research Fellow with CSTPV at the University of St. Andrews, where he specialized in the study of the internal organizing dynamics of terrorist networks. He has also worked for Georgia University's Center for International Trade and Security as a Research Fellow, investigating terrorism and proliferation issues.

Benjamin Freedman (Editorial Assistant) graduated from Bowdoin College (*magna cum laude*) with a degree in Government and Legal Studies. He served as a Research Intern for the Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. In addition, Benjamin Freedman interned for the U.S. Department of State in Marseille, France.

Perspectives on Terrorism (PT) seeks to provide a unique platform for established and emerging scholars to present their perspectives on the developing field of terrorism research and scholarship; to present original research and analysis; and to provide a forum for discourse and commentary on related issues. The journal could be characterized as 'nontraditional' in that it dispenses with traditional rigidities in order to allow its authors a high degree of flexibility in terms of content, style and length of article while at the same time maintaining professional scholarly standards.

About the Terrorism Research Initiative:

PT is a journal of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), an initiative that seeks to support the international community of terrorism researchers and scholars especially through the facilitation of collaborative and cooperative efforts. TRI was formed by scholars in order to provide the global community with centralized tools from which to better actualize the full potential of its labours. TRI is working to build a truly inclusive international community and empower it through the provision of collaborative projects to extend the impact of participants' research activities.

The Journal can be accessed at the following website URL:

www.terrorismanalysts.com

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Style and Formatting Guide for ‘Perspectives on Terrorism’

Purpose: The criteria and standards outlined in this document are meant to serve as guidance for editors and editorial assistants of *Perspectives on Terrorism* when styling and formatting manuscripts for publication.

I. Basic Manuscript Formatting

All text in manuscripts for publication should be submitted in Word and be single spaced and formatted in 12-point Times New Roman font. All text of pre-production draft manuscripts should be align-left until final production (Web site administrators will adjust manuscripts before uploading content onto the PT Web page, and manuscripts to be published in the print edition will be adjusted before final production).

Manuscripts should also include no paragraph indentation (flush with the left margin throughout the manuscript). A single line break should separate each paragraph from the proceeding or succeeding paragraph. A 3-line drop cap should be used for the first letter of the opening paragraph. Page margins should be 1 inch on each side.

If you wish to include images, tables or diagrams in your article then please provide these as image files in JPEG or PNG format.

A short biography of the author(s) should be included at the end of the manuscript with a line between the last sentence of the concluding paragraph and the biography. The name of the author(s) should be bolded and biography information should be italicized.

II. Titles and Headings

The main title of the manuscript should be bolded and in 16-point Times New Roman font. Names of authors should immediately follow the title on the next line and should be bolded in 12-point Times New Roman Font. Section headings/titles should also be bolded and in 12-point Times New Roman font. Subheadings within section headings/titles should be 12-point Times New Roman font, not bolded, and italicized.

In main titles, section titles/headings, and subheadings always 1) capitalize the first and the last word; 2) all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and subordinate conjunctions (“as”, “because”, “although”); and 3) lowercase all articles, coordinate conjunctions (“and”, “or”, “nor”), and prepositions regardless of length, when they are other than the first or last word.

Example:

Terrorism Today and Tomorrow (main title)

John Doe and Jane Smith (authors’ names)

Introduction (section heading)

This is the introduction text

Relevant Data

Statistics and data for paper

What Does It Mean? (section subheading)

Interpreting the data

The Next Attack

Explaining the data's predication

III. Citations

In the text of manuscripts citations should be in the form of bracketed endnotes, as in the following example:

According to General Custer, "I will win the battle against the Indians at Little Big Horn with ease." [1]

Endnotes should appear at the end of the article in 8-point Time New Roman font, as in the below example:

[1] John Smith, "Custer Guarantees Victory", *Atlantic Monthly*, A7, (1876).

Citations and/or quotations longer than one sentence, or three lines of text in the manuscript, should be indented ½ inch on a new line in block form with no quotation marks as in the following example:

According to Robert Pape, criteria based on research data were proposed to study why suicide terrorism has become such a proficient form of asymmetrical warfare independent of Islamic fundamentalism. He describes the initial psychological considerations as follows:

Islamic fundamentalism is not as closely associated with suicide terrorism as many people think. The world leader in suicide terrorism is a group that you may not be familiar with: the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka.

This is a Marxist group, a completely secular group that draws from the Hindu families of the Tamil regions of the country. They invented the famous suicide vest for their suicide assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991. The Palestinians got the idea of the suicide vest from the Tamil Tigers. (July 18, 2005, *The American Conservative*)

Using Pape's research and interpretation, it is apparent that... etc.