

Background Report: 9/11, Ten Years Later

THE UNIQUE NATURE OF 9/11

Among terrorism incidents in the United States and around the world, al-Qa'ida's attacks on September 11, 2001, are notably unique.

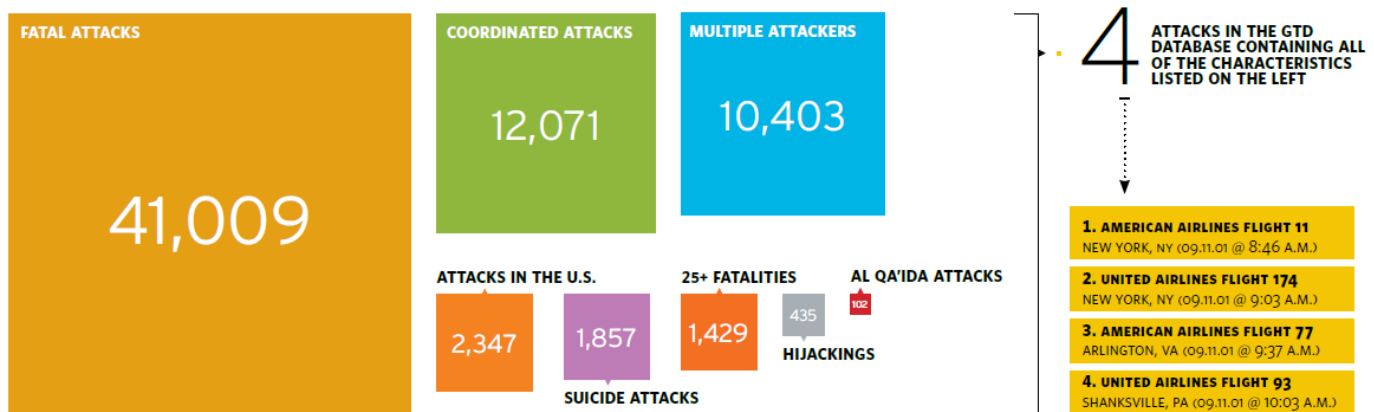
FATALITIES

- 2997 people died as a direct result of al-Qa'ida's 9/11 attacks: 2764 deaths at the World Trade Center and on Flights UA175 and AA11, 189 deaths at the Pentagon and on Flight AA77, and 44 deaths in Shanksville PA on Flight UA93.
- The attacks on the World Trade Center alone represent the deadliest terrorist attacks on record since 1970. Outside of 9/11, the deadliest terrorist attack occurred in 1994 in a Catholic church in Rwanda, when more than 1100 Tutsi refugees were killed by Hutu militants.
- More people died in the 9/11 attacks than in all other US terrorist attacks from 1970 to 2010. Excluding 9/11, nearly 500 people have died in terrorist attacks in the United States during this forty year period.

ATTACK TYPE

- The 9/11 attacks involved the first terrorist hijackings in the United States since 1984. There has not been a successful terrorist hijacking in the United States since 9/11.
- 0.5% of all terrorist attacks worldwide since 1970 have involved a hijacking.
- 9/11 was the first and only incident of terrorists using a hijacked plane to destroy a building.
- The attacks of 9/11 were the first cases of suicide bombing in the United States. There have been two successful terrorist suicide bombings in the United States since 9/11— one in which the attacker was killed when he flew a private plane into an IRS building in Austin, Texas, and another in which police shot and killed an assailant who was wearing explosives during a hostage standoff at Discovery Communications headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.
- 13.7% of US terrorism qualifies as being part of a coordinated attack, involving multiple targets in a concentrated period of time, like the four coordinated incidents of 9/11.

Dimensions of 9/11 in the Global Terrorism Database



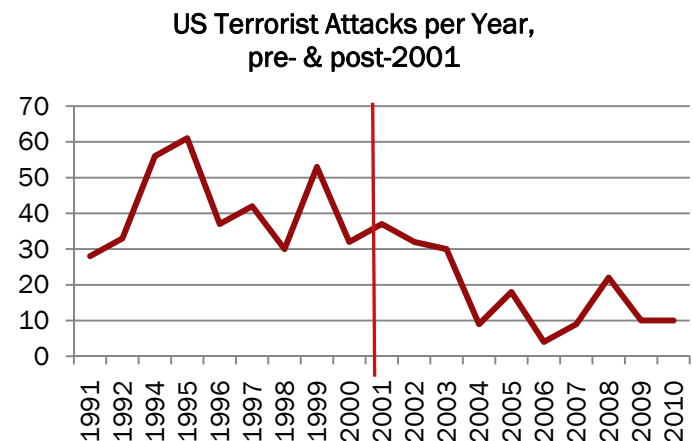
AL-QA'IDA

- The attacks of 9/11 are the only successful terrorist attacks by al-Qa'ida against the US homeland.
- Prior to 9/11, al-Qa'ida had successfully launched only three other terrorist attacks globally—having attacked the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the USS Cole in the Port of Aden in Yemen in 2000.
- Al-Qa'ida's activity is uniquely international, including attacks in 21 different countries, more than any other terrorist organization active since 1970. It is also especially lethal, bearing responsibility for less than 0.5% of terrorist attacks since 1998, but more than 5% of fatalities.

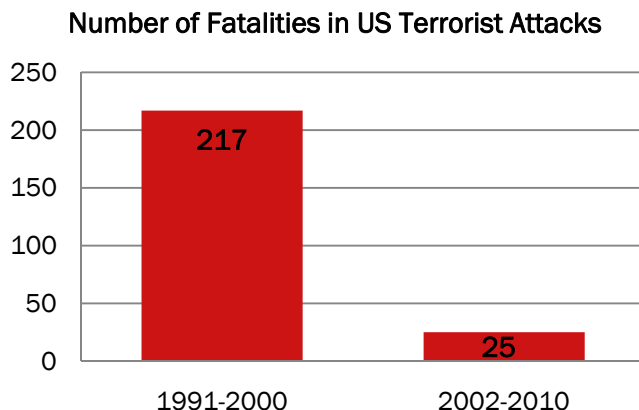
US TERRORISM SINCE 9/11

FREQUENCY OF ATTACKS

- The frequency of terrorist attacks in the United States has decreased since 2001.
- From 1991-2000, the United States averaged 41.3 terrorist attacks per year.¹ After 2001, the average number of US attacks decreased to 16 per year from 2002-2010.
- From 1991-2000, the United States ranked 20th globally in terms of number of terrorist attacks. The United States dropped to 21st for the period 2002-2010.
- Four terrorist attacks occurred in the United States in 2006. This was the smallest number of annual attacks in the country since the Global Terrorism Database began tracking incidents in 1970.



US TERRORISM DEATHS



- The average number of US terrorism fatalities per year has decreased since 2001.
- In the years prior to 2001, the average number of fatalities per terrorist attack in the United States was 0.42. This includes the 1995 bombing in Oklahoma City which killed 168. Following 2001, this rate decreased to 0.24 deaths per US terrorist attack.
- From 2003-2007, there were no fatalities from terrorist activity in the United States.
- Since 2008, seven of 42 US terrorist incidents have involved a fatality, with 22 deaths during this period (including 13 at Ft. Hood in 2009.)

¹Unfortunately, GTD does not include data on terrorist activity in 1993. For an explanation of this omission and efforts to restore the data, see <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/using-gtd/>.

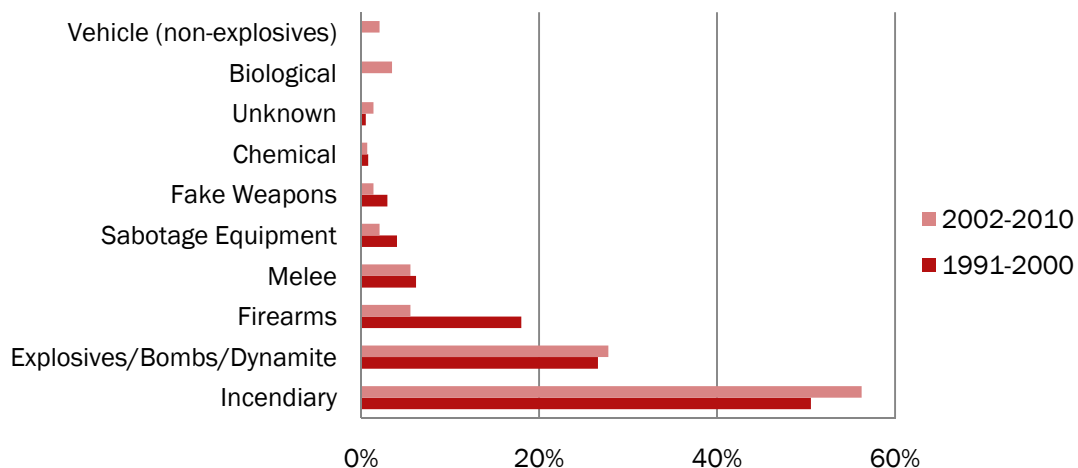
NATURE OF US TERRORIST ACTIVITY

- Terrorists launched attacks in 44 states, as well as Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico, between 1991 and 2000, while 30 states and Washington, D.C., experienced terrorist attacks after 2001.
- The concentration of terrorist activity shifted among states in the pre- and post-9/11 eras. California experienced the highest percentage of terrorist attacks for both periods, but the percent of attacks in California increased from 15% to 24% in the post-2001 period. The post-2001 period also saw increased activity levels in Washington State and Michigan.

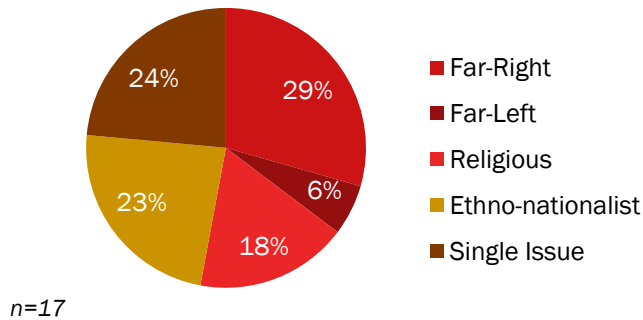
Concentration of Terrorist Activity at the State Level (10 states with highest number of attacks, 1991-2010)		
	1991-2000	2002-2010
California	15% of US attacks	24% of US attacks
New York	7%	6%
Florida	6%	5%
Oregon	6%	1%
Washington State	4%	6%
Illinois	4%	3%
New Mexico	3%	4%
Texas	3%	3%
Ohio	3%	1%
Michigan	2%	6%

- Terrorists' weapons of choice within the United States remained incendiary devices (used in 51% of pre-2001 cases and 56% of post-2001 cases) and explosives (27% and 28%, respectively). In the post-9/11 era, though, terrorists in the United States were far less likely to use firearms in attacks than they had been in the pre-9/11 era, with the rate of terrorist firearm usage decreasing from 18% to 6% post-9/11.

Terrorist Weapon Type in the United States



Primary Ideology of US Terrorist Groups, 1991-2010



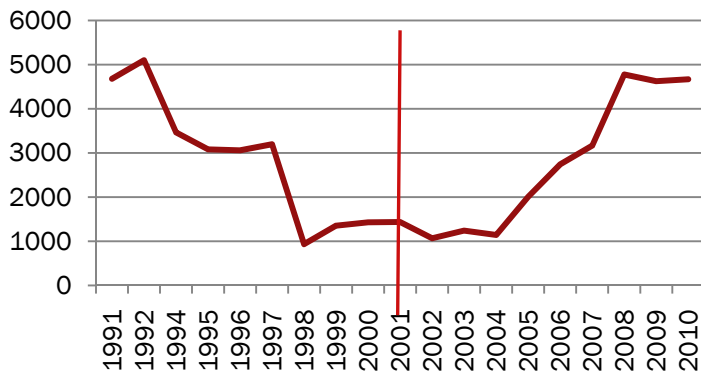
- Between 1991 and 2010 17 different terrorist groups carried out attacks in the United States representing a diverse array of ideologies. Far-right, ethno-nationalist, and single issue groups each account for roughly one-quarter of the groups. Eighteen percent were religious and 6% were far-left.

- Of the three religious terrorist groups targeting the United States from 1991 to 2010, al-Qa'ida was the only attacking group that was successful. Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) each made unsuccessful attempts in 2009 and 2010, respectively.

GLOBAL TERRORISM SINCE 9/11

FREQUENCY OF ATTACKS WORLDWIDE

Terrorist Attacks Worldwide per Year, pre- & post-2001



- Whereas the frequency of terrorist attacks in the United States has dropped steadily in the post-9/11 era, globally there has been an increase in terrorist activity since 2004.

- From 1991 to 2001, there was an average of 2922 terrorist attacks around the world each year, while the average number of attacks since 2001 has been 2826 per year. In just the last 5 years, though (2006-2010), the average number of attacks per year rose to 3994.

- The total number of attacks in 2010 (4669 incidents) was almost equal to the total number of attacks in 1991 (4680).

- The number of countries attacked by terrorists in the periods before and after 9/11 remained the same, with 150 countries experiencing a terrorist attack from 1991-2000 and from 2002-2010. However, the countries that experienced the most terrorist activity shifted pre- and post-9/11.

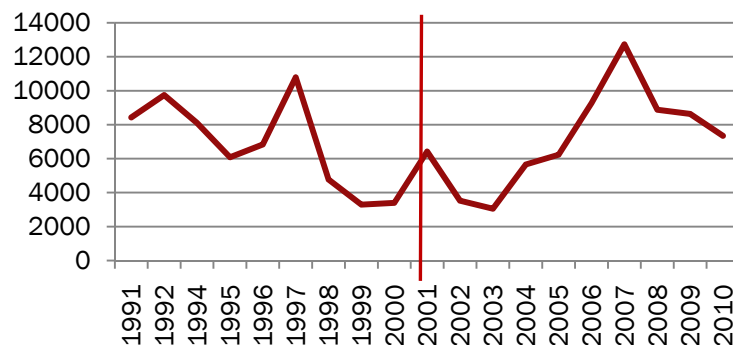
1991-2000		2002-2010	
Country	# of terrorist incidents	Country	# of terrorist incidents
Colombia	2585	Iraq	6307
India	1564	India	2749
Pakistan	1554	Pakistan	2553
Algeria	1487	Afghanistan	2443
Peru	1288	Thailand	1458

- Iraq was the site of more than 6300 attacks since 2002 and there were substantial increases in Afghanistan and Thailand as well, while the relative levels of activity in South American countries (Colombia and Peru) reduced after 2001. India and Pakistan remained the sites of high levels of terrorism both pre- and post-9/11.

TERRORISM DEATHS WORLDWIDE

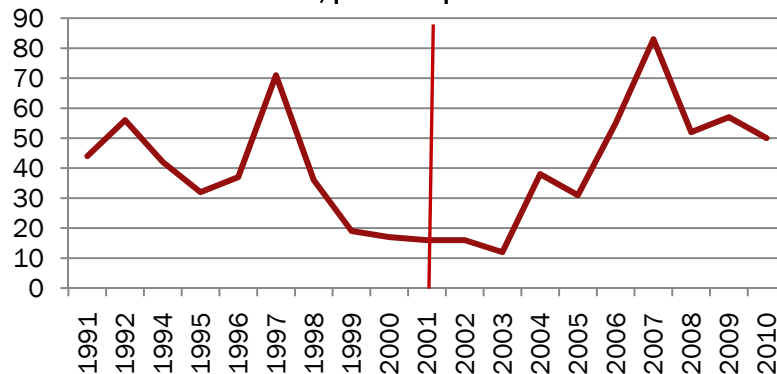
- Globally, over 65000 people have died in terrorist attacks since 2001, with an average of 7258 deaths in terrorist attacks per year. This annual average has increased since the 1991-2000 period, during which there were more than 61000 terrorist fatalities around the world, averaging 6825 deaths per year

Terrorism Fatalities Worldwide per Year, pre- & post-2001



- Prior to 9/11 the total number of deaths per year declined gradually. In the absence of 9/11 terrorism fatalities, 2001 would have been the lowest since the 1970s. Since then, the annual rate of fatalities increased steadily through 2007 and has recently been declining once again.
- Mass-casualty attacks that cause more than 25 fatalities follow a pattern similar to that of terrorism generally during the 1991-2010 time period.

Mass-Casualty* Terrorist Attacks Worldwide Per Year, pre- and post-2001



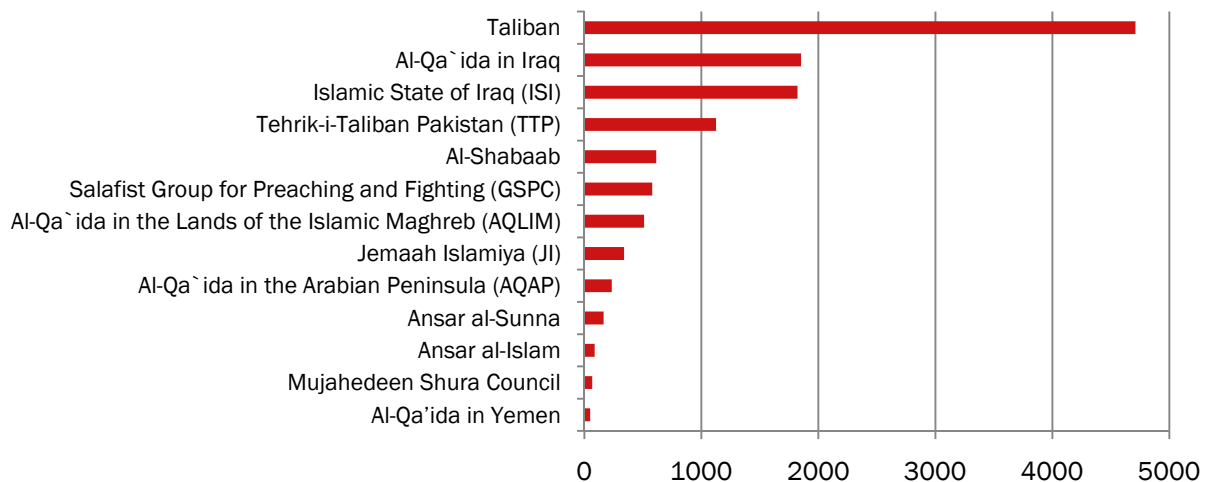
* >25 fatalities

- Mass-casualty terrorism has become more concentrated, post-2001. From 1991-2000, 51 countries experience at least one mass-casualty terrorist attack. This number decreased to 34 countries from 2002-2010, with Iraq the location of 46.7% of the 394 post-2001 mass-casualty terror attacks.

AL-QA'IDA-AFFILIATED TERRORISM GLOBALLY

- Al-Qa'ida-affiliated and -inspired terrorists have proliferated since 9/11. The deadliest post-9/11 US terrorist incident has been the 2009 attack on Fort Hood (Texas) which left 13 people dead following a rampage by Nidal Hasan—an individual who had been in contact with Anwar al-Awlaki, a radical Muslim cleric and purported operational commander of al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula.
- Groups allied with al-Qa'ida are responsible for over 12000 deaths worldwide.

Terrorism Fatalities by AQ Affiliated/Allied Groups (through 2010)



ABOUT THIS REPORT

The data presented here are drawn from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). The GTD contains information on more than 98,000 terrorist incidents that have occurred around the world since 1970. For more information about the GTD, visit www.start.umd.edu/gtd.

The GTD is a project of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). START aims to provide timely guidance on how to reduce the incidence of terrorism and disrupt terrorism networks, as well as enhance the resilience of society in the face of terrorist threats at home and abroad. Additional information about START is available at www.start.umd.edu.

Questions about this report can be directed to Erin Miller (gtd@start.umd.edu) or Kathleen Smarick (kismarick@start.umd.edu).

