

# Terrorist Tactics and Trends Handbook

O F F I C E O F A N T I T E R R O R I S M A S S I S T A N C E



## **The price a country pays for terrorism:**

**Lives lost**

**Victims who survived with their lives but who live with grievous emotional and physical scars**

**A society living in fear of the next attack**

**Resources diverted from basic social needs such as health care, education, and other civil rights to fight terrorism**





## What is Terrorism?

### International

The perpetrator, target location, or victims are from two or more countries.

### Domestic

The perpetrator, target location, and victims are all from a single country.

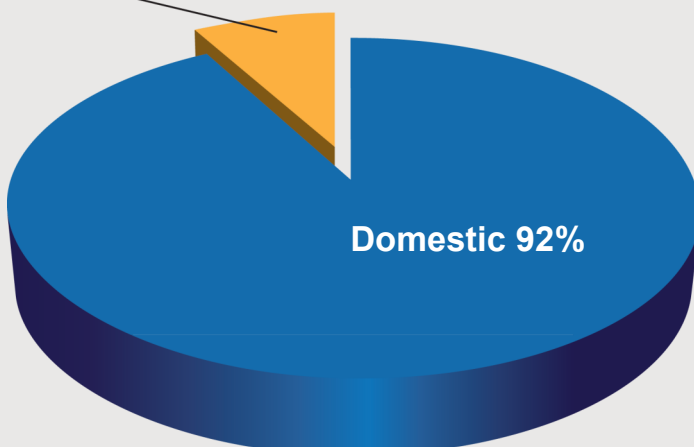
Decades ago when terrorism analysis was first studied, data on domestic attacks was difficult to acquire, so typically only international terrorism data was collected. Since the end of the 1990s, news reporting had sufficiently improved and domestic terrorism became easier to analyze. These data show that more than 90 percent of all attacks are domestic.

A growing concern with international terrorism is the active and aggressive recruiting of fighters who have passports to countries that the terrorist organization wants to attack. As a member of the US 911 Commission reported, and as is often repeated, "For terrorists, travel documents are as important as weapons."



## Definitive Features of Terrorism

International 8%



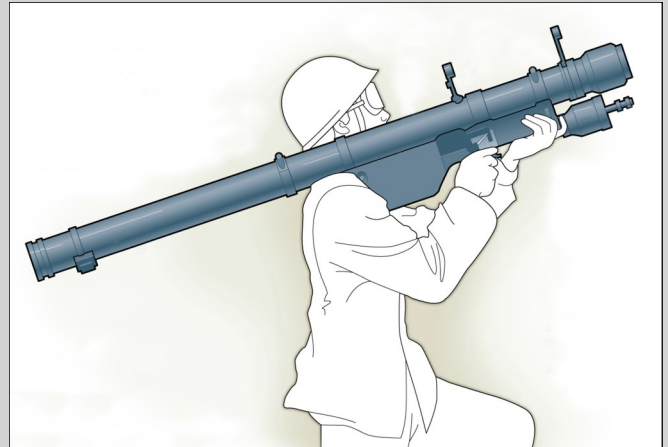
*RAND database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents 1998-2008.*



## Growing Threats: MANPADS

Authorities around the world fear the proliferation of MANPADS because they are capable of firing a missile at twice the speed of sound. This missile can engage a plane as high as 15,000 feet over 3 miles away within 10 seconds.

Because of the relative ease of access and potential for large-scale casualties, civil aviation is an attractive target for terrorists with access to MANPADS. With attacks against civil aviation goes the tourism economy.



## Growing Threats: Cyber-Terrorism

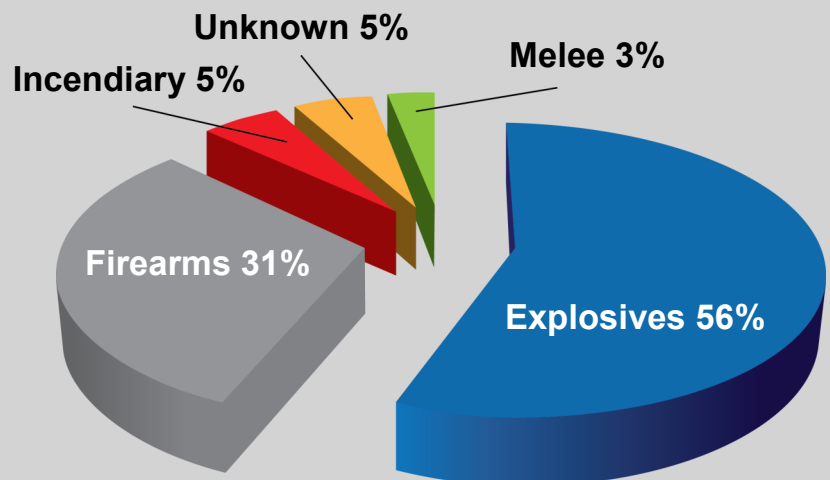


Cyber-terrorism is one of the greatest threats facing many nations.

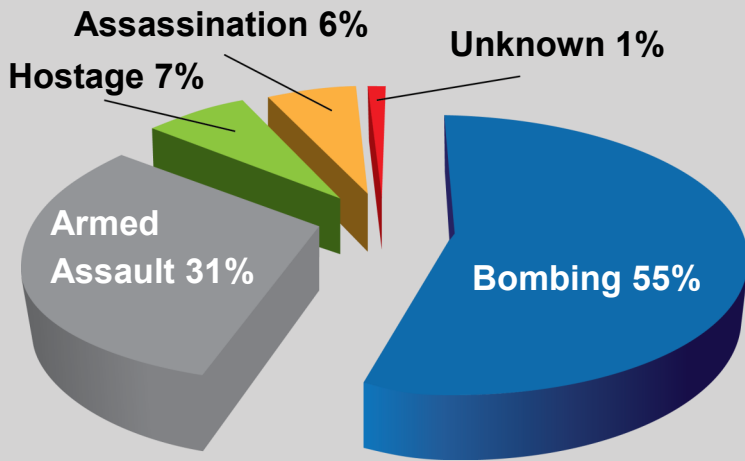
The greatest fear is a large-scale attack on a power grid that could shut down government agencies, crash planes into buildings, and bring the economy to a halt. These fears have been growing with recent attacks include hacking attempts on the US, French, Israeli, and British defense agencies, malware attack on Iranian computers, and hacking attempts against the oil industries of many countries.

## Terrorist Weapons

The most common weapons used by terrorists worldwide are explosives and firearms.



## Terrorist Tactics



Bombings make up 55 percent of all terrorist attacks. Over the past 10 years, terrorists have killed more than 28,000 and injured 80,000 worldwide in bombing attacks.

The second most popular type of attack is armed assault, which accounts for 31 percent of all terrorist attacks.

Hostage-taking has declined in the past 10 years and have targeted assassinations. Indiscriminate attacks have been on the rise.

*Study of Terrorism and Responses (START) Global Terrorism Database 2002-2012. <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>*

## Trends in Tactics

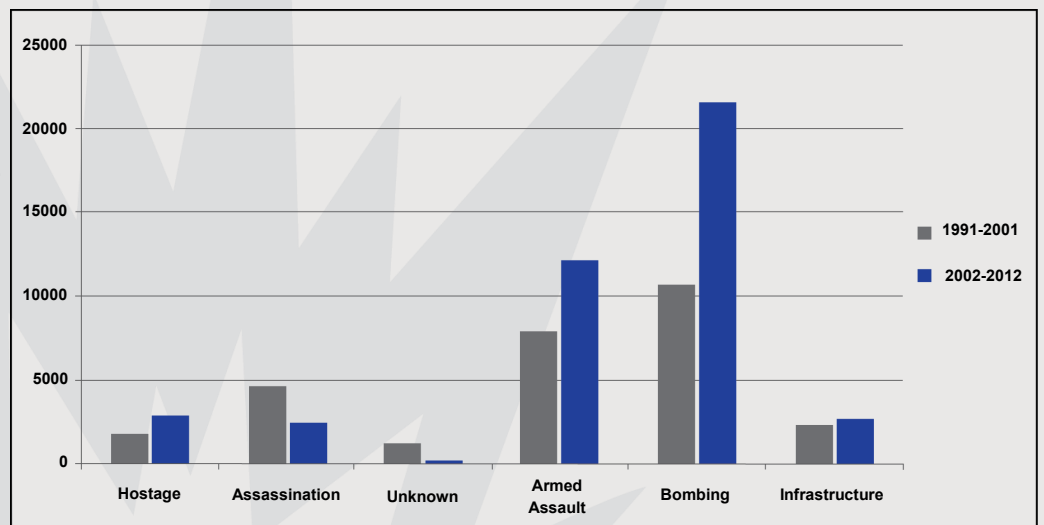
There has been a movement from large, organized terrorist groups to self-starting individuals and small groups. This movement is often called lone-wolf terrorism for the single individuals or homegrown for the self-starting groups.

Lone-wolf attacks have become more common as individuals gain the ability to strike without the training and funding provided by a terrorist organization. All they need is access to the Internet.

Two biggest changes in recent years are the large increase in percentage of armed assaults and bombings. The increase is based on more active terrorist campaigns, smaller bombings, and a surge in suicide bombings

Although suicide bombings account for only 5 percent of attacks, they are responsible for 21 percent of the casualties.

Terrorists still consider the suicide bomber the ultimate smart bomb.



*Study of Terrorism and Responses (START) Global Terrorism Database 2002-2012. <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>*

## Terrorists Use of Information Technology

The Internet is an essential tool for many terrorist groups—they use email to communicate and websites to recruit, train, and spread propaganda. They also use it to find maps, schedules, and other information on targets.

They now harness the interactive capabilities of chatrooms, instant messenger, blogs, video-sharing websites, and more to attract members and followers as the Internet becomes their new social environment.

Several larger terror groups publish magazines and journals that can be downloaded from the Internet, each promoting extremism and violence and offering instructions on building bombs and organizing assaults.



## Social Media and Terrorism

Online social networking platforms have become a powerful apparatus for attracting members and followers. These virtual communities are gaining popularity worldwide, particularly among the younger generation.

Due to the accessibility, affordability, and broad reach of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Terrorist groups increasingly use social media to recruit new members, spread their message and achieve their goals.

Lone-wolves, even though they operate alone, are recruited, radicalized, trained, and directed by others by way of the Internet. The Internet provides them with direct access to a community of like-minded individuals around the world as well as to training manuals, radicalizing material, and videos.



## Terrorists Publications



Before widespread use of the Internet, terrorists used other forms of media to spread propaganda and entice members.

Today, a number of high-quality, professional-looking magazines can be downloaded from the Internet, each promoting extremism and violence and offering instructions on how to conduct surveillance, organize armed assaults, and conduct their operations. Some of the magazines contain poetry, and others actually sell merchandise. All are intended to recruit and radicalize.

## **Staying Informed**

The RAND Corporation

<http://www.rand.org/topics/terrorism-and-homeland-security.html>

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START)

<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>

Counterterrorism Studies Center to The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point (CTC)

<https://www.ctc.usma.edu/publications/sentinel>

U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/>



This instructional handbook is a modification of TCD's Terrorist Tactics and Trends Module.  
Its distribution is limited to ATA training.