

START 

NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR THE
STUDY OF TERRORISM AND RESPONSES TO TERRORISM

A Center of Excellence of the U.S. Department of
Homeland Security based at the University of Maryland

“START is at the forefront of the scientific study of terrorism and continues to move the field forward. The consortium brings together the leading minds in terrorism research and has developed rigorous methodologies and analyses that will greatly benefit policy and operations across the homeland security enterprise.” — Sharla Rausch, Director, Human Factors/Behavioral Sciences Division, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate

“START has provided significant advances in research and findings in the area of terrorism and response to terrorism events. START has demonstrated the value of its contributions. We are firmly convinced that their expertise in the multi-faceted nature of terrorism will continue to benefit the nation’s defense against such acts through better understanding, preparedness tactics and security measures.” — Matthew Clark, Director of the Office of University Programs, DHS Science and Technology Directorate

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VISION

- ▶ **The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, known as START, was established in 2005 to use state-of-the-art theories, methods and data from the social and behavioral sciences to better understand the origins, dynamics and social and psychological impacts of terrorism. Our research informs decisions on how to disrupt terrorist networks, reduce the incidence of terrorism and enhance the resilience of our society in the face of the terrorist threat.**

START accomplishes its mission through a multi-institutional, multidisciplinary team of experts from throughout the social and behavioral sciences. We bring to the study of terrorism newly created databases and expertise in a range of methodological approaches. START also integrates training and education into its research program and engages in outreach to the policy and practitioner communities.

Funded by an initial \$12 million Center of Excellence grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Science & Technology Directorate (S&T) and aligned with S&T's Human Factors/Behavioral Sciences Division, START also receives support from units within DHS, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Transportation Security Administration, as well as from other federal agencies, including the National Science Foundation and the Department of Defense. START's research is intended to benefit homeland security professionals at federal, state and local levels.

"We want to do what universities do best, which is to turn out high-quality, objective research and train the next generation of researchers."

— Gary LaFree, START Director and Principal Investigator

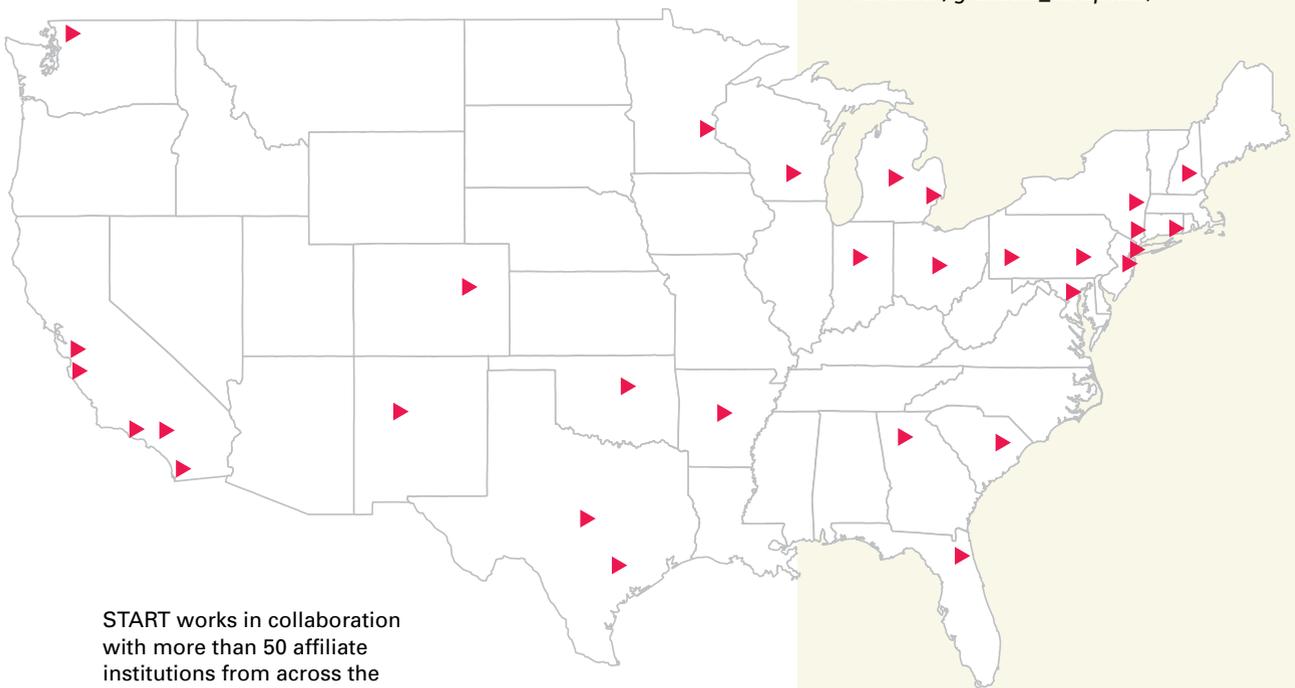
THE START CONSORTIUM

RESEARCH STRATEGY

The START consortium produces cutting-edge research related to three questions:

1. What can be done to counter radicalization in the U.S. and abroad?
2. What can be done to anticipate terrorist behavior and actions and to undermine sympathy for terrorists?
3. What can be done to encourage resilience before and recovery after attacks?

▶ THE START CONSORTIUM



START works in collaboration with more than 50 affiliate institutions from across the United States and around the world.



EDUCATION, TRAINING

Consistent with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) goals for its Centers of Excellence, START is dedicated to training and mentoring a new generation of scholars and analysts capable of examining questions related to the behavior of terrorists and terrorist groups and to the issue of how societies can best prepare for dealing with a terrorist threat or responding to a terrorist attack.

Terrorism Analysis Graduate Certificate Program

START offers an online, four-course graduate certificate program addressing terrorist motivations and behaviors, individual and group responses to terrorism, development of counterterrorism policy, and analysis of empirical data on terrorism and responses to terrorism. Accredited through the University of Maryland, this program employs faculty members from throughout START's 40+ university consortium. (www.start.umd.edu/start/education/graduate_certificate)

ING AND OUTREACH

Curriculum Development

Since 2005, START faculty members from across the consortium have taught over 3,000 graduate and undergraduate students in over 100 courses, including classes such as: Community Responses to Terrorism; Development and Control of Weapons of Mass Destruction; Rhetoric and Bioterrorism; and Terrorist Tactics and Innovation. In addition, START maintains an online syllabi repository on courses related to the study of the human causes and consequences of terrorism. (www.start.umd.edu/education/syllabi)

Training Offered by START Members

In addition to training the next generation of homeland security professionals, START is dedicated to direct training programs with current homeland security professionals. Since 2005, START faculty from across the consortium have delivered nearly 100 training programs to over 5,000 professionals, including programs such as: Introduction to CBRN Terrorism, the Patriot Act and its Implications in the War on Terrorism, Psychological Consequences of Disasters and Threat Assessment in Terrorism Analysis. Audience members have included homeland security professionals, university faculty, crime analysts and public health officials, among others.

Student Research Opportunities

START's Summer Research Program, For-Credit Internship Program and Research Assistantship Program allow students to work closely with START faculty members throughout the consortium on large-scale social science research projects. In addition to these training and mentorship programs, START offers two monetary awards to student researchers. The Undergraduate Research Program provides high-achieving undergraduate students with a \$3,000 stipend to conduct research on a faculty-led project while developing a complementary independent project. The Terrorism Research Award provides advanced graduate students and junior scholars

with \$5,000 toward research. (www.start.umd.edu/start/education/undergraduate_research_program) (www.start.umd.edu/start/education/terrorism_research_awards)

Terrorism Studies Minor Program

In this University of Maryland-based program, START has developed and administers an undergraduate minor in terrorism studies, a highly selective, five-course program focusing on human causes and consequences of terrorism and including:

- ▶ A study abroad program on counterterrorism
- ▶ Career profile sessions
- ▶ A day trip to New York City to provide students with firsthand exposure to the events of the World Trade Center collapse through the eyes of emergency responders on-site on Sept. 11, 2001.

(www.start.umd.edu/start/education/undergraduate_minor)

Homeland Security Federal Semester

In this University of Maryland-based program, START collaborates with the Office of Undergraduate Studies on a four-course sequence focusing on creation and administration of homeland security policy and providing students with an opportunity to both study and participate in the federal policymaking process.

Career Development Program

In this University of Maryland-based program, START awards full scholarships and stipends to high-achieving undergraduate and graduate students interested in homeland security. These programs provide students with academic and professional mentors, research and internship experiences and career skills workshops in order to help them successfully transition into careers relevant to the study of terrorism.

For more information on START's educational programs see www.start.umd.edu/start/education or e-mail education@start.umd.edu.

Terrorist Operations and Interventions

Effectiveness of Counterterrorism Strategies

MARTHA CRENSHAW, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

“Effectiveness of Counterterrorism Strategies” uses qualitative analysis to examine the development and implementation of government policies designed to prevent terrorist attacks in the United States, Canada, Israel, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, Britain, Spain and India and international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, European Union and NATO.

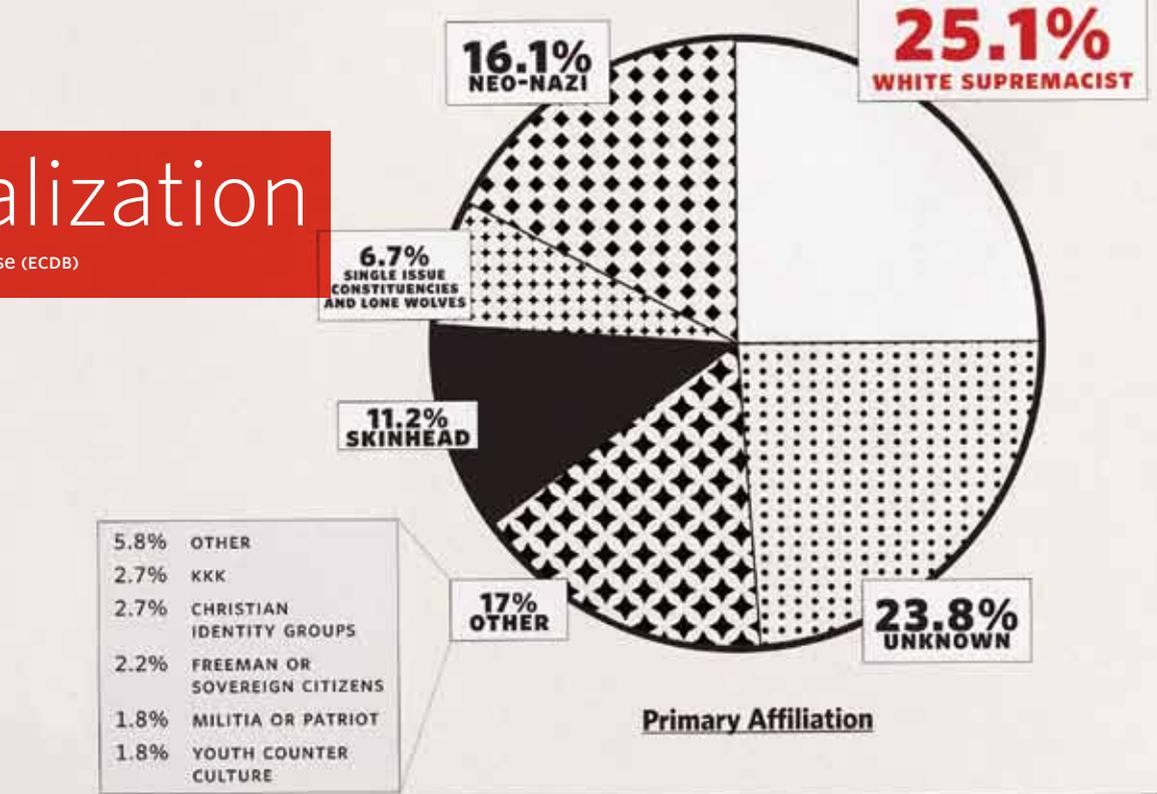
Data are collected from open-source historical documents and supplemented by interviews with past and current officials from the countries and organizations being studied. The impact of counterterrorism measures is also examined from the perspective of the terrorist via review of memoirs, public statements, media interviews, correspondence and other evidence of reactions to government

decisions and actions from terrorists. Results of this study show the wide variation in policies being implemented across these countries, despite the fact that they are all democracies. Variation stems, in part, from differing perceptions of threat across the countries but also from the political realities in each country: for instance, to what degree is the national government—rather than regional institutions—responsible for security and counterterrorism? What resources does the country have available to commit to this effort? The research also shows there is no universal or shared conception of how to measure the effectiveness of these policies within or across governments, raising questions about how good decisions can be made about the most appropriate policies to pursue.



Radicalization

Extremist Crime Database (ECDB)



Prior Arrests

31.8%
OF SUSPECTS

Group Membership

26.0% FORMAL
 23.3% ACTING WITH OTHERS,
 NO CLEAR BOUNDARIES
 19.3% UNKNOWN
 15.7% INFORMAL
 15.7% ACTED ALONE

Occupation (if known)

35.9% UNEMPLOYED
 23.1% BLUE-COLLAR
 15.4% STUDENT
 14.0% OTHER
 7.7% SELF-EMPLOYED
 3.8% GOVERNMENT

JOSHUA D. FREILICH, JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE; STEVEN M. CHERMAK, MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

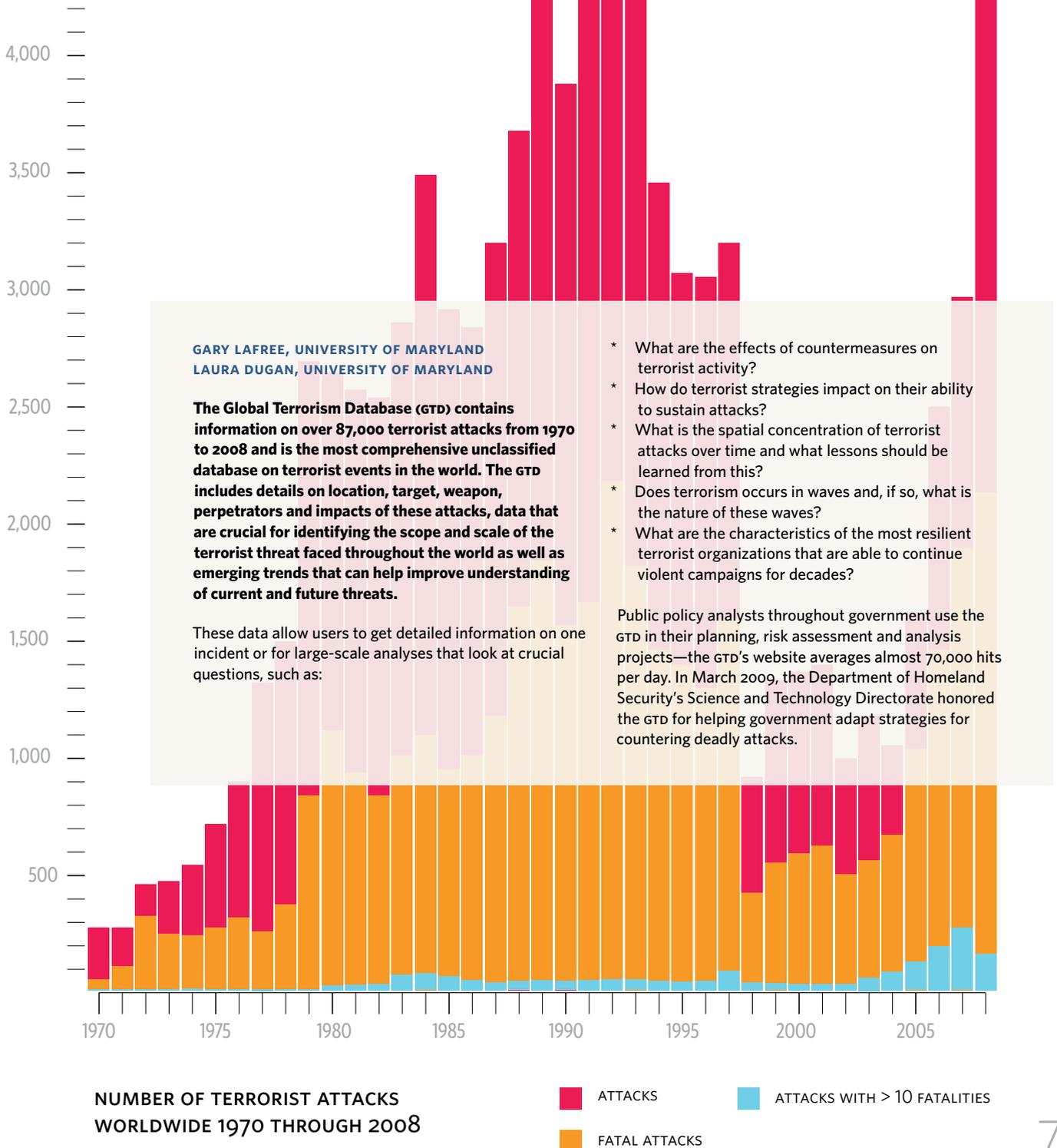
The Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) records documented crimes committed by extremists in the United States between 1990 and 2008. The ECDB includes data on the group (if applicable), incident, victim, suspect and assessment of open-source information—a total of more than 400 variables. It can be used to investigate such analytical issues as the connections between types of offenses, whether different types of crimes move together on the micro or macro levels, patterns that have changed over time and individual or regional variations in activity.

The ECDB has focused on criminal activity by far-rightists and contains information on more than 300 homicide events involving more than 650 suspects and another 100-plus attempted homicide events. This data-collection effort has revealed that, since 1990, far-rightists in the U.S. have killed at least 49 law enforcement officials. START is now expanding the ECDB to examine similar activities by jihadists as well as far-leftists, particularly animal rights/ environmental extremists. Efforts are also under way to collect structured information on involvement of these extremists in illegal financial schemes. The ECDB is a valuable tool for law enforcement, academia and policymakers. The expanded information

on the criminal histories of extremists allows for the comparison of the behavior of groups that do and don't employ terrorist methods, examination of the wide range of crimes committed by extremists and development and refinement of domestic training curricula for criminal justice personnel. Most importantly, it suggests precursor criminal behaviors, possibly allowing law enforcement to prevent terrorist attacks.

Cross-Cutting

Global Terrorism Database (GTD)



START Investigators at the University of Maryland

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Margaret Wilson, *University of Surrey (UK)*

Sue-Ming Yang, *Georgia State University*

The Homeland Security Centers of Excellence program is an integrated network of university-based centers conducting research critical to the mission of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and its Science and Technology Directorate. The Centers of Excellence bring together leading experts and researchers to conduct multidisciplinary research and education for homeland security solutions.



START ➡➡

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