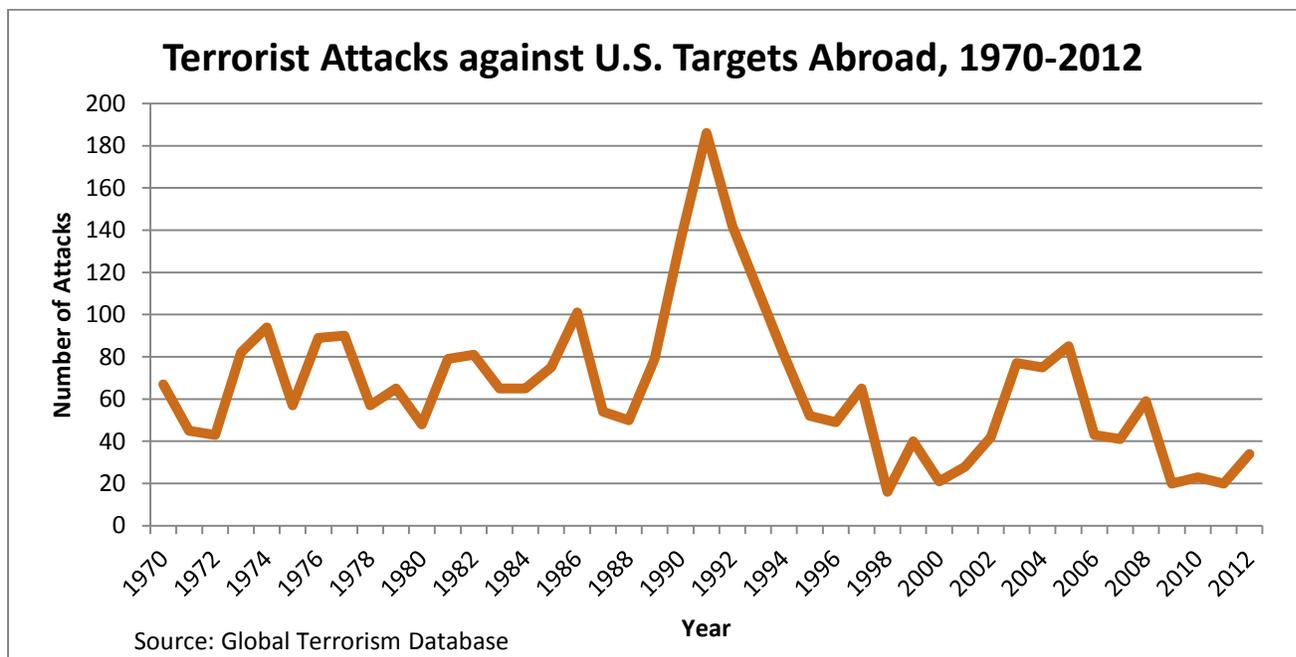


August 2013 Security Threat to Americans Abroad

On Aug. 2, 2013 the U.S. State Department issued an alert¹ to Americans traveling abroad, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, citing potential threats from al-Qa'ida and affiliated organizations in the Arabian Peninsula. The alert references a wide variety of potential tactics and targets, and remains in effect throughout the month of August. On Aug. 4, the State Department released a subsequent statement² indicating that, out of an “abundance of caution,” diplomatic posts in Abu Dhabi, Amman, Cairo, Riyadh, Dhahran, Jeddah, Doha, Dubai, Kuwait, Manama, Muscat, Sana’a, Tripoli, Antananarivo, Bujumbura, Djibouti, Khartoum, Kigali, and Port Louis will remain closed following the Eid celebration, through Saturday, Aug. 10. On Aug. 6, the State Department issued a warning³ to Americans traveling in Yemen and announced a reduction in emergency U.S. Government personnel in Yemen. In light of these events, START has compiled the following background information on terrorist attacks against U.S. targets abroad, attacks on U.S. diplomatic targets in particular, and the recent activity of al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), using data from START’s Global Terrorism Database (GTD).

ATTACKS ON U.S. TARGETS ABROAD

- Between 1970 and 2012⁴ there have been more than 2,700 terrorist attacks on U.S. targets abroad⁵ that caused more than 3,000 deaths (both U.S. and foreign nationals). Of these attacks, 17.5 percent (n=477) took place within the past decade.



- More than half (54.5%) of all attacks on U.S. targets abroad were bombings, 14.8 percent were armed assaults, 10.7 percent were kidnappings, and 8.9 percent were facility/infrastructure attacks. Assassinations represent 6.5 percent of attacks on U.S. targets abroad and the remaining tactics include hijackings, hostage taking (barricade) incidents, and unarmed assaults.
- The vast majority of attacks on U.S. targets abroad were non-lethal (70.3%), however 52 attacks incurred more than 10 fatalities, and three individual attacks in particular resulted in more than 200 fatalities.

¹ http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_6042.html

² <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/08/212660.htm>

³ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/08/212720.htm>

⁴ Data for 1993 are missing from the GTD. This figure interpolates 1993 statistics by averaging the number of attacks in 1992 and 1994.

⁵ Note that these figures are a conservative assessment of attacks on U.S. targets abroad, as they exclude attacks that target distinctly multinational or international interests, which may include U.S. entities.

Mass Casualty Attacks against U.S. Targets Abroad

10/23/1983: A suicide truck bombing targeted the United States Marine Corps barracks building in Beirut, Lebanon, killing 241 American service members. A coordinated explosion at the same time targeted a separate building housing French paratroopers. These attacks were claimed by Islamic Jihad, a name used by Hezbollah for its operations in Lebanon.

12/21/1988: An explosion on board Pan American Flight 103 from London to New York destroyed the plane in mid-air over Lockerbie, Scotland, Great Britain. The attack killed everyone on the plane and several individuals on the ground, a total of 270 fatalities including 189 Americans.

08/07/1998: A suicide truck bomb exploded outside of the United States Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, killing 213 people, including 12 Americans. Four thousand people were also injured in the attack, which was perpetrated by al-Qa'ida. A coordinated explosion also took place at the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

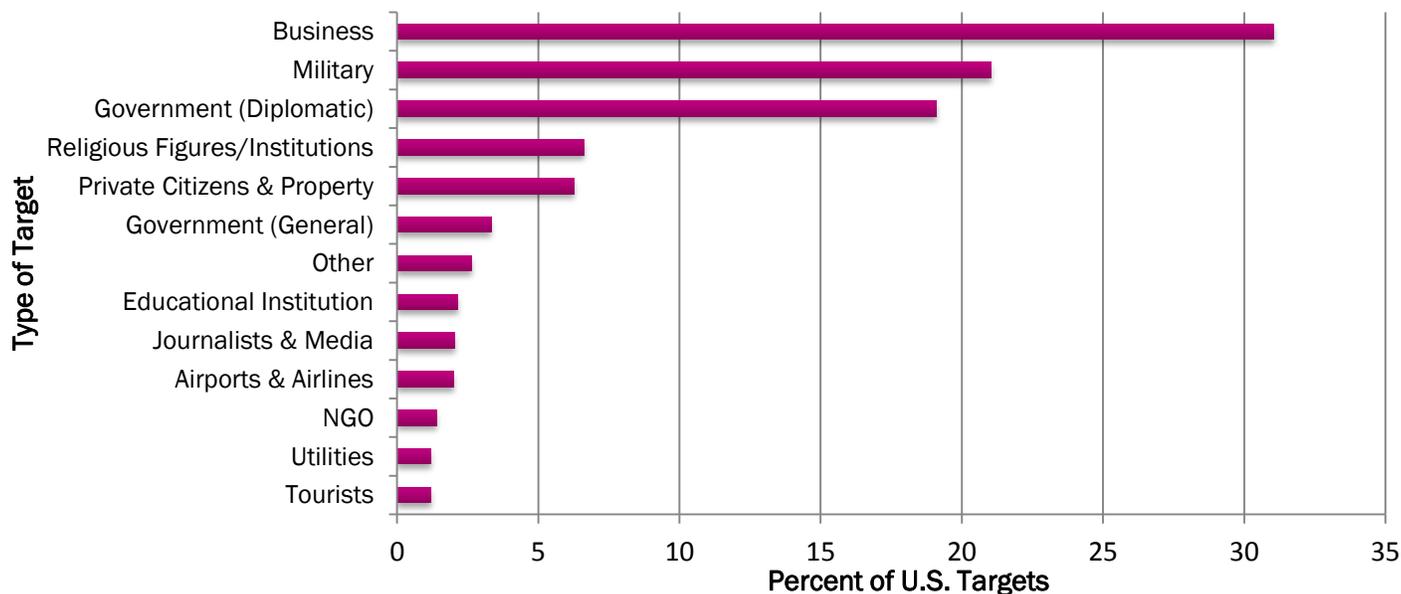
**Table 1: Terrorist attacks on U.S. targets 1970-2012
in countries where diplomatic facilities have been closed**

Country	Attacks on U.S. Targets	Fatalities	Attacks on U.S. Diplomatic Targets	Fatalities in Attacks on U.S. Diplomatic Targets
Yemen	32	45	9	3
Jordan	23	46	9	3
Saudi Arabia	15	49	3	16
Egypt	11	34	4	0
Kuwait	11	5	2	0
Sudan	8	7	1	2
Bahrain	4	1	1	0
Libya	3	4	3	4
Qatar	2	2	1	1
United Arab Emirates	2	0	0	0
Madagascar	1	0	0	0

Source: Global Terrorism Database

- Terrorist attacks on U.S. targets abroad occurred in 129 different countries between 1970 and 2012, including 11 of the 16 countries where the State Department has recently closed diplomatic posts.
- Terrorist attacks against U.S. targets abroad most commonly target business interests. Companies, including hotel chains, fast food chains, automotive companies, and oil companies, represent more than 30 percent of all U.S. targets abroad. U.S. military targets are second most common (21%), followed by U.S. diplomatic targets (19%). Aside from attacks on hotels, tourists represent just 1.2 percent of all U.S. targets of terrorism abroad.

Types of U.S. Targets Attacked Abroad, 1970-2012



Source: Global Terrorism Database

ATTACKS ON U.S. DIPLOMATIC TARGETS ABROAD

- Between 1970 and 2012 there have been 521 terrorist attacks on U.S. diplomatic targets abroad, including embassies, consulates, and personnel in 92 countries.
- These attacks caused nearly 500 deaths, almost half (43%) taking place in the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi described above. Attacks in just seven other countries, including Lebanon, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Peru, and Tanzania caused more than 200 additional deaths.
- Since the U.S. Embassy attacks in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, there have been 81 attacks against U.S. diplomatic targets in 35 countries. For 34 of these attacks, the GTD has identified a perpetrator group. Most of the perpetrators of these attacks belong to the al-Qa`ida network.

Table 2: Perpetrators of attacks on diplomatic targets abroad, 1999-2012

Perpetrator Group	Attacks	Fatalities
Al-Qa`ida	1	5
Al-Qa`ida in Iraq	2	5
Al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)	2	10
Al-Qa`ida in Yemen	1	2
Ansar al-Sharia (Libya)	2	4
Asa'ib Ahl al-Haqq	1	0
Baloch Liberation Front (BLF)	1	1
Brigades of Imprisoned Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman	1	0
Haqqani Network	2	10
Hizb-i-Islami	1	0
Islamic Jihad Group (IJG)	1	2
Jemaah Islamiya (JI)	1	0
Lashkar-e-Omar	1	12
Liberation Army for Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac	1	0

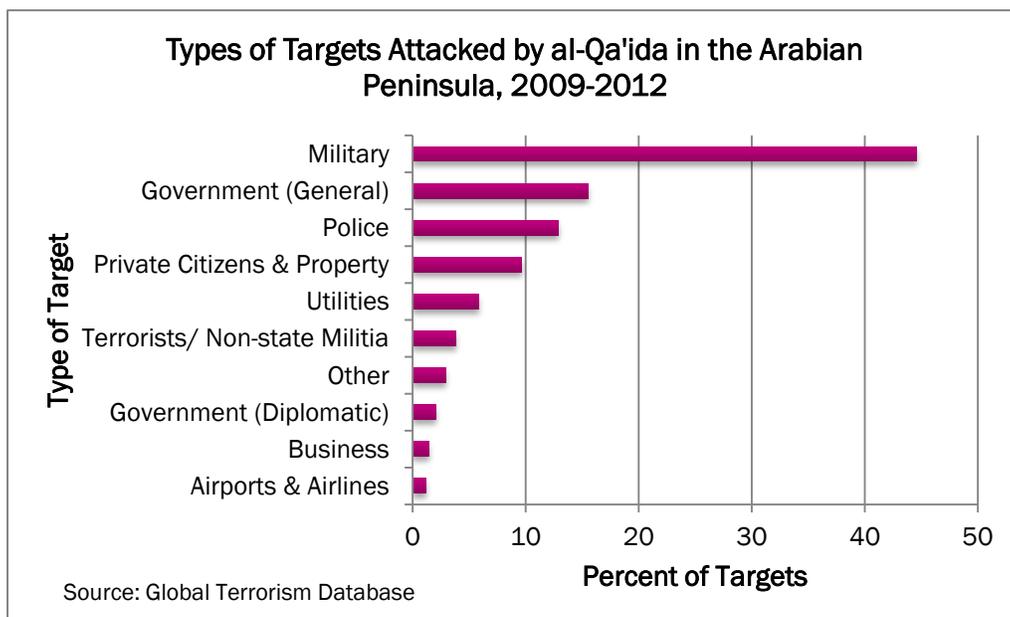
Mahdi Army	1	0
Mujahedeen Corps in Iraq	1	2
Popular Resistance Committees	1	3
Revolutionary Struggle	1	0
September 11	2	0
Shining Path (SL)	1	9
Taliban	5	10
Tawhid and Jihad	2	2
Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	2	4

Source: Global Terrorism Database

AL-QA'IDA IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Reports indicate that the specific threat that led to the recent security measures in Yemen is linked to al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Between 2009 and 2012 AQAP⁶ carried out more than 320 attacks, all but four of which took place in Yemen.

- The average number of fatalities per AQAP attack is 4.7, considerably higher than the average number of fatalities per attack for all perpetrator groups that have carried out more than ten attacks, which is 2.8. However, AQAP's rate of successful⁷ attacks is 87.7 percent, somewhat lower than the 92 percent average for the most active perpetrator groups. In particular, AQAP is responsible for several high-profile failed attacks on U.S. targets, including the December 2009 attempt by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab to detonate explosives on Northwest Airlines Flight 253 as it approached Detroit, Michigan. Also, in 2010 AQAP operatives in Yemen planted explosives hidden in printer cartridges on cargo planes bound for the United States, however authorities intercepted the planes in Dubai, United Arab Emirates and Leicestershire, Great Britain and defused the devices before they detonated.
- While AQAP has not successfully carried out major attacks against Western targets, the group's English language propaganda emphasizes its international reach, both through inspiring homegrown violent extremist attacks and attempting high profile (if failed) international attacks from Yemen. Despite this particular propaganda campaign, the vast majority of AQAP's violence and resources target Yemen and the broader Arab world.
- The victims of attacks attributed to AQAP are almost always Yemeni, and approximately 45 percent of the group's attacks target the military in an ongoing campaign for control of territory. On occasion, AQAP adopts the name Ansar al-Sharia for such attacks, as well as those against Yemeni government and police targets. However, the group has also targeted foreign diplomats from Bulgaria, Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, as well as a French oil company. It has also been implicated in attacks on tourists from countries including Austria, Finland, and Switzerland.



⁶ Al-Qa'ida affiliated groups based in Saudi Arabia and Yemen adopted the name "Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula" as early as the mid-2000s, however we focus this analysis on the current incarnation of AQAP, which organized in 2009 and is comprised of residual al-Qa'ida elements in Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

⁷ The GTD includes attacks that are attempted, insofar as the perpetrator is "out the door," but not successfully carried out because, for example, explosives fail to detonate or the attack is otherwise thwarted.

- AQAP has carried out attacks throughout Yemen, however its violent activity is particularly concentrated in Abyan, Adan, Hadramaut, and Shabwah governorates, which combined comprise more than 70 percent of the group's attacks. Only 25 attacks took place in the capital city of Sana'a between 2009 and 2012, 18 of which targeted Yemeni or foreign government entities. AQAP also frequently targets energy infrastructure, including bombings of both oil and gas pipelines in Adan, Ma'rib, and especially Shabwah governorate.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

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The data presented here are drawn from START's Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and reports from news media. The GTD contains information on more than 104,000 terrorist incidents that have occurred around the world since 1970. For more information about the GTD, visit www.start.umd.edu/gtd.



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