Profiles of Perpetrators of Terrorism in the United States (PPT-US): Data Collection and Descriptive Analysis

Interim Report to Human Factors/Behavioral Sciences Division, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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About This Report

This report is part of a series sponsored by the Human Factors/Behavioral Sciences Division in support of the Counter-IED Prevent/Deter program. The goal of this program is to sponsor research that will aid the intelligence and law enforcement communities in identifying potential terrorist threats and support policymakers in developing prevention efforts.

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About START

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) is supported in part by the Science and Technology Directorate of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through a Center of Excellence program based at the University of Maryland. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics and social and psychological impacts of terrorism. For more information, contact START at infostart@start.umd.edu or visit www.start.umd.edu.

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Introduction

The overall *Creation of an Integrated U.S. Security Database* (IUSSD) project involves project goals related to: (1) integrating existing data on U.S. terrorism and extremism, (2) enhancing these data, (3) supplementing these resources with newly collected data on countermeasures, and (4) conducting analyses using these newly integrated data. This report focuses on work associated with the data integration and enhancement goals—specifically, on efforts related to data on *terrorist groups* that have targeted the United States, towards the goal of preparing these data for alignment and merger with event-focused data.

The original IUSSD proposal indicated that the research team for this project would review, validate, and update data on terrorist groups that had previously been collected by the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) for its Terrorism Knowledge Base (TKB). The initial review of these data, however, revealed that a more reliable and efficient approach would be for the research team to systematically assemble a new collection of data on organizations that have attacked the United States.[1] As such, the research team, in consultation with program managers in the Human Factors/Behavioral Sciences Division of the Science and Technology Directorate of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, amended the research strategy. However, the outcome of the modified work plan reflects the same deliverable promised in the proposal: an updated and validated quantitative dataset on terrorist groups that have targeted the United States homeland, structured to integrate with related datasets on terrorist events and extremist criminal activity. This deliverable, now known as **Profiles of Perpetrators of Terrorism in the United States (PPT-US)**, and its development are discussed in detail in this report.

Selecting groups for inclusion

One of the shortcomings of the existing MIPT data collection was the absence of clarity regarding criteria for including a group in the collection. From the outset, START worked to remedy this issue for PPT-US. A research team devised criteria and a systematic method for vetting groups for inclusion. The team concluded that the ultimate criterion for inclusion in PPT-US was whether a group

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[1] MIPT's group-level data, provided to START via arrangement with DHS and MIPT, included no references to what sources were used to inform the data, significantly complicating plans to validate the existing data. In addition, there were notable inconsistencies between MIPT's data and other known and vetted terrorism databases, reflective of the fact that MIPT provided no clear inclusion criteria regarding which groups were included in its database: For instance, the Global Terrorism Database includes 80 groups known to have attacked the U.S. that were not included in TKB. Similarly, TKB included a number of groups never directly associated with any terrorist attacks (but, rather, were considered suspicious).

had conducted at least one attack in the United States (including Puerto Rico) since 1970,[2] and whether that attack met the inclusion criteria of the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) as a terrorist attack. That is, any group identified in the GTD as a perpetrator of an attack targeting the U.S. homeland was included in PPT-US.[3] Note that groups thought to be suspicious, dangerous, or known to espouse extremist ideology but that had never launched a terrorist attack against the United States were omitted from PPT-US. For example, this means that while MIPT included the 1st Mechanical Kansas Militia in its collection of group-level information, this organization is excluded from PPT-US as it never engaged in a terrorist attack according to GTD.

As such, the list of groups included in PPT-US is derived empirically from the incident-level data, rather than adopting a priori classification of a 'terrorist organization.' This produced a mix of groups based in the United States as well as groups based overseas that launched attacks in the United States.[4] The GTD defines terrorism as "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation. Specifically, incidents reflect the following three attributes: (1) the incident must be intentional; (2) the incident must entail some level of violence or threat of violence; and (3) the perpetrators of the incidents must be sub-national actors. In addition, at least two of the following three criteria must be present for an incident to be included in the GTD: (1) the act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, or religious goal; (2) there must be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) than the immediate victims; and (3) the action must be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities.

Additional criteria were developed for including an organization in PPT-US: First, the GTD[5] includes a variable that indicates if there was doubt among the coders about whether that incident should be classified as terrorism or, instead, whether it would be more properly classified as insurgency, internecine conflict, mass murder, or a purely criminal act. Ten percent of the 2594 U.S. terrorist attacks in the GTD between 1970 and 2010 have been flagged by the GTD team as incidents in which the necessary inclusion criteria are satisfied yet the designation of terrorism is doubted. If such

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[2] It should be noted that the GTD does not include any incidents that occurred in 1993, as original coders of these data misplaced materials containing details on all cases from that year. START researchers reviewed all supplemental data collection efforts for 1993 to identify any perpetrator groups that satisfy the PPT-US inclusion criteria. Only one additional entity, the Liberation Army- Fifth Battalion, which claimed responsibility for the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, qualified for inclusion and was subsequently added to PPT-US.

[3] The time frame of PPT-US corresponds with that of the GTD, which is currently updated from 1970 through 2010. As GTD data collection continues, PPT-US will be updated accordingly.

[4] Groups that have targeted U.S. interests abroad, but not the U.S. homeland directly, were not included.

[5] To date this variable is only coded for post-1997 cases and supplemental cases from 1970 to 1997 that were coded by GTD staff. It did not exist in the collection process for the original data.

uncertainty existed for all of a specific group's activities, that group was excluded from PPT.[6] In addition, in attributing responsibility for specific incidents in the GTD to organizations, coders record whether there is high confidence that an organization is, in fact, responsible for the attack or, conversely, whether the group is only the suspected perpetrator. Only GTD groups for which there is high confidence of responsibility for at least one attack are included in PPT-US.[7]

By applying these selection criteria, 142 groups were identified for inclusion in this project (please see Appendix I for a list of these groups). By contrast, MIPT included only 68 groups based in the United States, and only 30 PPT-US groups were also included in MIPT's TKB. These 142 groups are responsible for approximately 1230 terrorist attacks on the United States between the years 1970 and 2010.

Developing the PPT-US codebook

In addition to identifying groups to include in this database, START researchers worked to identify the appropriate set of information to collect for each included group. This effort involved the development of a structured codebook that would define the full set of variables for which researchers would seek to specify values for each group. In addition, the codebook development effort involved making decisions on which type of data – quantitative versus qualitative – would be most appropriate for each variable, and, for quantitative variables, the research team identified specific values that would be appropriate for that variable.

With the objective of producing systematic and comprehensive profiles of terrorist perpetrators, START's research team developed a codebook containing over 100 variables--approximately nine times more variables than were collected for the original TKB group profiles (please see Appendix II for a copy of the codebook).[8] The variables included reflect organizational characteristics identified in the terrorism-studies literature, as well as in research in criminology, political science, and psychology regarding factors that may be relevant to the behaviors—especially violent behaviors—of organizations. The codebook contains 12 sections related to the following categories: (1) attack location/dates and location of headquarters; (2) historical context; (3) philosophical context; (4) date formed; (5) notable events; (6) ideology; (7) major goals; (8) other (political/criminal/social) activities;

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[6] This parameter eliminated 4 groups associated with GTD incidents from PPT-US.
[7] This parameter eliminated 14 groups associated with GTD incidents from PPT-US.
[8] The TKB collected information relevant to the following variables: mother-tongue name; aliases; bases of operation; date formed; strength; classifications; financial strategies; founding philosophy; current goals; key leaders; related groups; and government designations.

(9) relationships with other groups, key leaders and number of members; (10) group structure; (11) recruitment strategies; and (12) financial strategies.

We expect that these variables and the analyses that they enable will be of great value to academics and practitioners. Findings about the links between group characteristics and the nature of a group's activities can inform decisions about which current groups may pose threats, while improved understanding of how the groups that engage in terrorism vary within and across eras can assist in understanding emerging threats. Furthermore, capturing dates and locations of a group's terrorist attacks as well as the location of their headquarters provides end-users with data to analyze the spatial and temporal characteristics of these groups. It is also important to capture those significant events that can shape a group's decisions, structure, and general behavior to help understand how similar groups might respond to such events in the future.

Ideology can relate to several important motivational functions, providing explanations for the circumstances that underlie grievances, identifying and framing offending parties and adversaries, and providing overarching plans for redressing grievances. By collecting structured, nuanced data on ideological characteristics of groups, PPT-US should allow for important advances in the understanding of the relationship between the ideology and behavior of terrorist perpetrators. In addition to coding ideological data, qualitative data on groups' cultural, religious and philosophical background characteristics are included in the group history and founding philosophy variables. This provides end-users with a wealth of information to understand the precipitating events surrounding the birth of the group, the history and evolution of the group, as well as its mission or raison d'être. To measure how motivations, agendas, grievances and goals vary across groups, we took a more granular approach, identifying the specific type of goal/s (e.g. political, social, economic or religious) pursued by a group as well as noting further details about their specific aims (e.g. for political goals, whether the group wanted regime change; territorial change; or to influence elections).

Beyond their terrorist activities, most groups tend to be involved in other legal and illegal activities. As such, we found merit in collecting and coding data on the range of political, social and criminal activities in which groups are engaged. Coupling these data with our data on group alliances and relationships affords end-users the opportunity to study the activities where collaboration between groups often occurs. In addition, because leaders often shape the course of events that determine outcomes,[9] we identify key group leaders.

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[9] Crenshaw, Martha. 1995. "Thoughts on Relating Terrorism to Historical Context," in Martha Crenshaw, ed., *Terrorism in Context*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

PPT-US includes information on how groups recruit members, obtain financial resources, and structure themselves. Comparing the diverse structures, recruiting methods, and financial strategies of these groups provides unique insight into their strategic logic – information that can be used to inform general principles for identifying access points where each variant of strategy and structure can be targeted. The research team recognizes that the unclassified literature contains only a small portion of known (often classified or sensitive) information about groups' recruitment strategies and financial sources. Nonetheless, we believed it was important to catalog the information that was present on these factors in open-source materials not only to provide a clearinghouse of publically known information on these topics, but also to provide analysts an opportunity to compare information from unclassified and classified sources to assess the strengths of each.

Several ideas for the codebook were informed by other START-funded research projects. For instance, the PPT-US adopted the GTD's coding strategy for dates and locations of terrorist attacks in the United States. Furthermore, the research team designed the "other political activities" variables based on those found in the Minorities at Risk Project (MAR); added the value scale for the group size variable from the Big, Allied and Dangerous Database (BAAD); and added ideology/sub-ideological categories from the Radiological and Nuclear Non-State Adversaries Database (RANNSAD).

In addition, the research team agreed to include in the structure of this effort an information source and a confidence indicator in that source for *each* variable per group—a unique quality of this dataset. Citing the information source(s) for each variable allows users of the data to reference original source material so that they can determine whether they agree with how each variable is coded and/or extract additional information. This provides users the opportunity to have higher levels of confidence about what was measured and how, as they use and interpret the data.

A metric for measuring a coder's confidence in the value assigned to each variable per group, based on the perceived validity of relevant source information, is also included in PPT-US. The confidence indicator is based on a three-level scale, in which "1" indicates that the source(s) informing this coding possesses inherent biases or reporting errors, raising questions about the reliability of the information related to the variable value; "2" indicates that the source(s) used to inform the coding of a variable is generally credible, but knowledge about the validity of the particular information is lacking (e.g., information reported by anonymous intelligence sources that cannot be confirmed); and "3" indicates a high degree of confidence in the source and the resulting information derived from the source for a variable. Other key factors are considered as well: for instance, the proximity of the source to the information (e.g. primary or secondary source), the quality and quantity of other research that cites the source, and the reliability of the source in past cases.

Data collection and coding

Data on identified groups were systematically collected using numerous unclassified materials, which, based on several pilot profiles, were chosen because they provided the richest and most reliable information. In addition to academic books[10] and journals[11], websites[12] and search engines[13] were used to identify relevant information.

Data coders were tasked with following four search guidelines. First, collectors were expected to search all of the following search engines:

- Lexis-Nexis
- Proquest
- Infotrac
- World Quest
- Yahoo
- Google (general, scholar and books)
- All the Web
- Infomine

Several of these sources produce findings that overlap considerably, but each source may on occasion provide information that is lacking in others. Second, collectors were reminded to vary search terms when little information was initially found. Searches performed using Lexis-Nexis and Proquest, for instance, often return different findings depending on how a search term is spelled (e.g., al-Qaeda as opposed to al-Qa'ida). Third, for cases with overwhelming amounts of data about a group, data collectors were encouraged to include in the data bank only one story from each day unless each story had unique or additional information. Lastly, collectors were expected to pay careful attention to the date of each source. More recent articles may provide useful or updated information about the group. Note that for five groups coders were unable to locate any sources of information

[10] See, for example, Atkins, Stephen E. *Encyclopedia of Modern American Extremists and Extremist Groups*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002; Hill, Sean D. *Extremist Groups: An international compilation of terrorist organizations, violent political groups and issue-oriented militant movements*. Huntsville: Office of International Criminal Justice, 2002; Jones, S.G., and M.C. Libicki. *How terrorist groups end: Lessons for countering al Qaida*. Santa Monica: RAND Corp, 2008; and Janke, Peter. *Guerrilla and Terrorist: A world directory and bibliography*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1983..

[11] For example, *Terrorism and Political Violence, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* and *American Journal of Political Science.*

[12] For example, Globalsecurity.org; Opensource.gov; State & CIA websites; the Congressional Research Service; Newslibrary.com; and the National Counterterrorism Center's website.

whatsoever. To indicate groups for which the only source of information is the Global Terrorism Database, a variable (NOSOURCES) was added to the codebook.

Establishing inter-coder consistency

The work plan for coding the identified groups required that each profile be coded by one of two START research assistants. To ensure that the two coders were following data collection protocols similarly and that data would not reflect a bias depending upon which coder collected it, the variables for three groups (al-Qa'ida (AQ), the Weather Underground Organization (WUO) and Omega-7) were coded by both primary researchers at the outset of the coding process. These three groups were selected to test inter-coder reliability because of the varying amounts of open-source data on each them, and because each represents a distinct ideology with diverse group characteristics.

The percentage of agreement between the two coders across all three profiles was high. For each group both coders assigned the same values for each variable the vast majority of the time: inter-coder reliability for both AQ and the WUO was approximately 95 percent, while for Omega-7 it was 98 percent.[14]

Coding strategies and rules

After the coding team demonstrated high levels of inter-coder reliability, critical decisions were made concerning how best to collect temporally dynamic information. Ideally, mapping variables that are subject to fluctuations, like number of members per group, over time would enhance the richness of the profile. However, this project did not include sufficient resources to allow for annual or semi-annual coding of group characteristics. As such, the team made explicit decisions regarding static coding of characteristics that could change over time.

When capturing a group's goals and ideology, the "has ever" rule applies – that is, if the group has ever demonstrated allegiance to a distinct ideology or goal, that ideology or goal should be coded as "Yes" for the group under consideration. In addition, coding the number of members in a group is a difficult task because membership size ebbs and flows throughout a group's existence. To mitigate these difficulties, the "measure at the peak of activity" rule instructed coders to record group size during the period in which the group committed their highest frequency of terrorist attacks. When conflicting accounts of group size were found, coders were instructed to report the highest value while also recording in the notes section all other findings.

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[14] While the coders were not given a pre-defined list of sources to draw from, they did end up using several of the same sources. Additionally, while both the historical and philosophical narratives were not figured into the percentages, these two variables proved to be substantively similar, yet stylistically different.

A rule was also developed to help code group structure. Like group size, a group's structural composition tends to evolve in light of circumstance and need for survival. Our initial reaction was to measure group structure at the most recent (or last) point in a group's existence. But this rule proved difficult to maintain when coding defunct groups since their structure at the moment of disengagement was volatile and possibly uncharacteristic of the structure they maintained during the zenith of their existence. As such, coders adopted a dual strategy: for active groups,[15] the "measure the most recent" rule applied; for defunct groups, the "measure at the peak of activity" rule applied.

Regarding the coding of dichotomous Yes/No variables that appear throughout the codebook, unless otherwise indicated a variable was coded as "1" (that is, Yes) only if sources positively confirmed the existence of this attribute for the group. Due to the inherent difficulty of positively confirming the absence of a given characteristic, the coding of "No" and "Unknown" are contingent on the availability of source information about a particular domain. A dichotomous variable will have a value of "0" (No) if the characteristic measured is positively confirmed as absent for the group. In addition, the variable will have a value of "0" if information about the broader domain is available for a group but there is no indication of that particular attribute for the organization under review. Finally, if uncertainty about the value of the variable exists after consulting all available sources, if conflicting information is found, or if no source information for the broader domain can be identified, then the variable is coded as "-99" (missing data).

The data collection process and tools developed for PPT-US encouraged coders to record coding notes for each variable for each group in the data set. These coding notes contain additional information on why decisions were made to assign specific variable values to a group, given the available information. The coding notes are a key tool for project leaders to use in reviewing data. START does not plan to make these internal coding notes publically available, but the project team will have the opportunity to refer to this record if/when questions arise about the values assigned to specific groups.

Codebook evolution

Our meetings with project sponsors from DHS, including HFD project manager Dr. Allison Smith, further informed our coding strategies. Given the inherent limits of open-source research, Dr. Smith recommended we scale back efforts in collecting data that the intelligence community is perhaps

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[15] A group is considered "active" if sources confirm that the group (up to the date of coding) still maintains some base of operation and is actively engaged in some level of violent or non-violent, legal or illegal, activities.

better situated to collect; for instance, variables such as group structure, size, financial strategies and recruitment strategies. Reconsidering how we conceptualize and define several variables was also encouraged. With these insights in mind, the research team revisited the codebook to remove, reframe and combine several variables.

Our success in finding information on certain variables helped us gauge which to remove. Coding, for instance, a group's particular network structure (chain network, hub, starfish or all-connection) proved to be difficult. In addition, the research team redefined several variables, most notably the "territorial aims" variable, with the intentions of improving their face validity. Originally framed as "reclaim the homeland," the "territorial aims" variable was reconsidered so that it accurately captures a range of territorial goals, from the irredentist aims of the Puerto Rican nationalists to al-Qa'ida's goal of establishing a Global Caliphate. As the codebook was developed, several related variables measuring similar or overlapping concepts were also collapsed into one variable. The codebook included as an appendix to this report reflects these modifications and updates.

Data validation

The initial coding of all identified groups by PPT-US researchers took place between February and June 2010. Upon completion, START implemented a plan to verify the findings from this coding effort. The first validation strategy, which took place in June 2010, involved comparing the new PPT-US data to the Big, Allied, and Dangerous (BAAD) database, an independent group-level data collection effort led by START investigators Victor Asal and Karl Rethemeyer.[16] Although the scope of BAAD differs from PPT-US in many respects (primarily that BAAD is looking at all terrorist groups, not just those that have attacked the United States, and only includes groups active between 1985 and 2005), the research team identified ten perpetrator groups and six key variables that the two databases have in common. A comparison of these data revealed considerable agreement between PPT-US and BAAD, for those variables where information is known. However, differences in variable values made it not feasible to conduct a systematic comparison across the data collections.

Beginning in July 2010, START implemented a more rigorous effort to evaluate the validity and reliability of the data. To this end, a new coder, who was not involved in the codebook development process, coded full profiles for two random samples of the groups included in PPT-US.[17] For the first sample, the new coder was provided with the exact source material used by the original coders and was instructed to base the profile strictly on these materials. For the second sample, the coder

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[16] For more on BAAD, see Victor Asal; R. Karl Rethemeyer; Ian Anderson, 2009, "Big Allied and Dangerous (BAAD) Database 1 - Lethality Data, 1998-2005", http://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/16062 UNF:5:2Z77QCNImKUu2OVS6hqccw== Project on Violent Conflict [Distributor] V3 [Version].

[17] Each random sample included 10% of the groups in the PPT-US dataset.

identified relevant data sources with no reference to what sources initial coders had employed. Data from the first sample—using previously identified sources—allowed project leaders to review the clarity of the codebook as well as the accuracy and reliability of the initial coding by comparing profiles constructed by two independent coders using the same source information. The second sample, using sources identified by the new coder, allowed project leaders to also review the source-finding process to determine if independent efforts to locate sources of information on the same groups produce comparable results in terms of the coded data, providing for a review of the validity of the coded data.

A comparison of coding values generated by independent coders for a total of 26 groups (20% of the original PPT-US groups) revealed an average agreement rate across all variables of 88.8%. Variable-specific agreement rates ranged from 29% to 100%. There was no significant difference in the agreement rate between the sample in which coders used the same sources versus identifying sources independently.

A variable-by-variable review of the comparisons did reveal some notable discrepancies (less than 67% agreement) among coders in assigning values for a small number of variables (3.6% of all the PPT-US variables): The agreement rate between coders assessing whether an organization was part of a larger movement (variable=MOVEMENT) was 42%; the agreement rate was 46% regarding whether the organization wanted a change in governmental policies (G_POL_1); there was 46% agreement between coders on whether a group was engaged in verbal opposition to a government or its policies (OA_POLI_1); and the agreement rate was only 29% for whether there was more than one member of a group (ONEMAN).

Project leaders reviewed coding of these problematic variables to determine the source of discrepancies among them and found that in all four cases the low agreement corresponded to a lack of clarity in the codebook regarding the operationalization of the variable. With the exception of one variable (MOVEMENT), START staff took the opportunity to make the operational definitions of these variables more explicit in the codebook and reviewed the coding of these variables for all of the PPT-US cases. For instance, from reviewing coders' notes for the variable intended to capture whether a group engaged in verbal opposition to a government or its policies, it became clear that statements by groups in which they claimed responsibility for a terrorist incident were a source of coding confusion: These qualified as public statements by groups, but they were inherently linked to the terrorist incidents. Because this variable was intended to measure the nature of a group's political activity *in addition* to its engaging in terrorism, the decision was made to amend the codebook to instruct coders that any communication that exclusively relates to taking responsibility for a terrorist attack should not be considered verbal opposition.

Regarding the MOVEMENT variable, it was determined that there was not sufficient conceptual uniqueness to distinguish it from the "Organizational Structure: Movement" variable (STRUC_4), which indicates that rather than a cohesive organization, the entity is characterized by a broader social alliance or leaderless resistance. Consequently, the MOVEMENT variable was removed from this version of the database.
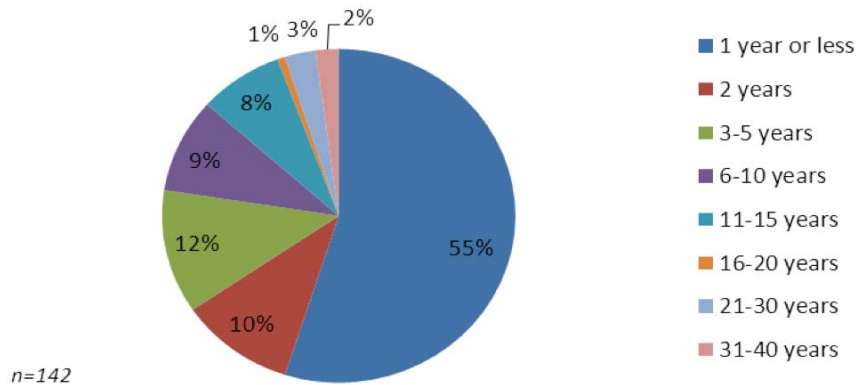
The codebook included as an appendix here includes clarifications made after this review, and the current version of the data reflects corrected values for these four variables for all groups included in PPT-US.

Findings

Organizational demographics

Several interesting findings were unearthed after examining the aggregated data on 142 groups in the data set. The average duration of a group's existence – the parameters of which were set by the dates of its first and last known attacks – spanned from 1 to 40 years with an average duration of 4 years. The distribution of groups' lifespans is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Lifespans of Terrorist Groups that Attack the United States

n=142

Legend:
- 1 year or less — 55%
- 2 years — 10%
- 3-5 years — 12%
- 6-10 years — 9%
- 11-15 years — 8%
- 16-20 years — 1%
- 21-30 years — 3%
- 31-40 years — 2%

Seven of these groups were still actively engaged in terrorist activity around the world as of 2010:
- al-Qa'ida,
- al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula,
- Animal Liberation Front (ALF),
- Earth Liberation Front (ELF),
- Irish Republican Army (IRA),
- Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and

- The Justice Department.

Four of these groups launched attacks on the United States in 2010 (al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, ALF, TTP, and The Justice Department). Among those, only ALF had a history of attacking U.S. homeland targets prior to 2010.

Between 1970 and 2010, an average of 3 emergent groups targeted the United States for the first time. Per Figure 2, the 1970s and early 1980s saw the greatest number of new groups launching attacks per year,[18] while there were eight years between 1970 and 2010 in which no group launched a first attack on the United States—including six of the years following 2001.

Figure 2. Number of Groups Launching First U.S. Attacks, by Year
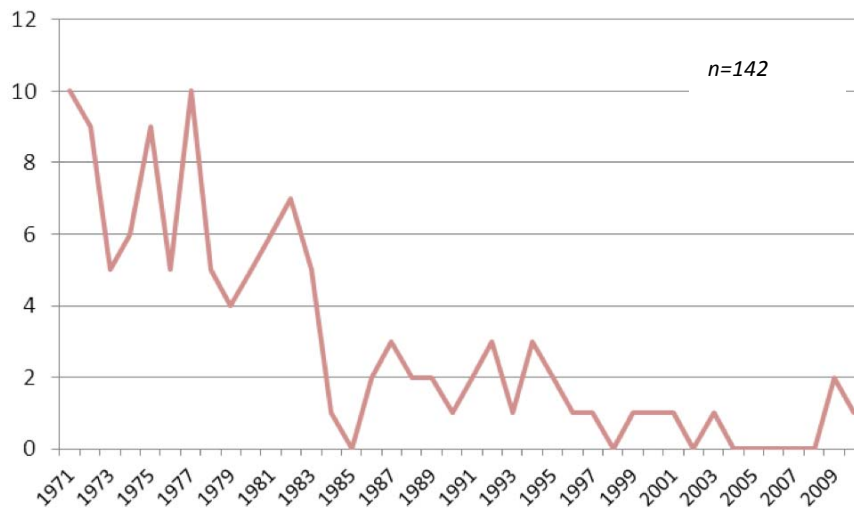
PPT-US includes information on the known location of headquarters for 78 groups,[19] of which 86% (n=67) were located in the United States while 14% were exclusively internationally based but attacked the United States.[20] Of the 78 groups with headquarters in the United States, PPT-US includes information on the state or states in which the group was based for 51 groups. Only 9 of

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[18] GTD begins tracking terrorist activity in 1970. As such, PPT-US includes an over-count of "new groups" in 1970, as numbers for that year include all groups active in 1970, even if they were in operation in years prior to GTD tracking. As such, groups whose first attack in GTD and PPT-US is noted as 1970 (n=24) are omitted from this figure.

[19] A group's headquarters is defined as the place where attacks are planned, members are trained and/or public relations/marketing tools (e.g., written statements, audio and video broadcasts, etc.) are produced. Our coding strategy was to capture the location of any headquarters that a group operated from at some point in its operational existence.

[20] International groups targeting the United States were based in Afghanistan (n=1 PPT group), Pakistan (n=1), El Salvador (n=1), Haiti (n=1), Lebanon (n=1), Jordan (n=2), Yemen (n=1), France (n=1), Great Britain (n=1), and Northern Ireland (n=1).

these groups (17.6%) were known to have headquarters in more than one state. Of the 52 states/districts included in PPT-US (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico), groups were headquartered in 40% (n=21), as reflected in Table 1. Group headquarters were concentrated in California (n=14)) and New York (n=10).

Table 1. State Headquarters of PPT-US Groups	
STATE	# of PPT-US Groups with Bases in State
California	12
New York	10
Puerto Rico	6
Florida	5
Illinois	4
Oregon	4
Virginia	3
Arkansas	2
District of Columbia	2
Idaho	2
Michigan	2
New Jersey	2
Wisconsin	2
Colorado	1
Mississippi	1
Missouri	1
Ohio	1
Oklahoma	1
South Carolina	1
Texas	1
Washington	1

PPT-US includes data on organizational size, as measured by number of members at the organization's operational peak, for 67 groups, of which the clear majority had fewer than 100 members at their peak, as reflected in Figure 3. Only 3 organizations that ever targeted the United States were reported to have more than 10,000 members—the Ku Klux Klan, Posse Comitatus, and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). On the other end of the spectrum, there are 3 "groups" included in PPT-US that researchers have determined to be "one-man groups"—organizations with only one member.

Figure 3. Organizational Size (at peak of organization's activity)

n=67
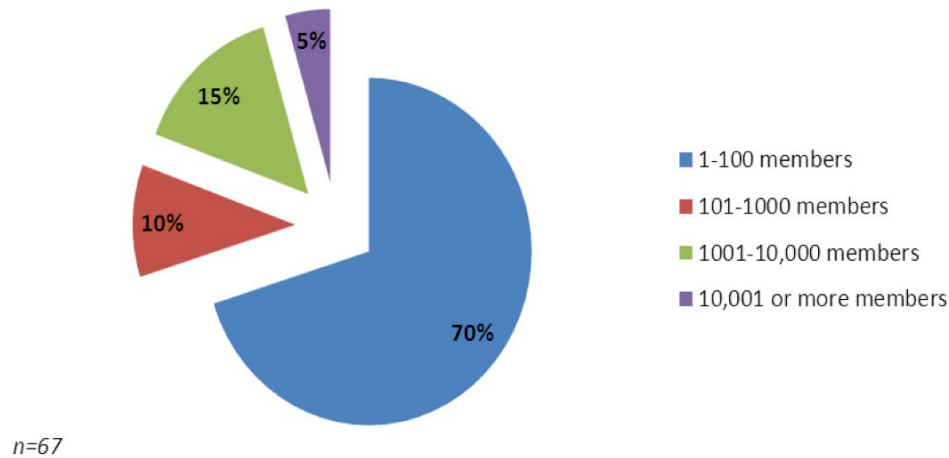
Ideology

Figure 4 provides a breakdown by dominant ideology of 125 terrorist groups in the dataset. (This variable could not be coded with confidence for 12% of PPT-US groups due to a lack of reliable information.) Of the groups that attacked United States between 1970 and 2010, 32% (n=40) were formed around an ethnonationalist/separatist agenda. Thirty-five of the groups (28%) were committed to some single cause. Only 6% of groups that have attacked the United States (n=8) are focused on a religious ideology; this small set of organizations, though, includes the group that has inflicted the greatest amount of damage on the United States through terrorism, al-Qa'ida. Within each of these large ideological categories, several movements were represented. Puerto Rican nationalists, Jewish extremists, Armenian nationalists, as well as both Irish and Croatian separatists were all classified as ethnonationalist/separatist. Single-issue groups included anti-Castro groups, anti-war groups, and animal rights/extreme environmental terrorist groups. Within the far-left category were Marxist-Leninist-Maoist groups and members of the New Left movement.[21]

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[21] The "New Left" movement is synonymous with the so-called Hippie movement and college campus protests of the 1960s and 1970s. Rather than focusing on issues of social class and labor unionization, the New Left focused on a broader range of reforms.

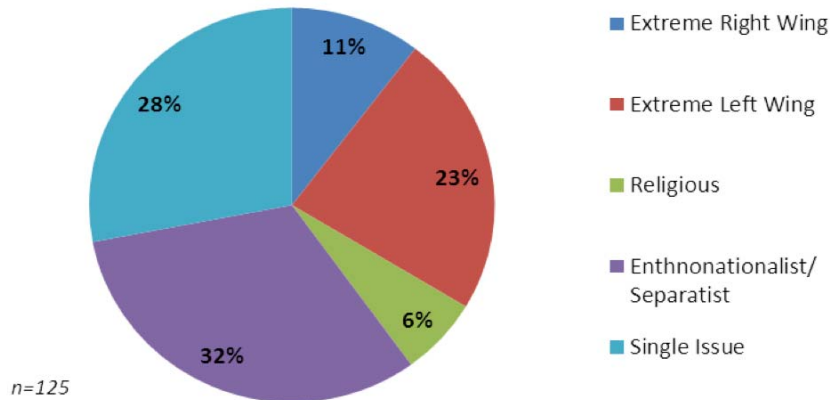**Figure 4. Dominant Ideology of Groups**

Figure 5 presents aggregated data on dominant ideologies according to the decade in which the groups espousing those ideologies were formed. This figure reflects the diversity of ideologies among terrorist groups that have posed real threats to the United States during the past 40 years, as well as a shift in dominant ideologies through the decades. For instance, in the 1970s and 1980s, the most frequent type of terrorist groups to emerge were ethnonationalist/separatist groups, while in the 1990s, the proportion of emerging extreme right-wing terrorist groups increased, with a smaller percentage of emerging groups advocating ethnonational/separatist goals. Similarly, more than 30% of groups emerging in 1970s were extreme left-wing but, by the 1990s, only 10% of groups reflected a far-left ideology. While the overall number of groups emerging in the 2000s is small in comparison to past decades, the fact that 50% of the groups in this period are religious is notable and marks a distinction from past decades.

Figure 5. Dominant Ideology of Emergent Terrorist Groups by Decade
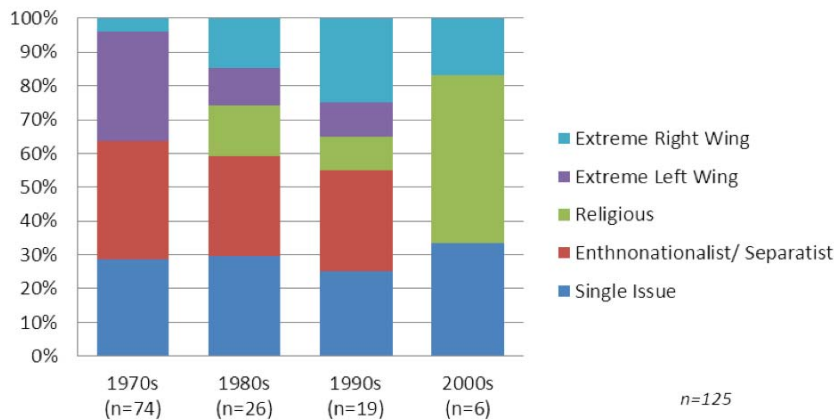
In addition to coding data on a group's dominant ideology, PPT-US also captures secondary ideologies adhered to by groups. While the dominant ideology variable is mutually exclusive per group and represents a group's primary vision, the sub-ideology variables are more granular and inclusive. For instance, in addition to coding a group as having a religious ideology as its dominant ideology, the religious sub-ideology variables note whether the group is Buddhist, Christian, Islamic (Shia/Sunni), Hindu, Jewish or a cult. A religious group may also have secular or issue-specific beliefs that could be captured under other sub-ideological categories, including Marxist/Leninist, Maoist, anti-Castro, anti-Communist, fascist, racial supremacist, anti-Semitic, extreme animal rights/environmentalists, and Black Nationalists.

Figure 6 presents the frequency of sub-ideologies among PPT-US groups. Whereas the most common dominant ideology was ethnonationalism/separatism, the most common subideology is far-left extremism, adhered to by about 45% of groups with a known ideology (n=56). Interestingly, for groups with any ethnonational perspective, it is highly likely that this perspective will be their dominant ideology: Forty of the 42 groups with an ethnonationalist/separatist sub-ideology also have this as their dominant ideology.

Figure 6. Frequency of Sub-Ideologies Among Terrorist Groups
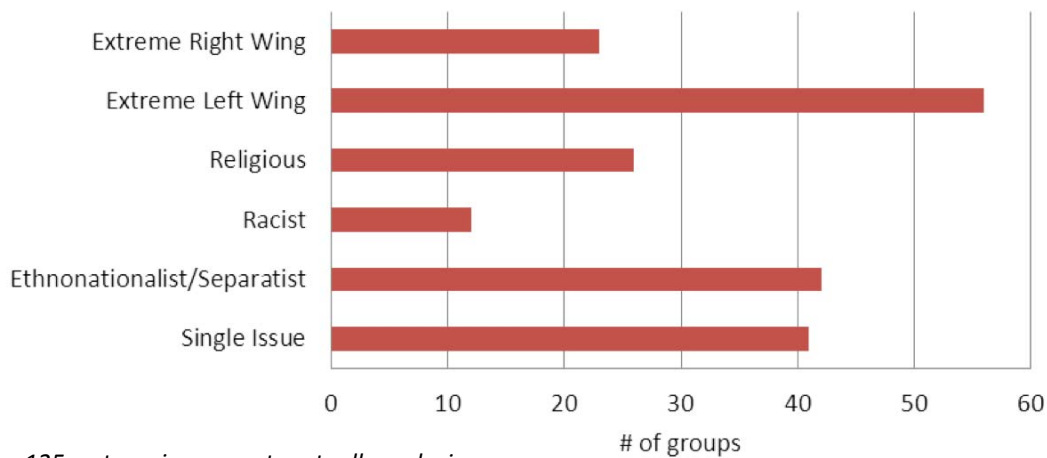
n=125, categories are not mutually exclusive

While less than 1 in 10 groups have a religious ideology as their dominant perspective, 20% of groups (n=26) reflect some religious perspectives in their belief system. Figure 7 reflects which religions were relevant to these groups, with Christianity (including Catholicism) being the most frequent religious sub-ideology (n=9), followed by Judaism (n=8).[22]

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[22] PPT-US coders also considered whether groups' ideologies reflected advocacy of other religious denominations, including Buddhism, Sikh, Pagan/Polytheistic, and Occult (including Satanist). No groups were found to reflect ideologies rooted in these religions.

Figure 7. Groups' Religious Sub-Ideologies
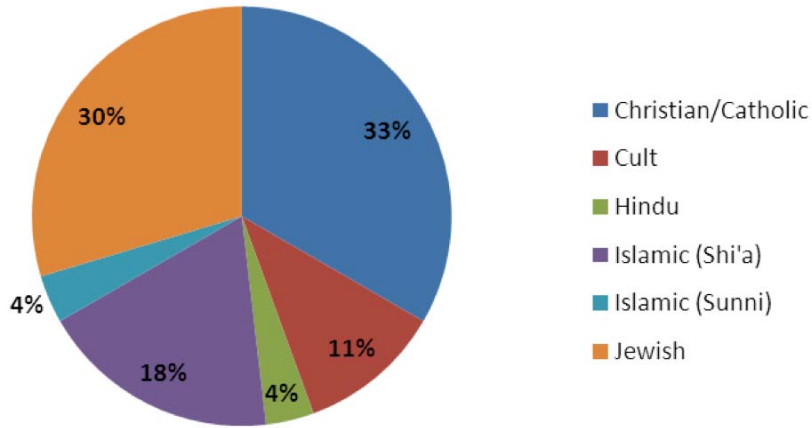
n=25

Sub-ideology data also provides more insights into the goals of those groups who are focused on a particular issue. Figure 8 presents the number of groups that align themselves with each of nine high-profile policy and/or social issues. While it is a minority of groups that engage on these "single-issue" considerations, 13% of all PPT-US groups are classified as anti-Castro, 10% as ecological/animal liberation focused, and 8% as anti-war.

Figure 8. Frequency of Single-Issue Sub-Ideologies among Groups
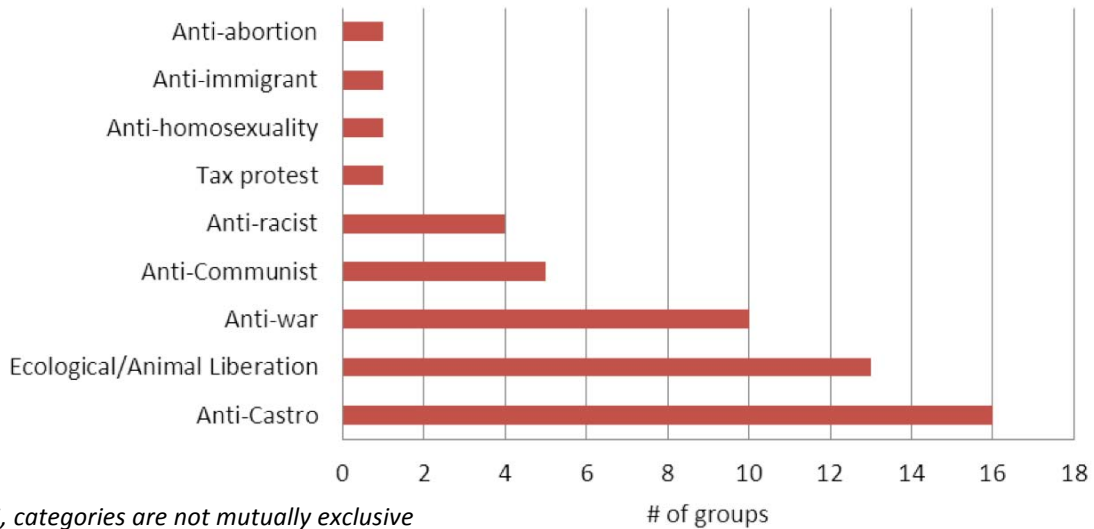
n=125, categories are not mutually exclusive

Goals

PPT-US attempts to further unpack groups' sometimes broad-brush ideologies to identify specific goals advocated by the groups. In particular, PPT-US includes information on political, social,

economic, and religious goals pursued by these terrorist groups. Per Table 2, these groups support a variety of goals among them, and individual groups are engaged on multiple issues and goals.
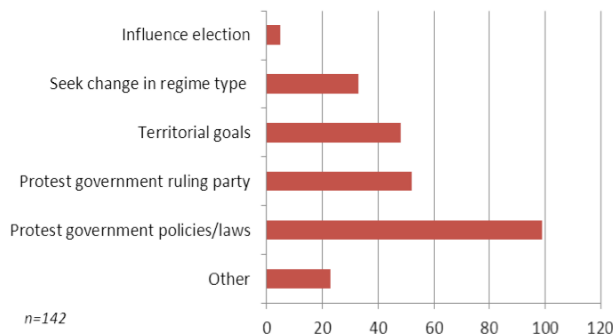
Table 2. Groups' Goals		
Category of Goal	**# of Groups / % of Groups**	**# of Groups w/Multiple Goals in this Category**
Political	120 / 85%	76
Social	67 / 47%	31
Economic	56 / 39%	30
Religious	16 / 11%	8

n=142

PPT-US provides more detailed information on groups' goals within each of these four categories. Per Figure 9, the most common political goal among the groups—and, in fact—the most common goal overall was to protest governmental policies and/or laws, relevant to 70% of all PPT-US groups (n=99). The frequency of this goal does not come as a surprise among these groups that have decided to use violence to voice and address their displeasure with a status quo. Beyond this, PPT-US does reveal other shared types of political goals among sometimes ideologically divergent terrorist groups: 37% of all groups were trying to remove from power a ruling political party or incumbent political officials, and 34% of groups espoused territorial goals, including changing existing national borders or gaining an independent territory for a peoples. Fewer groups (23%) were seeking overall regime change—for instance, moving a country from democracy to autocracy (or from a dictatorship to democracy)

Figure 9. Political Goals of Terrorist Groups

n=142

Figure 10 provides more detail on the nature of social goals of terrorist groups included in PPT-US. Almost 40% of all groups stated objections related to social justice issues and a desire to reduce or eliminate perceived discrimination against some group. Of course, there is notable variation among groups about which groups might be persecuted: The Ku Klux Klan, for instance,


Figure 10. Social Goals of Terrorist Groups

n=142

19
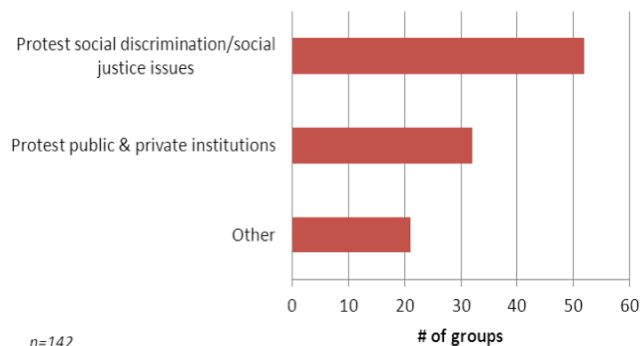
viewed affirmative action programs in the United States as discriminatory against whites and wanted them abolished. The Black Panthers, on the other hand, viewed African-Americans as subjected to systematic discrimination in all aspects of American society. In addition, 23% of groups voiced objections to specific institutions they viewed as problematic for society. Comrades in Arms, for instance, had as a goal to stop police harassment of African-Americans. Fifteen percent of groups presented social goals that could not be effectively classified, ranging from the very broad (such as the White Panther Party's goal of encouraging social revolution) to the very specific (the Armed Commandos of Liberation, for instance, demanded revitalization in one region in Puerto Rico).

Figure 11. Economic Goals of Terrorist Groups

n=142
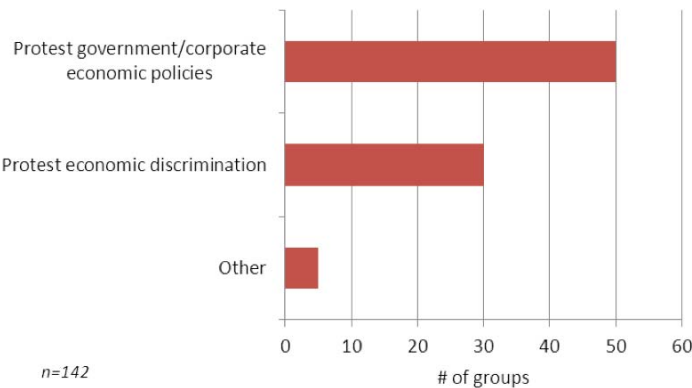
It was more common for PPT-US groups to have explicit political or social goals than it was for them to have economic aims, as reflected in Figure 11. For many of the groups (21%), economic goals were tied to a general social goal, as groups objected to perceived economic discrimination. It was more common, however, for groups to have more targeted economic goals, such as Cuban Action's desire to stop all corporations from conducting business with the Castro regime in Cuba. In all, 35% of groups voiced opposition to specific economic policies.

Just as religious ideology was relatively rare among terrorist groups that have targeted the United States, groups espousing explicitly religious goals were relatively rare. with only 11% of all groups voicing any such goal. Among these religious goals, the most common was to correct perceived religious discrimination, a goal professed by 6% of all groups, as reflected in Figure 12. In contrast, 5% had goals related to repression of those who did not share their own religious beliefs.

Figure 12. Religious Goals of Terrorist Groups

n=142
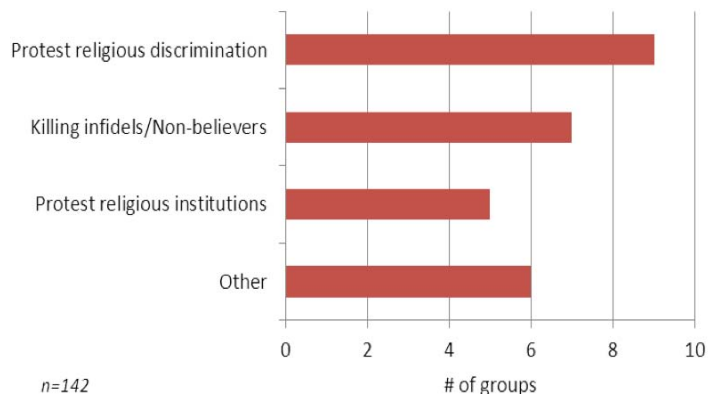
Other political and criminal activities

Terrorism, by its nature, is both a political and a criminal act. As such, PPT-US sought to identify a more complete inventory of the repertoire of political and criminal activities in which groups that have attacked the United States have engaged. While information on all of the activities that a group pursued was often elusive, PPT-US researchers succeeded in identifying specific efforts of PPT-US groups to engage in politics as well as evidence of groups' involvement in criminal activity, as presented in Table 3. In all, 55% of groups (n=78) engaged in political activity other than terrorism, while 27% engaged in criminal activity beyond their terrorist engagement. A review of these activities indicates that while all these groups share the common trait of having engaged in terrorism against the United States, PPT-US has not identified any other "typical" shared behaviors among this collection of organizations.

Table 3. Terrorist Groups' Other Political and Criminal Activities

Type of Organizational Activity	# of Organizations Involved	Example
Political Activity	*78*	
Verbal/written opposition	71	Up the IRS issued a series of communiqués stating its grievances against the Internal Revenue Service.
Involved in political demonstrations	34	The leader of the Macheteros organized political demonstrations focused on Puerto Rican independence.
Symbolic resistance	9	Members of EarthFirst! Released a 300-foot banner down the face of Glen Canyon Dam to replicate a crack in the dam.
Low level of participation in politics and existing political institutions	5	Mujahideen-I-Khalq endorsed selected politicians in Iran.
Medium level of participation in politics and existing political institutions	4	A leader of Posse Comitatus ran for Wisconsin state senate in 1980 and the governorship in 1982.
High level of participation in politics and existing political institutions	12	The Black Afro Militant Movement created a political party (New Party), and a BAMM leader ran for lieutenant governor of Florida in 1970.
Other political activity	8	The Rajneeshees took over a local city government to try to change the town name to "Rajneesh."

Criminal Activity	*52*	
Participation in property crime	36	The Organization of Volunteers for the Puerto Rican Revolution stole explosives to use in its operations.
Participation in violent crime	34	Symbionese Liberation Army members participated in 3 bank robberies.
Participation in public order crime	7	The Animal Liberation Front participates in releasing animals from research facilities.
Participation in drug trafficking	6	A leader of Omega-7 had ties with major narcotics dealers and the group was financed in part by trafficking activities.
Participation in financial crimes	12	A counterfeiting operation was based at the compound of the leader of Aryan Nation.
Other criminal activity	22	Members of the May 19 Communist Order were charged with and found guilty of possession of illegal firearms.

Groups' involvement in political activities (in addition to their terrorist activities) is more common than involvement in criminal activity (outside of their terrorist activities), with rhetorical opposition to government policies the most common form of engagement. Interestingly, though, a number of these groups that have engaged in behaviors well outside of the established political order (i.e., terrorism) are also engaged in traditional political processes, ranging from organizing protests (n=34) to establishing political parties and running parties for public positions (n=12).

PPT-US sources included fewer references to these groups being involved in criminal activity other than their known terrorist attacks. The data in Table 3 reveal, though, that groups were involved in various types of crime, both violent and non-violent. Interestingly, the least common type of criminal activity among those reviewed was drug trafficking, with sources only identifying six of 142 groups as known to be involved in drug trafficking.

Financing

Reliable information on funding sources for these groups was difficult to find in the unclassified literature. In all, PPT-US researchers were able to identify funding sources for 51 of the 142 PPT-US groups (36% of all groups). While the data in Figure 13 are not comprehensive, they do reveal that – among those groups for which financial information was available – a majority of them (57%) had multiple funding sources, including donors, criminal activity, or funding from group members/leaders. Such multipronged funding strategies are more difficult to eliminate and can allow groups to be

resilient even when some funding sources disappear due to effective counterterrorism efforts, a donor's change of heart, or some other reason.

Figure 13. Groups' Financial Strategies
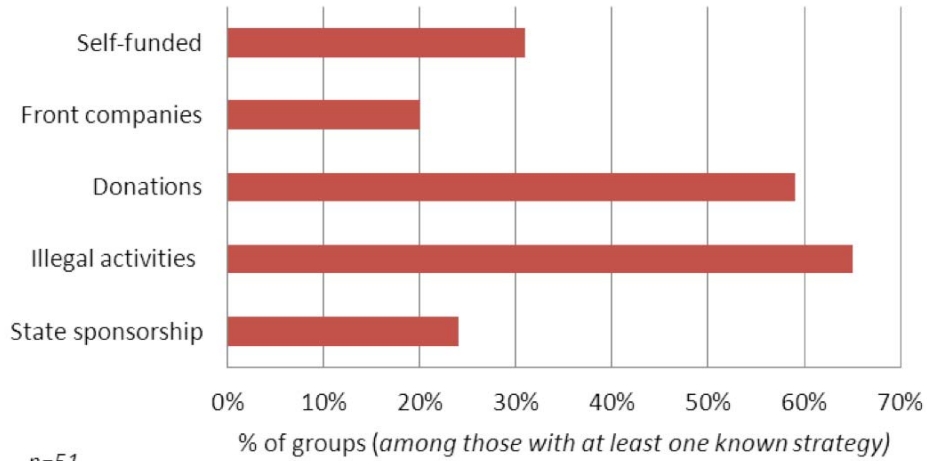
Conclusion

This report and the data supporting it represent the first release of the PPT-US data set. These data were developed to be a resource for researchers and analysts to help advance the science of terrorism by providing structured, comparable data on those groups that have engaged in terrorism against the United States homeland.

The findings presented here reflect the fact that, in the United States, terrorism has been a tactic employed by groups with widely varied ideologies, beliefs, and goals. Groups have been based all around the country and have ranged from "one-hit wonders," that disappear within a year or two of their first attack, to groups that persisted for decades. For some groups, their identity as terrorist organizations has not precluded them from engaging in legitimate political activities, as well. Others engage in a range of criminal behaviors in conjunction with the terrorism efforts. In short, there is no "profile" of organizations that target the United States with terrorism.

The findings presented here just begin to exploit the PPT-US data to gain understandings of these organizations, however. Future efforts by this project's research team will examine relationships among many of the characteristics that have been identified by this data collection effort. For instance, is there a correlation between specific goals of a group and that group's duration, or between a group's ideology, its other political activities, and the nature of the terrorist attacks it has perpetrated. It should be noted that PPT-US has been structured to allow for seamless integration with not only the GTD, but also the American Terrorism Study (ATS) and the Extremist Crime

Database (ECDB). In 2011-2012, DHS S&T HFD funding will support efforts to merge these four important data collections to develop a relational database on Terrorism and Extremist Violence in the United States (TEVUS)—a tool that will further expand the nature of questions that can be examined using PPT-US data.

PPT-US is by no means a finished product. The research team will continue to update this dataset, adding information on emergent and/or newly identified groups. As research uncovers any additional terrorist organizations that have targeted the United States since 1970, data on those groups will be coded and included in the dataset.

The PPT-US team will also continue to conduct ongoing reviews of existing data to ensure that it is of the highest quality. Researchers will undertake analyses to test for correlations among variables where one should expect correlations (for instance, presence of religious ideology and espousing of religious goals). If discrepancies are found, additional research will be conducted to explain these discrepancies or allow the project team to correct and/or update data as needed. The research team will also review data currently included in text fields in PPT-US (for instance, data on alliances among groups) and develop and implement strategies to make those data better suited to quantitative analysis.

While PPT-US is a work-in-progress, we believe that it is a valuable tool in its present state, and one that will allow researchers and analysts to examine more closely perpetrators of terrorism in the United States.

APPENDIX I: PPT-US GROUPS

1. Al-Qa`ida
2. Al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)
3. American Indian Movement
4. Americans for a Competent Federal Judicial System
5. Americans for Justice
6. Animal Liberation Front (ALF)
7. Anti-Castro Command
8. Antonia Martinez Student Commandos (AMSC)
9. Armed Commandos of Liberation
10. Armed Commandos of Student Self Defense
11. Armed Forces of Popular Resistance
12. Armed Revolutionary Independence Movement
13. Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
14. Army of God
15. Aryan Nation
16. Aryan Republican Army
17. BAY Bombers
18. Beaver 55
19. Black Afro Militant Movement
20. Black Brigade
21. Black Liberation Army
22. Black Panthers
23. Black Revolutionary Assault Team
24. Black September
25. Boricua Revolutionary Front
26. Chicano Liberation Front
27. Comrades in Arms
28. Condor
29. Continental Revolutionary Army
30. Coordination of the United Revolutionary Organization
31. Covenant, Sword and the Arm of the Lord
32. Croatian Freedom Fighters
33. Croatian Liberation Army
34. Cuban Action
35. Cuban C-4 Movement
36. Earth First!
37. Earth Liberation Front
38. Earth Night Action Group
39. East Coast Conspiracy to Save Lives
40. East Side Action Committee
41. Environmental Life Force
42. Evan Mecham Eco-Terrorist International Conspiracy
43. Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN)
44. Farm Animal Revenge Militia
45. Flower City Conspiracy
46. Fourth Reich Skinheads
47. Fred Hampton Unit of the People's Forces
48. Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional
49. Gay Liberation Front
50. George Jackson Brigade
51. Grupo Estrella
52. Guerrilla Column 29 September
53. Guerrilla Forces for Liberation
54. Hatikvah Leumi or National Hope
55. Imperial Iranian Patriotic Organization
56. Independent Armed Revolutionary Commandos
57. Irish Republican Army
58. Jamaat al-Fuqra
59. Jewish Armed Resistance
60. Jewish Committee of Concern
61. Jewish Defense League
62. Jewish Resistance Assault Team
63. Jonathan Jackson Brigade
64. Justice Commandos for the Armenian Genocide
65. Ku Klux Klan
66. Latin America Anti-Communist Army (LAACA)
67. Liberation Army Fifth Battalion
68. Lolita Lebron Puerto Rican Liberation Command
69. Luis Boitel Commandos
70. M-7
71. Maccabee Squad/Shield of David
72. Macheteros
73. May 19 Communist Order
74. Mexican Revolutionary Movement
75. Minutemen American Defense

76. Movement for Cuban Justice (Pragmatistas)
77. Mujahideen-I-Khalq
78. National Committee to Combat Fascism
79. National Front for the Liberation of Cuba (FLNC)
80. National Integration Front
81. National Socialist Liberation Front
82. New Jewish Defense League
83. New World Liberation Front
84. New Year's Gang
85. Ninth of June Organization
86. Omega-7
87. Organization 544
88. Organization Alliance of Cuban Intransigence
89. Organization of Volunteers for the Puerto Rican Revolution
90. Otpor (United States)
91. Pedro Albizu Campos Revolutionary Forces
92. People's Brigade for a Healthy Genetic Future
93. People's Liberation Army (United States)
94. People's Revolutionary Party
95. Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)
96. Popular Liberation Army (Puerto Rico)
97. Posse Comitatus
98. Provisional Coordinating Committee for the Defense of Labor
99. Puerto Rican Armed Resistance
100. Puerto Rican Liberation Front
101. Puerto Rican Resistance Movement
102. Puerto Rican Revolutionary Movement
103. Quartermoon society
104. Rajneeshees
105. Red Guerilla Family
106. Regulators
107. Republic of New Afrika
108. Republic of Texas
109. Revenge of the Trees
110. Revolutionary Action Party
111. Revolutionary Cells-Animal Liberation Brigade
112. Revolutionary Commandos of the People (CRP)
113. Revolutionary Force 26
114. Revolutionary Force 9
115. Revolutionary Force Seven
116. Revolutionary Labor Commandos
117. ROSADO-SOTO Command
118. Save Our Israel Land
119. Secret Army Organization
120. Secret Cuban Government
121. Secret Organization Zero
122. Sons of Liberty
123. Sons of the Gestapo
124. Students for a Democratic Society
125. Symbionese Liberation Army
126. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)
127. The Jewish Execution with Silence
128. The Justice Department
129. The Order
130. The Scorpion
131. The World United Formosans for Independence
132. Thunder of Zion
133. Tontons Macoutes
134. Tribal Thumb
135. United Freedom Front
136. United Jewish Underground
137. Universal Proutist Revolutionary Federation
138. Up the IRS, Inc
139. Weather Underground
140. White Panther Party
141. Young Cuba
142. Zebra killers