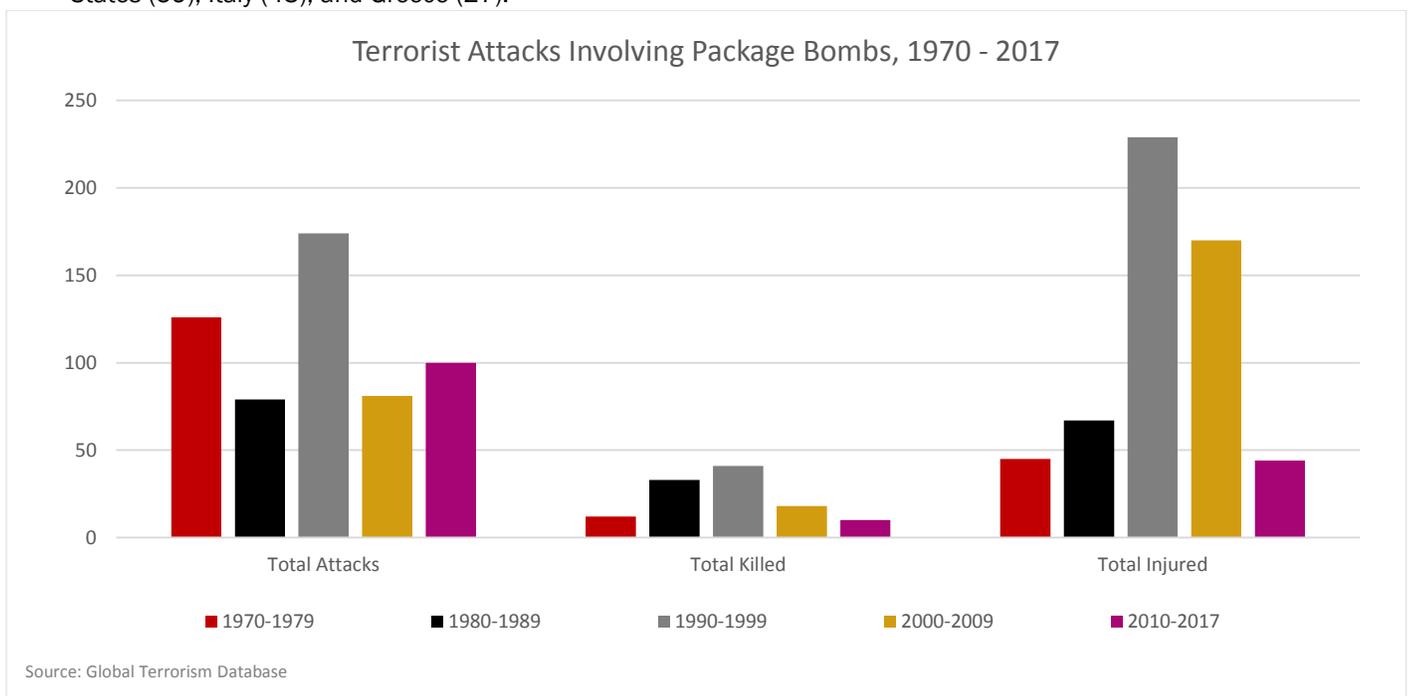
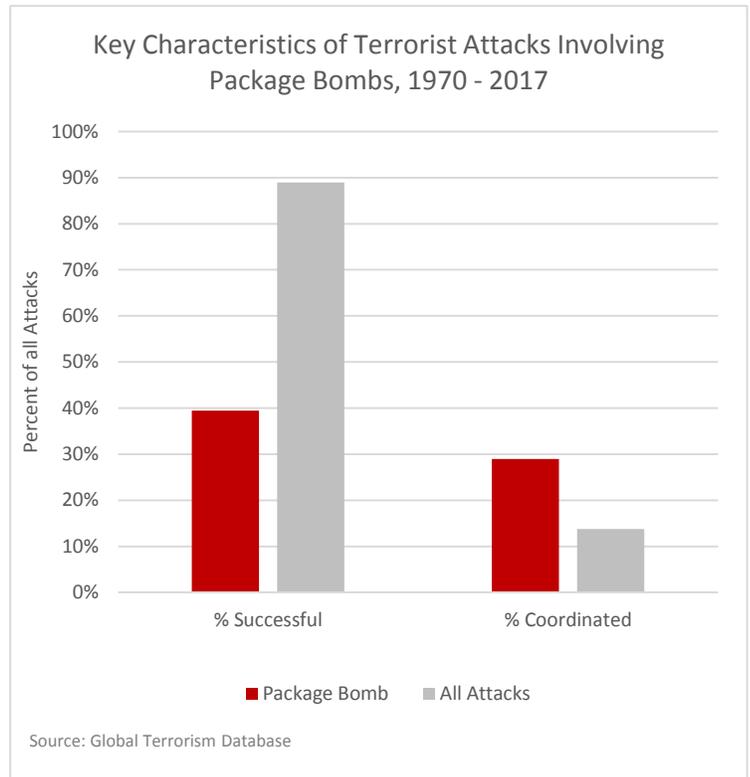


Terrorist Attacks Involving Package Bombs, 1970 – 2017

- Between 1970 and 2017, 560 terrorist attacks involved explosives in letters, parcels, or packages sent in the mail or made to appear as if they were sent in the mail.¹
- Terrorist attacks involving package bombs were least likely to be successful compared to attacks involving other types of weapons, with explosives detonating in 39 percent of all package bomb attacks. In comparison, 55 percent of pipe bomb attacks (excluding those sent in packages) were successful. Overall, 89 percent of all terrorist attacks worldwide during this period were successful, regardless of weapons used.
- More than one-quarter (29%) of all terrorist attacks involving package bomb attacks were part of a coordinated, multi-part event, compared to 14 percent of terrorist attacks overall.
- The vast majority (88%) of package bomb attacks were non-lethal. In 9 percent of cases one person was killed, and in 3 percent of package bomb attacks, two or more people were killed.
- The majority of package bomb attacks occurred in Western Europe (54%) and North America (12%), a total of 368 attacks. The five countries where this tactic was used most frequently are: the United Kingdom (102 attacks); Spain (63); the United States (59); Italy (43); and Greece (27).



¹ A previous version of this fact sheet [did not include data from 1993](#). We have updated this fact sheet to now include cases from 1993.

- A perpetrator group was identified for the majority of attacks involving package bombs (62%). The perpetrator groups responsible for the most package bomb attacks were:
 - Black September: 208 attacks in 1971 and 1972 killed one and injured six.
 - Basque Fatherland and Freedom: 39 attacks from 1987-2006 killed seven and injured 32.
 - Irish Republican Army: 24 attacks from 1973-1990 killed one and injured 23.
 - Informal Anarchist Federation: 19 attacks from 2003-2013 injured eight.
 - Conspiracy of Cells of Fire: 19 attacks from 2010-2017 injured five.

- Twenty-five percent of all attacks involving package bombs targeted non-diplomatic government entities, and an additional 16 percent targeted diplomatic embassies and personnel. Businesses were targeted in 17 percent of all package bomb attacks and 14 percent targeted private citizens.
 - The majority (58%) of diplomatic targets of package bomb attacks were Israeli (51 attacks). In particular, the Black September Organization carried out dozens of package bomb attacks against Israeli targets around the world in September 1972. No other single country experienced more than five package bomb attacks against diplomatic targets.
 - There were 59 package bomb attacks in the United States between 1970 and 2017. Seven of these were lethal, each killing one person, all prior to 1996.
 - Seventeen (30%) targeted non-diplomatic government entities, although all but one of these attacks occurred prior to 2000.
 - Six (11%) targeted diplomatic embassies and personnel in the United States, including diplomatic targets representing Israel, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.
 - Ten (18%) targeted private citizens and six (11%) targeted abortion-related clinics and personnel.

- Between 1970 and 2017, there were 39 terrorist attacks involving other dangerous substances sent through the mail.
 - Thirty-six of these attacks occurred between 2000 and 2017.
 - The materials used in these attacks include anthrax (21 attacks), ricin (6), 1080 pesticide (4), and cyanide (3). In five cases the specific type of material was not identified.
 - The majority of these attacks occurred in the United States (23). Other locations included New Zealand (6), Kenya (3), Czech Republic (2), Pakistan (2), the United Kingdom (2), and Chile (1).

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The data presented here are drawn from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). The GTD contains information on more than 180,000 terrorist attacks that have occurred around the world since 1970. For more information about the GTD, visit www.start.umd.edu/gtd. The GTD is a project of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). The authors of this Fact Sheet are START's Dr. Michael Distler and Dr. Erin Miller. For questions about this report, contact infostart@start.umd.edu.



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