

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

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Terrorist Attacks on Religious Figures and Institutions and Military Targets

As four suspects face possible conviction for plotting to bomb a New York City synagogue and Jewish community center and shoot down military aircraft, the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) releases information on attacks on religious figures and institutions and military targets in the United States. The data were taken from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), which includes information on over 80,000 attacks between 1970 and 2007.

~ There have been 25 terrorist attacks against religious figures or institutions in the United States, four of which were unsuccessful attempts. These 25 attacks resulted in a total of eight fatalities. Nine of the 25 attacks involved explosives or bombs.

~ Nine of these attacks involved Jewish targets, including synagogues in Dallas, Nashville, New York, and Sacramento.

~ Worldwide, there have been 1615 attacks on religious figures and institutions, with largest concentration in South America, Middle East, and South Asia.

~ There have been 38 terrorist attacks against military targets in the United States, eight of which were unsuccessful attempts. Attacks against military targets were frequently aimed at recruiting centers. The GTD contains no records of attacks against military aircraft in the United States.

~ The United States has experienced over 1350 terrorist attacks since 1970, peaking in the mid 1970s with 120 attacks per year. Since 1977 there have been fewer than 50 attacks per year. More than half of these have involved bombs or explosives, and the most common type of target has been private businesses.



The GTD is an open-source database including information on terrorist events around the world from 1970-2007. Unlike many other event databases, the GTD includes systematic data on domestic as well as transnational and international terrorist incidents that have occurred during this time period. For each GTD incident, information is available on the date and location of the incident, the weapons used and nature of the target, the number of casualties, and—when identifiable—the perpetrator.



The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) is a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence 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. Additional information on START is available at: www.start.umd.edu.