



**START**

# **Border Crossings and Terrorist Attacks in the United States: Lessons for Protecting against Dangerous Entrants**

*Final Report to the U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security Science & Technology  
Directorate Office of University Programs*

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National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism  
A Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Center of Excellence  
Based at the University of Maryland

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## About This Report

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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](mailto:infostart@start.umd.edu) or visit [www.start.umd.edu](http://www.start.umd.edu).

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**Executive Summary**

This project examines the degree to which individuals who have engaged in terrorist activity in the United States have crossed in and out of the country during planning and in the wake of illegal and/or violent activities. The September 11, 2001, attacks demonstrated the damage that can be inflicted by individuals with vicious intent who gain access to the country; the research team sought to determine to what degree the general travel patterns of the 9/11 attackers were common to others who have attacked the United States and how knowledge gained about the dynamics of such individuals in the past might inform border security personnel and practices today.

Fieldwork at select ports of entry (POEs) led the research team to conclude that the primary and overwhelming concern of screening agents at POEs remains the immigration status of entrants. Processes are directly informed by data on specific passengers from the National Targeting Center but the overall screening process is not focused on or built around identifying individuals who may intend to plot violent attacks against the United States. This raises several research questions: How frequently have individuals who have engaged in terrorist plots crossed in and out of the United States; and to what degree have they been successful at evading detection at POEs? Answers to these questions could inform the degree to which border screening should direct increased attention to the counterterrorist mission.

Based on a selection of information available about individuals in the United States who have been charged with Federal terrorism crimes between 1980 and 2004, the research team identified 264 indicted individuals who had been involved in 221 border crossings at U.S. POEs, based upon information available in public court documents. These identified border crossings served as the building blocks for the U.S. Terrorism Border Crossing (USTBC) dataset. This dataset includes information on what POEs were involved in a specific border crossing, the origin and final destination of the crosser, his/her citizenship and immigration status, as well as demographic and background information on the crosser.

<b>Border-Crossing Events</b>
221 border crossings involving at least one person indicted in a Federal terrorism-related case
Involved at least 22 different ports of entry
At least 29 different countries of origin for those attempting to enter the United States
<b>Border Crossers</b>
264 crossers had a direct link to a terrorism case
Associated with at least 12 known terrorist groups
More than 80% of crossers were male and married
Used a variety of legal and illegal measures to try to enter the United States

Analyses of these newly collected data revealed trends in these border crossings by individuals indicted on federal terrorism charges. The border crossers were most often U.S. citizens entering back into the United States, most often via an airport (rather than a seaport or a land port of entry). Almost all were male, and a large majority was married. According to U.S. court documents, only a minority had previous arrests. There was notable variation in the points of origin for these border crossers, with trips originating all around the world.

Demographics \ Border Crossers Indicted on Terrorism Charges
• Mean age at time of crossing = 31 years old
• 86.6% of crossers were male
• Average (mode) highest level of education was a high-school diploma (33%)
• 82% were married at time of crossing
• 11% were known to be previously arrested in the United States
• 11.1% were known to be previously arrested abroad

Researchers found that 87% of the known border crossings attempted by these indictees were successful, allowing the individuals to enter or exit the United States. Analyses of these data indicate that border-crossings were more likely to be prevented in winter months (December-January-February), but that this seasonal trend was not statistically significant. Similarly, the type of POE used by a traveler was not significantly related to the likely success of the crossing, nor were entrants more or less likely to succeed than those exiting the country.

There was no clear pattern regarding the relative distance between the location of a crosser’s POE and where he/she engaged in terrorism-related activity. While about half of those involved in violent terrorist acts targeted within 30 miles of where they crossed the border, another quarter of individuals targeted locations more than 800 miles from their point of entry/exit.

Prior to 2001, only two of the attacks involving USTBC crossers had resulted in fatalities. But the events of September 11, 2001, demonstrated in stark relief the destruction that can be associated with individuals who cross in and out of the country.

To supplement these historical, aggregated data, this project included a series of case studies examining how potential and actual terrorists have exploited U.S. borders. The four cases examined in detail were Ahmed Ressam (Millenium Bomber), Ghazi Ibrahim Abu Mezer, the 1993 World Trade Center Bombers and the North Carolina cigarette smuggling group. Natural comparisons emerged between Ressam and Abu Mezer: As discussed in detail in the case studies, both were entries into the United States in the state of Washington from Canada via a land or port crossing (as opposed to entry at an airport), neither crossing was legal, both were clearly tied to terrorist activity, they occurred within a three-year period, and both individuals had a criminal record. The major difference is that one eventually managed to cross successfully (Abu Mezer), while the other (Ressam) did not, although the former was stopped repeatedly by astute border agents.

Studies of those involved in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the NC cigarette smuggling ring highlighted how individuals involved in these plots relied on political asylum mechanisms to enter and remain in the United States, and on fake or fraudulently obtained documents to enter the country, serving as a reminder of the ongoing need to develop safeguards against such tactics at U.S. borders.

## Border Crossings and Terrorist Attacks in the United States: Lessons for Protecting against Dangerous Entrants

### Overview

Discussions of counterterrorism and border security in the United States are often linked to one another, given that borders can serve as entry points to or departure from the United States for potential or actual terrorists. Against this background, in March 2010, a team involving researchers from two DHS Centers of Excellence—the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) and the National Center for Border Security and Immigration (BORDERS)—began work on a research project called “Border Crossings and Terrorist Attacks on the United States: Lessons for Protecting Against Dangerous Entrants” (**Award# 2009-ST-061-MD0003**). START’s contributions to this project involve experts from the University of Maryland and the University of Arkansas, while BORDERS’ contributions involve researchers from the University of Arizona. The period of performance for this project was March 2010 through August 2012.

The first goal of this project was to improve understanding of how current border security procedures reflect explicit counterterrorism aims by investigating the screening environment at a port of entry (POE). The second, directly related goal was to provide historical data on the conditions under which individuals that have planned terrorist attacks targeting the United States or that have engaged in such conspiracies have entered or left the country. These data provide an empirically grounded baseline understanding of the border-crossing behaviors of individuals who have engaged in or have planned involvement in terrorist activity directed against the United States and, as such, inform recommendations regarding counterterrorism components of border screening processes.

Achieving these goals required a team comprised of experts from a variety of fields (including criminology, political science, computer and information science, and planning and policy development), who applied varied methodologies to studying this complex issue. As discussed below, the project included the construction and analysis of a quantitative data set, undertaking a series of qualitative case studies, ethnographic studies of ports of entry, and systems and process analyses of screening procedures. Project researchers collaborated to provide insights into terrorist border-crossing behaviors in the past and how current processes relate to those past behaviors, in the hopes to provide policy makers and practitioners informative findings to help prevent the entrance and departure of terrorists or “wanna-be” terrorists along the U.S. border in the future.

This final report aims to summarize the work conducted under this project, with an emphasis on key findings. The report provides an overview of the work conducted by all members of the research team. The appendices detail specific aspects of the project to provide readers with a clear sense of how the research was conducted and how specific findings and conclusions were achieved.

Researchers at the BORDERS Center at the University of Arizona, notably Jay Nunamaker, Elyse Golob, and Aaron Elkins, conducted analyses of the screening processes used at ports of entry and reviews of

how and whether the screening process could be impacted by new insights on behavioral patterns of individuals with ill-intent who have crossed borders in the past. A team at the University of Arkansas, led by Brent Smith and Paxton Roberts, took the lead in collecting data on the border crossing patterns of terrorism-related indictees, following a protocol developed at Arkansas in partnership with researchers at the University of Maryland. Arkansas researchers conducted geographic analyses of the emerging data, while researchers at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland conducted additional analyses of the border-crossing data and the comparative case studies presented here.

## Port of Entry Screening Processes

In order to obtain a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of screening procedures at U.S. ports of entry (POEs), project researchers based at the University of Arizona conducted in-depth studies of two U.S. POEs, one land and one air:

1. Mariposa Port of Entry, Nogales AZ (Land Port of Entry)
2. Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, Phoenix AZ

To improve understanding of operations at Mariposa POE, research team members conducted information gathering activities with Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers and Office of Border Patrol (OBP) officials to gain first-hand information from officers and agents working in the field. One activity included a group collaboration session using ThinkTank software that allows participants to anonymously voice their opinions on ongoing discussions, thus fostering greater overall participation. In this session 12 agents from CBP's Office of Field Operations (OFO) OBP, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the FBI participated. The goal was to bring agency representatives together to discuss issues they face in their daily work.

Additional information gathering involved visiting the OBP Tucson Sector Headquarters to conduct interviews with the Information Technology Directors as well as field agents. The goal was to gain a better understanding of the conditions under which they work as well as the technologies they commonly use in the field. Researchers also interviewed and received briefings from OFO officers, the intended users of any improved screening system.<sup>1</sup>

### Existing Screening Processes at Land Ports of Entry

This section details the processes and questions used to screen pedestrians and vehicles by OFO officers at U.S. POEs. These were collected and developed from the information gathering activities conducted during Phase 1 and will be further elaborated into detailed process diagrams to develop recommendations for automation and process improvements in Phase 2.

#### *Pedestrian Ports of Entry Process*

Pedestrians entering the United States typically wait in a queue outside the country that continues into the POE. As the pedestrian enters the POE he/she is randomly assigned by an OFO officer to one of several interview stations. This random assignment prevents collusion between a pedestrian and a compromised OFO officer. The pedestrian walks 10 to 15 feet to the interviewing officer who is watching

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<sup>1</sup> While not the focus of this study, these interviews generated findings regarding the needs identified by those working in the field regarding the border screening process in general. A summary of these findings is provided in **Appendix 1**.

for abnormal or suspicious behavior as the pedestrian approaches. The pedestrian presents ID and/or visa documentation to the officer. Where available, the officer scans the ID card via computer to retrieve information about the pedestrian's identity, nationality, arrest warrants, if any, and "armed and dangerous" status, if applicable. The officer may ask questions regarding the pedestrian's identity, origin, or reason for entering the country. These questions vary and help the officer identify any hostile or illegal intent. The interview typically lasts a few seconds to a few minutes, but the officer can continue the interview as needed. When satisfied, the officer grants permission for the pedestrian to enter the U.S.

If the officer is suspicious of the behavior or has assessed problems with the person's identity or cover story, the officer escorts the individual to secondary screening where officers can spend more time investigating the individual and his/her belongings. The pedestrian may be restrained with handcuffs during part of the secondary screening. If the computer returns "armed and dangerous" or that an arrest warrant has been issued, the officer can press a panic button for immediate assistance. Other officers converge to help take the person into custody.

### *Automobiles at Ports of Entry Process*

Automobiles (privately-owned vehicles or POV) entering the United States typically wait in a queue outside the country in a line that continues into a POE. On the southern border, this wait can be several hours due to the high traffic volume. The vehicle enters the POE for inspection and passes radio frequency identification (RFID) sensors. These sensors read the RFID chip in the identification card of the driver. A database is accessed and identification information is presented to the OFO officer. The RFID sensors are positioned 10 to 30 feet from the officer's interview station. The vehicle proceeds to the station and stops and the officer assesses the vehicle, driver, and passengers. The officer may ask questions of the driver or passengers, including requests for identification, origin, and reason for entering the country. This can last seconds or minutes, as the officer assesses for a variety of possible infractions: smuggling contraband (e.g., drugs, agricultural products, animals, etc.), illegal entry, trafficking of money or children, and terrorism. Upon satisfaction, the officer grants permission for the vehicle to enter the United States.

If a canine unit is present, the canine and its OFO handler walk around the vehicle while the primary officer conducts the interview. If the canine hits (i.e., detects drug odors), the vehicle and occupants are sent to secondary screening. Canine units work only 15 minutes out of every hour, with four canine units rotating to provide continuous coverage.

If the officer is suspicious of the behavior or has assessed problems with the identity or cover story of the individual, then the officer requests the vehicle to proceed to secondary screening. At secondary screening, the officer can spend more time investigating the individuals and their belongings. The driver and occupants are detained for questioning while other officers inspect the vehicle.

### *Commercial Vehicles at Ports of Entry Process*

Commercial vehicles (e.g., trailer trucks) entering the country must first pass through a pre-screening area located hundreds of feet from the border. It is mandatory that their cargo manifest (i.e., eManifest) be reported electronically before attempting to cross. The cargo data is transferred into the CBP Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) system to track cargo, cab and trailer, driver, product, importer, and exporter information. In Nogales, trucks then pass through radiation detectors, drug-sniffing dogs, inspection-friendly platforms, and Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) installed weigh-in-motion scales.



Upon entering primary inspection at the POE, the driver presents his/her documentation to the OFO officer. The documentation includes driver identification and the manifest of the cargo. The officer assesses the vehicle and the driver. The officer may choose to ask questions of the driver. Questions typically are regarding the occupants' identification, origin, cargo, etc. The assessment can last seconds or minutes. Upon satisfaction the officer grants permission for the vehicle to enter the U.S. or directs the commercial vehicle to secondary inspection.

Some POEs (e.g., Mariposa, AZ), offer low-risk commercial vehicles the option of a Free and Secure Trade (FAST) lane. This FAST lane requires prescreening (i.e., background check) of the driver and vehicle in exchange for shorter wait times and less inspection. Only drivers "carrying eligible goods for an approved carrier, importer and shipper" can receive FAST clearance. Vehicles with a FAST lane permit can still be questioned by an OFO officer, but typically do not need to wait in the longer and slower queues.

If secondary screening is required, the OFO officers may open and inspect all of the cargo. This inspection includes checks for hazardous materials, weapons, narcotics, and agricultural pests. The commercial vehicles may also be imaged with a back-scatter x-ray image. The x-ray is mobile and mounted on an OFO truck; the x-ray provides a clear picture of any hidden drugs or contraband in hidden compartments.

If an infraction is identified, the truck and cargo are impounded. The driver is questioned for knowledge or involvement, but may not be detained for long because the tie between driver and contraband is difficult to prove (i.e., the driver says he doesn't know how it got there). The contraband is removed and the truck's owner is called to collect the vehicle and allowable cargo.

### *Pedestrians and Vehicles Leaving the U.S. Process*

Most pedestrians and vehicles leaving the U.S. are now being automatically screened. Pedestrians approach a computer, scan their identification and answer questions presented by the computer regarding whether this is a temporary exit or a permanent one. Vehicle drivers follow the same process. Officers can ask questions if desired, and are primarily looking for those laundering money, escaping arrest warrants, or transporting weapons.

### *Questions Used During LPOE Screening Processes*

When foreign nationals enter a POE pedestrian crossing, they are interviewed by an OFO officer at a counter. The questions are similar across interviews. If additional information is needed or the officer suspects the interviewee is being deceptive, the officer will deviate from the script. Otherwise, a set of questions similar to those found in **Table 1** is used.

<b>Table 1. Typical set of questions asked POE pedestrian crossing</b>
1. Hello, where are you going?
2. Why are you going there?
3. Do you have the address of where you are going to stay?
4. How long are you going to stay there?
5. Who lives there?
6. Do you have proof of where you work?
7. How long have you worked there?
8. Do you have proof of where you live?
9. How long have you lived there?
10. Put your index finger here (takes fingerprints of both fingers)
11. Look at the camera (takes picture with webcam).
12. Take a seat and wait for your name to be called.

During the initial interview, the interviewee’s name is taken from the passport or passport card. Questions 1 and 2 establish the purpose of the visit. Typical reasons to come to the U.S. are to work, shop, or visit family and friends. If the interviewee is not convincing or exhibits suspicious or abnormal behavior, they may be required to go through additional screening. Questions 3, 4, and 5 get at the specific time, location, and landlord of the place where they will stay. Questions 6 and 7 are important because people without jobs are more likely to enter the country to look for (illegal) work. Questions 8 and 9 aid the interviewer in determining credibility. For example, if a person from a town in southern Mexico says they are coming to the U.S. to shop, this may raise suspicion. Following the questioning, the person’s fingerprints for both index fingers are taken and stored in a database. A picture is taken with a webcam and the interviewee is asked to sit and wait for their name to be called.

If there is sufficient suspicion during the interview, the interviewee may be taken to a pat-down area and searched for drug paraphernalia and weapons. At that time, they are also interviewed about any violations committed during the primary screening, such as lying about the purpose of the visit. If the person is found with drugs, weapons, or has committed a violation, they are briefly detained. Smugglers and those caught lying are taken to a different area for further questioning.

During the secondary screening, pedestrians are asked their name, their fingerprints are taken, and a picture is taken. More standard questions are asked (see **Table 2**) and entered by keyboard into a computerized form.

<b>Table 2. Typical set of questions asked during the secondary screening process</b>
1. What is your name?
2. Where are you coming from?
3. Where are you going?
4. What is your height, weight, birth date, nationality, and marital status?
5. What is your country of origin?
6. What are the names of your father and mother?
7. What are their ages and nationality?

After this information is input, a more personalized but still formulaic set of questions is asked by the officer. For example, a pedestrian crosser may tell the officer that he is a U.S. citizen when he is not. The

follow-up questions specifically address that violation and are entered into a text document for record-keeping (see **Table 3**).

<b>Table 3. Personalized set of questions asked in secondary screening</b>
1. What is your full name?
2. Do you go by any other name?
3. Is that the name you were given at birth?
4. What is your date of birth?
5. How old are you?
6. In what country do you have citizenship?
7. Are you a citizen of the U.S.?
8. In what country do your parents have citizenship?
9. Have your parents ever immigrated to the U.S.?
10. Have you ever immigrated to the U.S. before?
11. How did you enter the U.S.?
12. Did you know it was against the law to say you are a U.S. citizen when you are not?
13. Have you ever been arrested in the U.S. by police or immigration services?
14. Have you ever been arrested in your own country?

**Existing Screening Processes at Air Ports of Entry**

To obtain a more operational level understanding of the border crosser screening process, a detailed systems and process analysis was conducted at the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport in Phoenix, Arizona. The research team observed U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) OFO officers as they conducted screenings of passengers arriving at Sky Harbor from international flights.

During this screening analysis, the research team collected documents (e.g., I94 and 6059B forms), observed the process, and interviewed officers. The result of this analysis led to the development of the detailed process diagram in **Figure 1**. The diagram documents the decisions, information flows, forms, and processes that occur from the time that a passenger arrives to and leaves from the customs area.<sup>2</sup>

The motivation for examining the screening process was to identify and recommend improvements to the existing process based on the patterns and behavior of terrorist border crossers revealed in this research. However, during the course of this investigation we learned that primary screening officers are mainly concerned with immigration status (i.e., establishing identity and citizenship) and customs declarations.

All processes leading to terrorism-related screening are driven by information from the National Targeting Center (NTC). Specifically, the officers at the Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport receive a list of names from each passenger manifest that have been identified for secondary screening. Our research team was unable to obtain access to the NTC to develop customized recommendations based on this screening process.

Despite not being able to provide specific operational recommendations for the NTC, the research team continued efforts to compile original, unclassified data that would allow for the identification of patterns

<sup>2</sup> For consistency and ease of interpretation, the diagram was made using Business Process Model Notation 2.0.

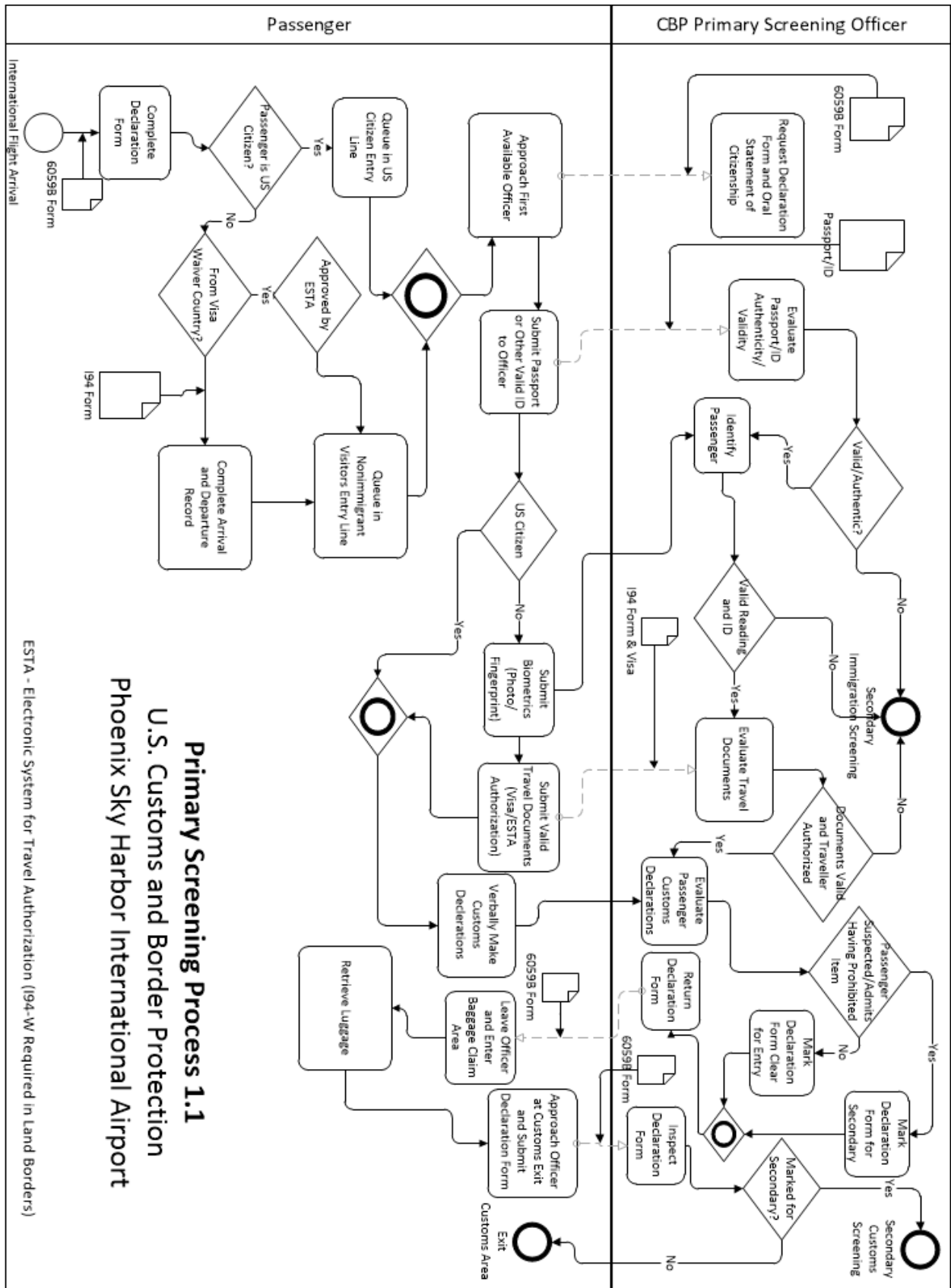


Figure 1. Air POE Screening Process

of historical terrorist border crossers that were either apprehended or missed with the expectation that lessons learned from these analyses would be useful both at the operational and strategic levels to members of the homeland-security community.

## The Landscape of U.S. Border Crossings by Terrorists and Intended Terrorists

An essential step in this project was determining the frequency and dynamics of border crossings by individuals who conducted or who wanted to conduct terrorism-related activities in the United States. Towards that goal, the project built upon the existing holdings of the American Terrorism Study (ATS) in this effort. The ATS, housed at the University of Arkansas, catalogs and systematically codes information on more than 300 Federal court cases involving Federal terrorist charges since 1980 and, following a review of other possible resources, proved to be the most useful starting point for compiling open-source, quantitative data on terrorist border crossings.

Since 1989, the American Terrorism Study (ATS) has received lists of court cases and associated indictees that resulted from an official FBI terrorism investigation spanning 1980 through 2004. Housed at the University of Arkansas' Terrorism Research Center in Fulbright College (TRC), the ATS now includes almost 400 cases from the FBI lists. Of these, approximately 75% of cases have complete court documentation, and almost all of those collected have been coded into the ATS database, while the ATS team continues to track new cases by collecting, reviewing, and coding new and additional court documentation. The ATS includes terrorism incidents and attacks, thwarted or planned terrorism incidents sometimes referred to as preventions, material support cases for terrorism, general terrorism conspiracies, and in some cases, immigration fraud; the common denominator among all ATS events is that the FBI investigated these events as terrorism-related incidents.

During preliminary research for this project, court records from 378 terrorism cases found in the ATS dataset were reviewed for information on potential border crossing events related to terrorism cases. The documents for each court case were manually reviewed by researchers to determine whether the collected records reported that one of the defendants or accomplices in a case crossed a U.S. border at some point.

Thirty-eight percent of the reviewed cases—145 cases—from 1980 through 2004 were found to either have:

- direct mention of a border crossing in the court documents, or
- a link to a terrorism incident that involved a known border crossing, either before or after an incident.

After compiling this list of court cases for inclusion, each identified court case was then linked to a criminal incident involving terrorism charges. Initial reviews revealed a connection to a border-crossing event in a total of 58 successful terrorist attacks, 51 prevented or thwarted attacks, 26 material support cases, 33 immigration fraud incidents, and 4 general terrorism conspiracies. Additional reviews of relevant information on indictees and their activities resulted in a reduction in the number of successful terrorist attacks associated with these individuals to a total of 43.

**Appendix 2** provides more details on the data collection process and how a reliable collection methodology was established to create the *U.S. Terrorist Border Crossing Dataset (USTBC)*, using the ATS as a starting point.

Systematic evaluation by the research team revealed that the American Terrorism Study is a reliable and useful resource for identifying individuals associated with terrorist attacks or terrorist criminal cases (such as conspiracies) and for determining which of these individuals crossed U.S. borders in advance of or in the wake of their terrorism-related behavior. This is largely because the ATS is based on court documents, which among sources of data on terrorism are the most likely to reference relevant border crossing activity. The Global Terrorism Database, which is based primarily on media sources, can serve a supporting role in this research, but the ATS is the primary source allowing for construction of a new, relational database on U.S. Terrorist Border Crossings (USTBCs). That being said, it is important to recognize that the ATS is not a perfect data source. As noted above, its contents are limited to individuals and information related to court cases in which one or more defendant was charged with Federal terrorism charges. As such, the contents of ATS clearly represent a subset of all terrorists or attempted terrorists in the United States, as it systematically omits those who:

- were never arrested or faced any charges,
- were charged with offenses not directly related to terrorism,
- were charged at the non-Federal level, or
- were engaged in dangerous activity that does not meet the FBI's definition of a terrorism case.

Throughout this project, the research team was careful to respect the limitations of this data collection and to draw conclusions that recognize that the border crossing events included in this project likely represent a *non-representative subset of all border crossing attempts by terrorists or intended terrorists*. Despite these limitations, though, the data that was built upon the baseline of ATS provides important insights into the nexus between border crossings and terrorism.

### The U.S. Terrorism Border Crossing Dataset

The final versions of the codebooks used to develop the U.S. Terrorist Border Crossing (USTBC) data collection are presented in **Appendix 3**. Based upon knowledge gained from pilot efforts (as discussed above and in Appendix 2), the project resulted in two codebooks—one focused on dynamics of a border-crossing *event* involving someone associated with a Federal terrorism court case, and another focused on the characteristics of the *individuals* associated with Federal charges who were involved in the border-crossing event.

Data collection for the USTBC lasted for approximately one year and was primarily conducted by research assistants at the Terrorism Research Center at the University of Arkansas.<sup>3</sup> The resultant data that comprise the USTBC are available in **Appendix 4**.

**Table 4** provides a snapshot summary of these data, which include detailed information on the location of an attempted crossing, the timing of a crossing relative to attempted or actual terrorist activity, the origin or destination of an attempted crossing, and more. The data also include specific information on border crossers, including their citizenship status, their criminal history, and key demographics (including level of education, marital status, etc.) **Appendix 5** provides descriptive statistics from the border-crossing and border-crosser data.

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<sup>3</sup> Special thanks to Kim Murray and Summer Jackson of the Terrorism Research Center for their efforts in combing through the courtcase material and assembling these data for the USTBC.

<b>Table 4. Snapshot of USTBC Data</b>	
<b><i>Border-Crossing Events</i></b>	
221 border crossings involving at least one person indicted in a Federal terrorism-related case	
Involved at least 22 different ports of entry	
At least 29 different countries of origin for those attempting to enter the United States	
<b><i>Border Crossers</i></b>	
264 crossers had a direct link to a terrorism case	
Associated with at least 12 known terrorist groups	
More than 80% of crossers were male and married	
Used a variety of legal and illegal measures to try to enter the United States	

**Border Crossings Identified in USTBC**

*Attempts to Enter the United States*

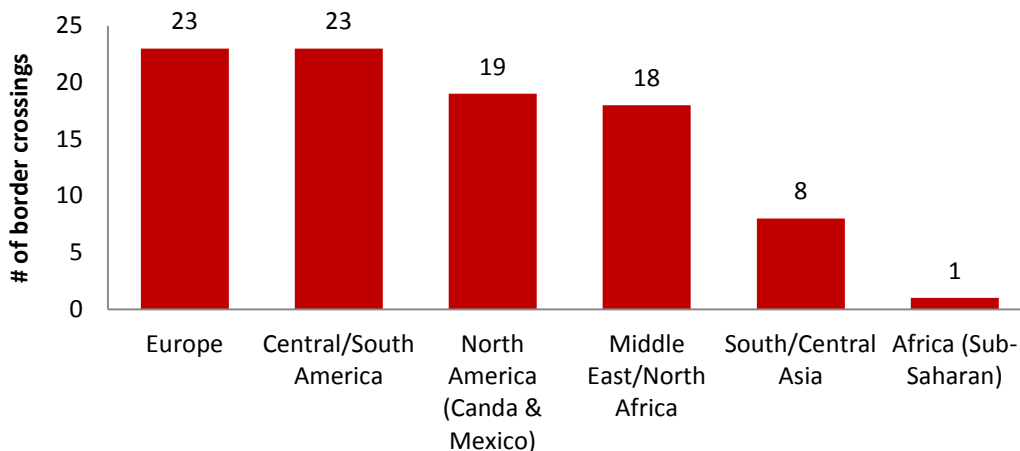
Of the 221 border crossings identified in this project as involving individuals who were indicted by the U.S. government in terrorism-related cases, the majority (129 crossings) involved an individual attempting to enter the United States, while the remainder (92 crossings) involved an individual attempting to exit the United States.

Eighty-seven percent of the attempted border crossings were successful, rather than being thwarted by law enforcement or foiled by some other events or developments. Additional discussion on the nature of successful crossings versus those who were apprehended at the border is presented below.

Among those attempts to enter the United States, the most frequent origin for these crossing efforts was Canada.<sup>4</sup> But, as **Figure 2** illustrates, such attempted entries originated from all corners of the world.

<sup>4</sup> Appendix 5 includes detailed information on the number of crossing attempts originating from 29 countries for 92 of the crossings for which such information could be obtained.

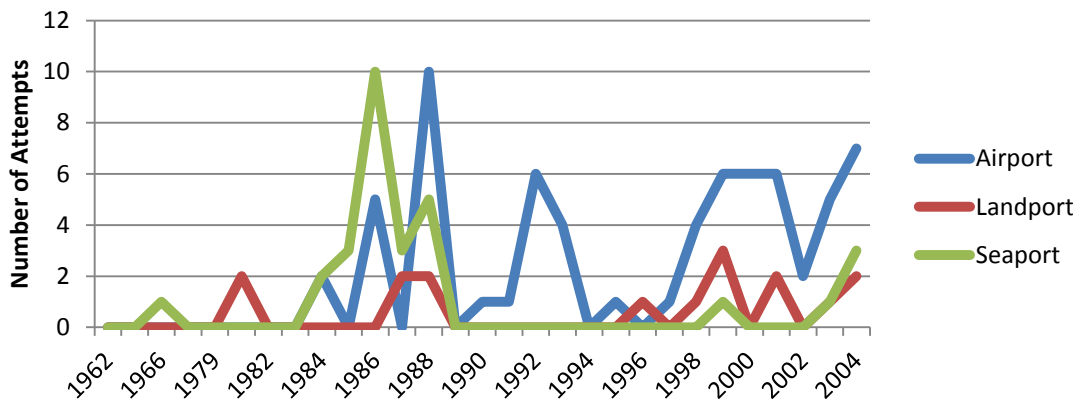
**Figure 2. Geographic Region of Origin of Attempted Border Crossings**



**Port of Entry (POE) Type**

As of 2012, there are 329 official ports of entry (POEs) in the United States. Almost two-thirds of the documented border-crossings involving indictees in federal terrorism-related cases traveled via U.S. airports<sup>5</sup> (80 crossings). Twenty-nine such crossing incidents occurred at U.S. seaports, and only 16 known incidents occurred at land ports of entry (LPOEs). **Figure 3** illustrates POE patterns over time and reflects that crossings via seaports were more common in the 1980s than in subsequent periods, although seaports have witnessed an increase in relevant activity since 2005, while airports have been the most popular mode of entry each year since 1995. The maximum number of indictees revealed to have crossed via LPOE in any year was 3 people (in 1999).

**Figure 3. Method of Entry for Terrorism-Related Border Crossings Over Time**



**POE Location**

Researchers were able to identify the state in which the relevant POE was located for 106 border-crossings events in this study: 25% of the crossings occurred in New York state, including those at the POE most frequently used by the subjects of this study: John F. Kennedy Airport in New York City (the

<sup>5</sup> Data on the type of port of entry was available for only 125 of the 221 relevant cases.



site of 15 crossing events). However, a review of just New York state reveals that crossings also occurred at three POEs along the New York state/Canadian border—at Rouses Point, Alexandria Bay, and Niagara Falls.<sup>6</sup> Those indicted on terrorism charges did not only cross the border at major international airports.

While the majority of border crossings by those indicted on terrorism charges in New York occurred in more distant history (1970s and 1980s), it has remained an active location for such crossings, with more incidents identified in New York than in any other state for the period 1995-2005. Other states experiencing multiple border crossings identified in this study during the period 1995-2005 include Illinois (5), California (4), Florida (4), Washington State (4), Georgia (2), and Michigan (2).

Of all U.S. locales, Puerto Rico saw the highest number of attempted border crossings by those indicted in Federal terrorism cases—32 of 115 (28%) crossings in which the state/location of the crossing was known occurred in this U.S. territory. However, the most recent crossing noted in Puerto Rico was in 1988.

Notably, the states that comprise the U.S. southwest border—California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas—account for only 6 of the 115 cases included in this study for which such data are available. As stated previously, however, these analyses only account for border crossings that were specifically referenced in court documents related to Federal terrorism cases; as such, these data could misrepresent the frequency with which terrorists attempt to cross the expansive southwest border.

**The Nature of USTBC Border Crossers**

In compiling the U.S. Terrorist Border Crossing dataset, the research team identified 264 individuals involved in border crossings who, according to court documents, had a direct link to terrorism. The research team systematically collected as much demographic and background information on these individuals as was available in an effort to determine whether there were common traits among this collection of people. **Table 5** presents a summary of the data collected on these 264 individuals.

<b>Table 5. Demographics of Border Crossers Indicted on Terrorism Charges</b>
• Mean age at time of crossing = 31 years old
• 86.6% of crossers were male
• Average (mode) highest level of education was a high-school diploma (33%)
• 82% were married at time of crossing
• 11% were known to be previously arrested in the United States
• 11.1% were known to be previously arrested abroad

Of those for whom citizenship could be determined (n=95), almost half (48%) were U.S. citizens, and another 18% were Canadian citizens. Among the non-U.S. citizens, there was great variation in the immigration status of the border crossers, including those with both legal and illegal documentation. This is described in more detail in **Appendix 5**, and in the case-studies associated with this project and presented below.

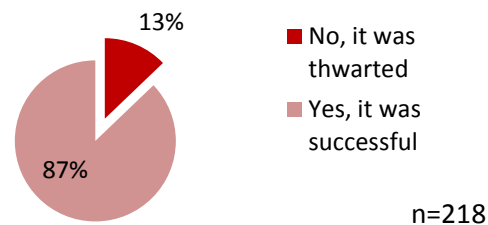
**Terrorist Border-Crossing Prevention: Successful Crossings v. Preventions**

<sup>6</sup> Appendix 5 includes information on the specific POEs involved for the 49 crossings in which such data was able to be obtained.

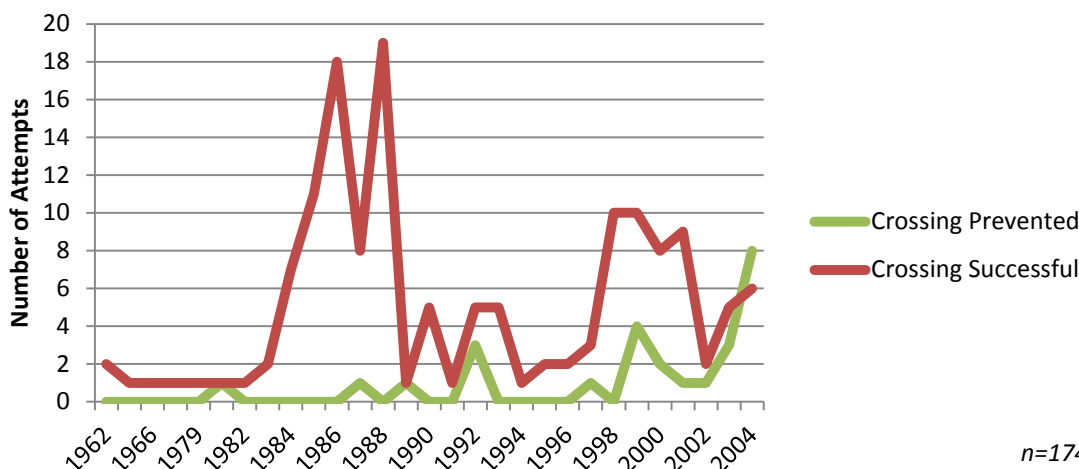
Of the 218 border crossings attempted, 190 resulted in an actual border crossing, while 28 attempts were thwarted, as noted in **Figure 4**.

The data span approximately 42 years, with the first record of a crossing by an indictee in an ATS case in 1962 (although the first ATS court case is from 1980). Over this timeframe—per **Figure 5**—the data show a subtle trend toward better prevention of terrorist attempts. 2004 was the first year in which more attempted crossings were successfully prevented than not.

**Figure 4. Was Border Crossing Successful?**

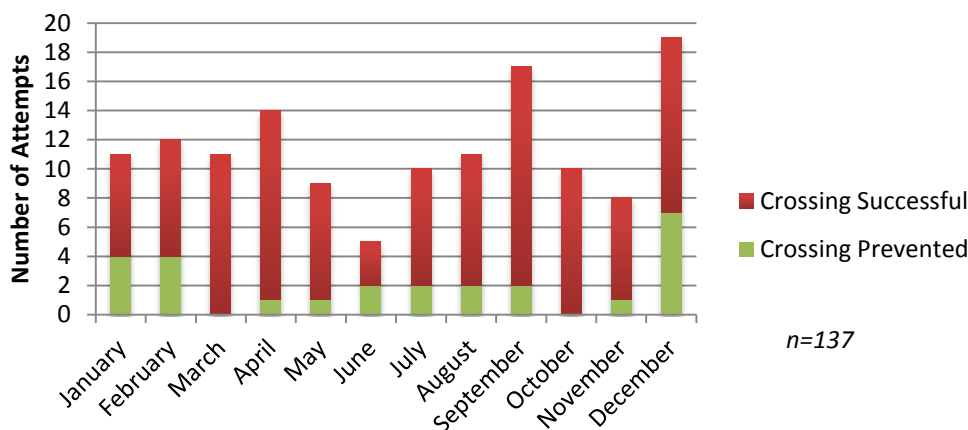


**Figure 5. Terrorism-Related Border Crossings Over Time**



The researchers examined whether there are seasonal differences in terrorism-related border crossings. The data were aggregated across the entire 40-year time period, and crossing statistics (successful vs. prevented) were examined by month. **Figure 6**, though not conclusive, indicates that there may be seasonality to terrorism-related border crossings. It is also instructive to note that while the number of attempts varies widely across the different months of the year, prevention of these attempts remains fairly constant.

**Figure 6. Prevention of Terrorism-Related Border Crossings by Month**



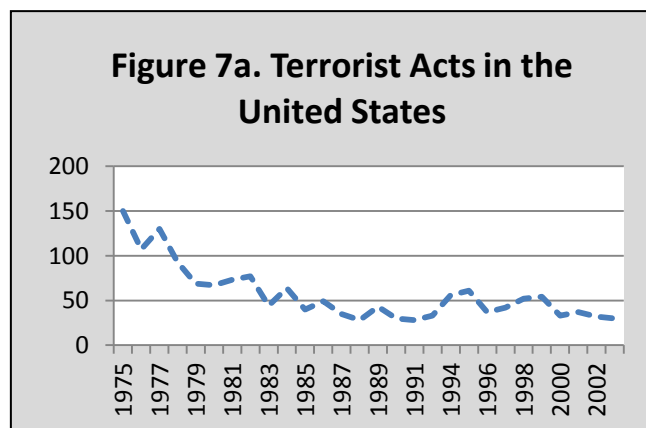
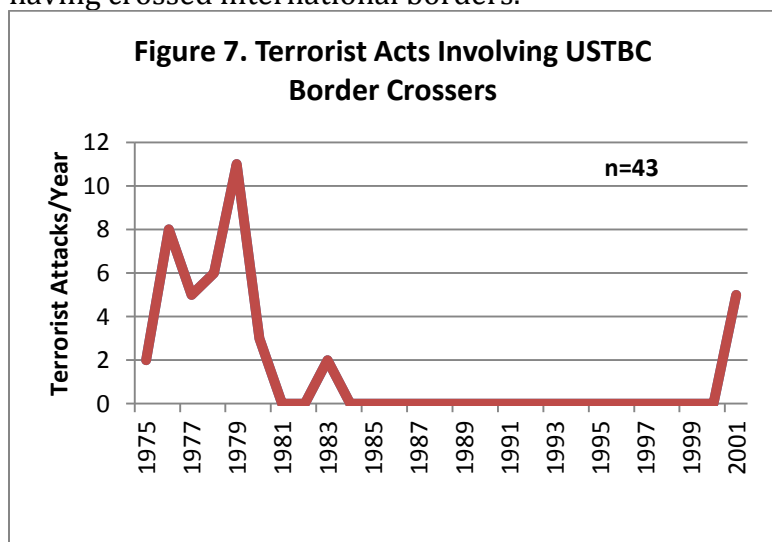
Researchers also used USTBC data in mean comparison analyses to determine whether specific characteristics of a crossing made it more or less likely to succeed. The first analysis performed was a simple means comparison of border entries vs. departures. With border crossing success as a binary outcome variable (Success = 1, Prevention = 0), crossings for terrorists entering the country ( $M = .83, SD = .38$ ) were not significantly more successful than terrorists who were leaving the country ( $M = .90, SD = .30$ ),  $t(219) = 1.54, p = .13$  (two-tailed). A second analysis compared three different methods of entry into the country for terrorism-related border crossings (airport, land port, and seaport). A one-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance statistical test) with border crossing success as the outcome variable was conducted. The analysis revealed no significant differences between crossing methods  $F(2, 122) = 1.22, p = .30$ : at each type of POE, the crossing was more likely than not to be successful.

### Terrorist Activity by USTBC Border Crossers

Analysis of USTBC data on its own provides useful context for understanding who has crossed U.S. borders while in the process of planning terrorist activity against the United States, when they have done it, and where they have crossed U.S. borders. By merging USTBC data with existing datasets related to terrorist events and terrorist behaviors, the research team was also able to provide insights into the violent, illegal activities in which the individuals involved in these border crossings engaged.

#### Frequency of Attacks

Individuals involved with the 221 border-crossing incidents identified in USTBC were associated with 43 terrorist attacks in the United States between 1975 and 2001, according to a comparison between USTBC and START’s Global Terrorism Database. As discussed above, because the USTBC data do not represent a comprehensive set of all attackers or would-be attackers it is not appropriate to consider this statistic as a percentage of all U.S. attacks. However, as a point of reference note that there are 1532 terrorist attacks in the United States between 1975 and 2001 recorded in the GTD. Figure 7 illustrates that the concentration of terrorist acts perpetrated by those involved with USTBC crossings occurred in the 1970s, while Figure 7a reveals that, while the frequency of terrorism in the United States declined after the 1970s, it did continue at a relatively steady rate through the early 2000: That is, terrorism continued in the United States, but these terrorist acts became far less likely to involve those identified in USTBC as having crossed international borders.



There was a resurgence in 2001 of terrorist acts involving those known to have crossed borders. Four of the 5 attacks included in 2001 as associated with USTBC crossers occurred on September 11<sup>th</sup> (two attacks on the World Trade Center buildings in New York City, one attack on the Pentagon, and one attack that ended in Shanksville PA). The fifth USTBC-GTD case in 2001 had nothing to do with 9/11 or al-Qa'ida. Rather, it involved an attack on a logging company in Oregon, perpetrated by an environmental terrorist group, after which the attacker successfully fled to Canada.

### *Terrorist Groups Involved in USTBC Border-Crossings*

Similar to this situation in 2001, those individuals included in USTBC were found to be associated with a collection of ideologically diverse terrorist groups, including:

- Abu Nidal Organization
- al-Qa'ida
- Animal Liberation Front (ALF)
- Environmental Liberation Front (ELF)
- Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN)
- Hamas
- Hizballah
- Japanese Red Army
- Macheteros
- Omega-7
- Provisional IRA
- Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party

### *Fatalities*

Prior to the September 11, 2001, attacks, only two attacks involving USTBC crossers resulted in fatalities. Attacks in 1979 and 1980 on Cuban officials in New York each left one person dead, and both involved the same member of Omega-7 who had come from Cuba and gained political asylum status in the United States.<sup>7</sup>

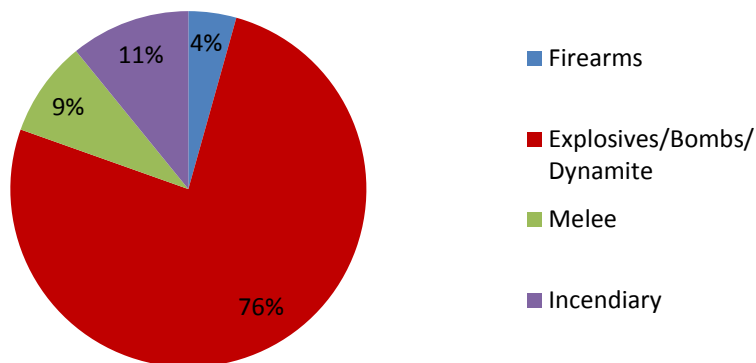
### *Weapon Choice*

In more than three out of every four attacks involving USTBC border crossers, the terrorists used explosives, bombs, or dynamite as the weapon in the attack, per **Figure 8**. Only two of the 43 attacks involved firearms. By comparison, looking at all terrorist attacks in the United States between 1974 and 2002 reveals that the use of explosives, bombs, or dynamite was less common among all cases (52% of incidents involved these as the primary weapon type) than among USTBC-GTD cases, and that the use of incendiaries was more common among all U.S. cases than it was in USTBC-GTD cases (27% v. 11%).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Again, this excludes any attacks that might have occurred in 1993.

<sup>8</sup> Given the small number of USTBC-GTD cases, tests for statistically significant differences between USTBC-GTD cases and all other U.S. GTD cases were inconclusive.

**Figure 8. Weapon Types in Terrorist Attacks Involving USTBC Border Crossers**

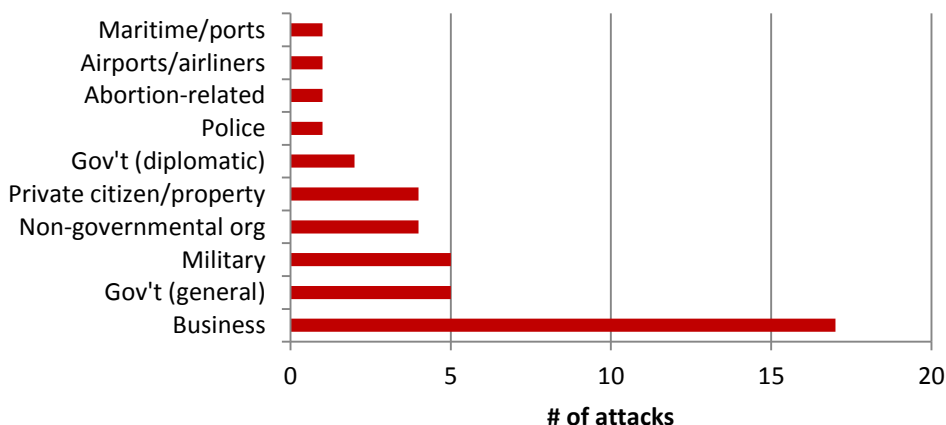


n=46: The four attacks of 9/11/2001 employed multiple weapon types, while the weapon could not be determined for one USTBC-related case.

*Target Type*

While these attacks showed little variation in weapon choice, the types of targets selected by USTBC-related terrorists did vary, as indicated in **Figure 9**. Businesses were targeted in 42% of these attacks, while government facilities (general government buildings, U.S. military targets, and diplomatic offices within the United States) were targeted in 29% of the attacks. Historically, businesses have been the most common targets of terrorists in the United States (targeted in 27% of all U.S. terrorist attacks), so USTBC-GTD cases are consistent with other cases in this regard. In contrast, USTBC-GTD cases were less likely than others to be directed against abortion-related targets (2% for USTBC-related cases v. 16% of all U.S. attacks in GTD).

**Figure 9. Target Types of Terrorist Attacks Involving USTBC Border Crossers**



n=41

*Location of Terrorist Attacks and Planned Attacks*

Between 1974 and 2001, every state in the United States experienced at least one terrorist attack, according to the GTD. Terrorism involving federal indictees known to have crossed a U.S. border, on the other hand, were greatly concentrated geographically, as presented in **Table 6**, with Illinois experiencing more than half of the USTBC-GTD attacks. The high level of activity in Illinois is related to border-crossing

activities by members of the FALN, a militant Puerto Rican separatist group. All but one of the Illinois attacks involved FALN and one leader of the organization—William Morales—who successfully fled to Mexico from the United States following his identification as an FALN ringleader.

**Table 6. Locations of Terrorist Activity Involving USTBC Border Crossers**

STATE	# of USTBC-related attacks
Illinois	22
New York	12
Florida	4
New Jersey	1
Pennsylvania	1
Virginia	1
Washington State	1

New York State, which has experienced the highest levels of terrorism in the country, was also targeted by border crossers, but not at the same rate as Illinois. Interestingly, only two states which experienced an attack—New York and Washington State—share a geographic border with another country.

Additional insights on the location of terrorist activities and planned activities by border crossers were obtained by integrating USTBC data with detailed information on planned and actual violent activities included in the American Terrorism Study (ATS): ATS includes a greater range of activities than does GTD, notably including violent attacks that were planned but not executed due to successful law enforcement efforts or some other external or internal intervention. Reviews of USTBC in conjunction with ATS identified 51 border crossings associated with violent terrorism incidents or planned incidents (rather than material support cases or financial crimes) and for which sufficient location data were available to conduct analyses. **Figure 10**, compiled by the University of Arkansas’ Paxton Roberts, presents these data on a map of the United States, identifying both where a border crossing occurred (in green) and where the violent act occurred or was planned to occur.

**Figure 10** depicts New York City as a hotbed of activity—both as a location for border crossings and as a target for those who crossed U.S. borders. But the spread of red dots across the maps demonstrates that these individuals were certainly not just targeting the highest profile locations (e.g., New York City), nor were they focused solely on targets along the borders of the country. **Table 7** presents additional information on the relationship between location of a border crossing and intended violent activity.

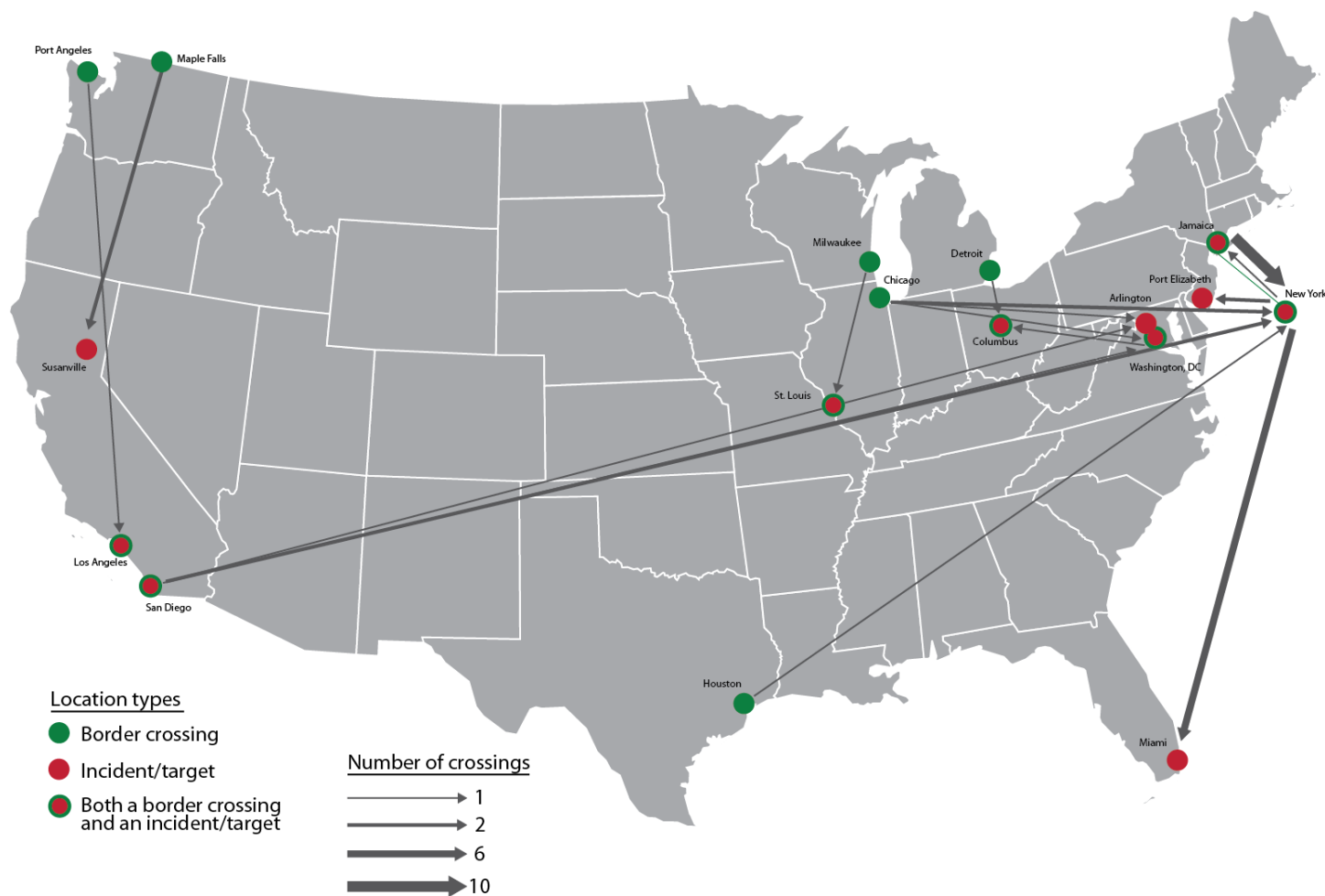
**Table 7. Relative Location of Border Crossing and Related Terrorist Activity**

	<b>Border Crossing to Incident/Target Distance</b>
<b>0 - 30 miles</b>	54.90%
<b>31 - 90 miles</b>	1.96%
<b>91 - 270 miles</b>	3.92%
<b>271 - 810 miles</b>	15.69%
<b>811 + miles</b>	23.53%
<b>Minimum Distance</b>	0 miles
<b>Maximum Distance</b>	2,806 miles
<b>Mean</b>	535.49
<b>Median</b>	17
<b>Std. dev.</b>	813.10
<b>Unique Crossings</b>	22
<b>Unique Incidents</b>	35
<b>Measurements</b>	51

Note: Each time a border is crossed it is counted as a "crossing" and may have involved been by one or more persons. Multiple people crossing together is counted as one crossing.

In the majority of cases for which data were available, the border crossers' target was close (within 30 miles) to the location at which he/she crossed the border and entered into or departed from the United States. But, in almost one-quarter of the cases, the eventual target was 811 or more miles from the POE transited by the border crosser identified in USTBC. As examined in the case studies below, it is often the case that an individual or group of individuals cross the border at a given POE but then travel extensively within the country before engaging in planned terrorist violence.

**Figure 10. Locations of Border Crossings and Related Terrorist Activity**



Source: American Terrorism Study Database 2011

### Case Studies of Terrorist Border-Crossers

The statistical analyses enabled by the construction of the USTBC provide important new knowledge about the scope and dynamics of terrorist efforts to cross U.S. borders. But while the findings from those analyses are useful in understanding aggregate trends, they cannot provide the level of detail about any particular crossing or crosser that can be provided in qualitative case study. As such, the project team conducted a series of comparative case studies looking in depth at the steps taken by selected indicted terrorists to enter and remain in the United States. The full comparative case study report is included as **Appendix 6** and provides analyses of border crossings involving (1) Ahmed Ressam, the so-called Millennium Bomber arrested as he tried to enter Washington state on his way to Los Angeles to ignite a bomb at Los Angeles International Airport; (2) Ghazi Ibrahim Abu Mezer, a Palestinian intent on punishing the United States for its long-time support of Israel; (3) the 1993 World Trade Center bombers; and (4) cigarette smugglers financing Hezbollah activity. (A summary presentation of the case study report is included as **Appendix 7**.)



As noted in the case study report, important trends are evident from these cases: Notably, the dangerous entrants studied here relied on the political asylum apparatus as a key mechanism for entry into the United States—a mechanism which provided these individuals with sufficient opportunity to move around the country and engage in violent and/or illegal activities while in the United States with little ongoing monitoring.

The case studies also highlight the practice of individuals relying upon fraudulent documents to gain access to the United States. This, of course, has been an area of intense scrutiny in the past decade, with the U.S. government making significant investments in both personnel and technologies in order to improve detection of fake documentation and/or fraudulently obtained materials. These cases underscore the need to sustain a commitment to fraud detection at the borders as a means to preventing dangerous individuals from entering the country.

### **Meeting Grant Objectives**

Consistent with the goals of the program that funded this research, this grant led to a successful research collaboration between experts with different areas of expertise—border security and terrorist behaviors—and with different disciplinary and methodological foundations, bringing together engineers and social scientists. Through this unique collaboration, new understandings about the challenges of detecting individuals who might wish to engage in terrorist activity, or even be actively involved in a terrorist conspiracy, as they enter and/or exit the United States. There is no standard blueprint of where, when, or how such individuals cross U.S. borders, nor does history reveal common characteristics of these individuals. The historical record does show, though, that terrorists who have targeted the United States have exploited the country's borders, undermining the country's security, making clear that continued efforts to identify information and processes that might support counterterrorism goals of screeners at POEs are valuable.

### **Stakeholder Engagement and Results Transition**

Supported by the Office of University Programs (OUP) in the Science and Technology (S&T) directorate of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), this research and its findings are directly relevant to operational components at DHS, notably CBP and ICE, as well as DHS's Office of Intelligence and Analysis. During the life of this grant, preliminary findings from the research were presented to DHS officials from various offices and components via opportunities arranged by S&T: Specifically, the research team comprised a panel on "Data Driven Solutions for Preventing Cross-Border Terrorist Attacks" at the Fifth Annual DHS S&T University Network Summit in March 2011. Similarly, findings from the project's case studies on the border-crossing behaviors of known terrorists were presented at a Brownbag Research session at DHS S&T headquarters in Washington, D.C., in August 2012. Feedback from practitioners and analysts who attended these venues were incorporated into subsequent research efforts and helped to shape the final products included here.

### **Student Engagement and Advancement**

This grant also served to support OUP's mission to engage high-performing students in the conduct of homeland-security-related science and to help develop a next generation of homeland-security scientists. While this project was led by senior scholars Gary LaFree (Maryland), Jay Nunamaker (Arizona), and Brent Smith (Arkansas), the team also included talented students whose interest in homeland security issues was heightened and supported through their important work on this project: During the course of

this grant, Aaron Elkins (Arizona), who conducted process analyses of Arizona POEs as part of this project, completed his Ph.D. in Computer and Information Science and subsequently secured a position as a post-doctoral researcher with the Intelligent Behaviour Understanding Group, Imperial College London. Kim Murray and Summer Jackson, graduate students at Arkansas who were the primary data collectors of the USTBC, have completed their studies at Arkansas, and both have entered into a Ph.D. program at the University of Oklahoma, where they continue their work on understanding domestic terrorism, working with the co-lead of the ATS project Kelly Damphousse. And, using funds from this grant, START was able to fund a summer internship focused on developing the project's case studies. Based on her success in this position, the intern—Jaime Shoemaker, who had just completed a master's degree in international studies prior to her internship—was subsequently hired by START as a full-time research assistant, where she continues to expand her knowledge of homeland security issues.

The research findings and products presented throughout this report represent important contributions to understanding of key issues related to homeland security, and the human capital developed through this collaborative research will continue to pay dividends for this community into the future.

## Appendix 1. Identified Screening Process Needs

Aaron Elkins, Jay Nunamaker, and Elyse Golob (University of Arizona)

At the completion of information gathering activities at the Mariposa AZ Port of Entry, it became obvious that there are numerous areas of concern for both OBP agents and OFO officers beyond the immediate scope of this project. While both offices face their own unique set of challenges, some common areas for improvement were identified. We detail the top five issues below.

Inter-Agency Collaboration – Without exception, all participants called for better inter-agency coordination, especially for information sharing. Roles and responsibilities in the field are fairly well defined, however they believed that better coordination at the political and high-level leadership levels would not only improve information sharing, but also resource allocation/sharing.

IT System (in particular database) Integration – Perhaps one of the greatest challenges for DHS is managing disparate databases. Every component within the agency develops and maintains its own set of databases for tracking relevant information. Each component is also very protective of who else can access this information, despite the possibility that information maintained in one database could be of use to another component. Furthermore, when one database is updated, related information in another database is not automatically updated. When dealing with illegal immigrants, this often creates a significant amount of extra work to determine which information is accurate. Also, when a database is shared, it is not integrated, thus forcing officers and agents to use multiple login/password combinations and hindering efficient information sharing.

Field Communications – One of the biggest security issues in relation to agent safety is field communications. OBP recently switched from analog radios to digital versions for improved secure communications. Unfortunately the digital radios have proven less reliable. Further complicating the issue is that many agents cannot talk directly to local law enforcement. As a result, they must carry field radios, cell phones, and blackberries to enable mobile communication needed for coordination. Universally, all agents interviewed requested a single, reliable voice and data communications system for use in the field.

As a subcomponent, numerous agents expressed the need for improved data communication in the field. In particular, they would like to be able to transmit and store large amounts of video, sensor, and biographical data (fingerprints/photos) for future analysis. Unfortunately, the current data communications architecture does not adequately support large data file transfer, especially between individual agents in mobile vehicles and station headquarters. We expect that this issue will be especially relevant in developing processes focused on effective screening for potential terrorists at ports of entry.

Methods/Processes – Agents stressed that Standard Operating Procedures need to be improved, particularly when multiple agencies are involved. This often is a highly political issue, especially when it involves the processing, detention, prosecution and/or deportation of illegal immigrants. Each agency theoretically follows DHS protocol and/or state and federal laws, but the interpretation of what is acceptable in the field can vary. Agents would like stronger leadership and inter-agency cohesion in this area.

Detection Technology – Finally, officers and agents would like to see technology fielded that will aid in the detection of illegal immigrants. Most were very open to new ideas and methods for identifying people at or between POEs. Their only request is that whatever technology is developed it be practical, useful, and impose no additional burden on the already over tasked personnel.

## Appendix 2. Developing the U.S. Terrorist Border Crossing Dataset

*Paxton Roberts* (University of Arkansas), *Erin Miller* (University of Maryland), and *Kathleen Smarick* (University of Maryland)

Our review of existing data and sources showed that ATS is a useful and appropriate resource for studying U.S. terrorist border crossings. In addition, unlike the GTD, the ATS includes data on thwarted terrorist attacks, planned attacks that never actually happened, and other documented terrorist planning activities, providing insights into a range of terrorist-related activities and perpetrators beyond actual attacks. ATS also includes information on individuals fleeing the United States after a terrorist attack—information that will be included in analyses and should prove to be useful to officials working at U.S. points of entry.

In short, these data review efforts demonstrated that ATS, supplemented by GTD, could (1) be used to identify terrorists and aspiring terrorists who have crossed U.S. borders in advance or in the wake of a planned attack, and (2) includes sufficient, reliable source materials to facilitate the systematic collection of more detailed information on the nature of these border-crossing events.

Following this assessment, the START/BORDERS research team collaborated to identify what specific information on such crossings would be most useful to achieve the goals of the project. The long-term goal is to offer evidence-based insight to U.S. officials working at or with personnel at ports of entry regarding the behaviors of terrorists and potential terrorists at the borders. To achieve this, additional work was needed to identify, classify, and analyze these behaviors. More specifically, data needed to be collected and compiled on the nature of the individuals and the border-crossing events known to be linked to terrorism-related criminal activity. In advance of that, the START/BORDERS team developed and tested a codebook on U.S. Terrorist Border Crossings to establish a sound data collection protocol for all border-crossing events identified via ATS.

The research team worked to develop a list of factors related to border-crossing events and individuals attempting to cross the U.S. border that would be of potential interest to U.S. border officials focused on a counterterrorism mission. The team then generated specific variables to capture relevant characteristics of these events and individuals, and—where applicable—determined the range of possible values for each variable, assigning each value per variable a numeric code. While some variables were designed to be numeric, other variables (which require more nuanced information and for which the values will vary greatly from case to case) allow for free-text responses. Numeric variables will facilitate statistical analyses, while text variables will capture additional qualitative information that cannot be easily codified. The combination of numeric and text variables provides for a systematic and efficient, yet comprehensive dataset.

The border crossing characteristics section includes information about the border crossing event. For example, variables in this section will clarify if the crossing was an entry into or departure from the United States. The date, location, and transportation method of the crossing are also collected, as well as whether any terrorism-related materials were transported across the border.

In the section on characteristics about the border crosser (that is, the individual rather than the event), we collect demographic information such as gender, age, and marital status. There are also variables that capture the crosser's immigration status, the crosser's role in the incident, and whether there was contact between the crosser and law enforcement personnel during the crossing.

The incident characteristics section provides information about the associated terrorist incident– if there was a specific target, the date and location of the planned or actual attack, and the ideology of the terrorists involved in the incident.

In all, the codebook includes 212 variables, each of which is expected to be able to provide some insights into when, where, and how a potential terrorist might try to cross a U.S. border. As discussed below, we know that we will not be able to find full information on all 212 variables for each of the 145 border-crossing cases, but the data collection process developed and tested in Phase 1 will allow for the systematic collection of important data to improve understanding of dynamics at U.S. borders among those who intend to harm the United States, and to inform development of performance metrics.

### **Pilot Data Collection Efforts**

After constructing a pilot codebook, the team randomly selected ten ATS cases for pilot coding. Coding was done simultaneously but independently by one research assistant at the University of Maryland and two graduate research assistants at the University of Arkansas.

The codebook was updated continuously to incorporate lessons learned during the pilot data-collection effort. The pilot coding allowed the researchers to understand what kinds of information it could expect to find in court documents and format the codebook accordingly. For example, some of the cases that were coded did not involve a clear ‘target,’ and as such, values needed to be added to specific variables to reflect this. Similarly, a variable was added to capture the number of children that the individual crosser had, as it was found that this information is sometimes reported in the court documents. Likewise, the researchers determined that it would be helpful to distinguish between weapons and bomb-making materials being transported across the border. The team thus added a variable for whether the crossing involved the transportation of bomb-making materials.

Important court records used for coding the crossings during the pilot stage included:

- criminal indictments (for charges);
- financial affidavits (for employment, marital status, and dependent information);
- affidavits by law enforcement personnel (stating facts of the case);
- transcripts of proceedings (may contain prosecution and defense testimony);
- motions in limine (may contain facts that are deemed not admissible in trial and thus not found in other documents);
- letters rogatory to foreign countries (contain requests to foreign judicial systems, often summarizing the facts of the case); and
- plaintiff and defendant pre-trial memorandums and trial briefs (detail or summarize legal and factual arguments).

The University of Arkansas has a repository of these materials for ATS, allowing coders on this project to focus efforts on examining the documents rather than locating them.

The pilot coding revealed the diversity of cases relevant to the topic of border crossings. Sample cases involved a variety of crossing methods, such as individuals illegally hiking across the U.S.-Canadian border, flying legally on commercial airlines, and entering the United States by ferry with false identification. Crossings also involved transporting items and materials, including large amounts of cash, bomb-making materials, incendiary devices, flammable products, and illegal drugs. There was great

variability in the amount of law enforcement contact with individual crossers at the border. The incidents coded in the pilot test also varied regarding the type of terrorist activity for which the border crosser was indicted, ranging from successful terrorist attacks to financial conspiracies to fund terrorism.

Pilot coding also allowed the research team to evaluate the reliability of the codebook and the coding process. By having independent researchers code the same set of sample cases using the same coding schema, the team was able to compare the results to determine if any changes or points of clarification must be made to the codebook, or if any additional coding decisions or instructions were needed. If, for instance, different coders using the same source materials assigned different values to the same variables for a case, this indicated that additional work was needed to refine the definition of the variable and/or its associated values.

Due to the fact that the researchers consciously changed the codebook in response to problems during the pilot data coding phase, we could only perform inter-coder reliability tests on the parts of the codebook that were not altered. Initial comparisons between the coding efforts at the University of Arkansas and the University of Maryland indicated that, on average, more than 70% of the variables were coded identically across coders for all but one case. There were very few instances of coders recording conflicting information on substantively important issues. The only case in which coding agreement was less than 70% was one in which the border crossing was planned, but never came to fruition, revealing the difficulty of coding variables for hypothetical events that will require clarification in the codebook.

Most of the discrepancies among coders were nuanced rather than substantively meaningful. For example, the vast majority of disagreement between coders involved the use of the value “Unknown” versus “Not Applicable.” There were also several cases where one coder was able to record information for a variable while another marked it as “Unknown” or “Not Applicable.”

The comparison also revealed some important differences regarding the identification of unique border crossing events in the source documents. In two of the pilot cases, the coders identified the border crossings differently. These initial comparisons between the pilot coding efforts have provided valuable feedback to inform the final version of the codebook and coding instructions.

Finally, the process of developing and testing the codebook led the research team to re-think the structure of the USTBC moving forward: In the initial proposal, the team envisioned a single data set focused on crossing events. However, the data collection exercises early in the project demonstrated that there were data relevant to two different levels of analysis that were critical, and that those two levels of analysis—the crossing events and the border crossers—should be treated as separate data points. As such, USTBC is actually comprised of two data sets, each governed by its own codebook, with one focused on the nature of a border crossing event and the other focused on the individuals associated with a Federal terrorism case who attempted to cross the border.

## **Appendix 3. U.S. Terrorist Border Crossing Data Collection Codebooks**

*Paxton Roberts, Kim Murray, Summer Jackson, and Brent Smith (University of Arkansas)*

*Please see attached file.*

## **Appendix 4. USTBC Data**

*Please see attached files.*



## **Appendix 5. Descriptive Analysis of Data on Border Crossings by U.S. Terrorists**

*Kathleen Smarick (University of Maryland)*

*Please see attached file.*

## **Appendix 6. Border Crossings and Terrorist Attacks in the United States: Case Studies**

*Jaime Shoemaker (University of Maryland)*

*Please see attached file.*

## **Appendix 7. Border Crossings and Terrorist Attacks in the United States: Case Studies Presentation**

*Jaime Shoemaker (University of Maryland)*

*Please see attached file.*