Policing Terrorism

Gary LaFree

Although terrorism has much in common with ordinary crime (LaFree and Dugan 2004), it also raises unique challenges for policing. Perhaps the greatest challenges center on how to use scarce police resources to fight crimes that are relatively uncommon, that have national and sometimes international implications, and that require intelligence that may be limited or altogether unavailable at the local and state levels. But despite these challenges, it is hard to imagine any effective national policy on preventing terrorism or responding to its aftermath that does not heavily rely on the hundreds of thousands of sworn police officers that serve the United States. Addressing these complex challenges requires a level of cooperation across federal, state, and local jurisdictions that has not been typical in the

past. However, some optimism is provided by the fact that the strong connections to community that produce the best results for policing in general may also be the same characteristics that are most useful in preventing terrorist attacks and responding to those that are carried out. At the same time, providing support for counterterrorism must be done by local police in such a way that it does not erode their effectiveness in communities.

This balance between being effective in counterterrorism efforts and maintaining the trust of the community should not be taken lightly but in some ways resembles the challenges police have long faced in responding to crimes that require proactive rather than reactive methods.

I divide this essay into four parts. In part one, I consider the frequency and characteristics of terrorist attacks on the United States, especially since 9/11. In

Gary LaFree is professor of criminology and criminal justice at the University of Maryland and the director of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Dr. LaFree is a member of the Police Foundation's Research Advisory Committee.

this section, I briefly examine global terrorist threats to the United States, foreign groups that target the United States, and terrorist attacks within the United States. In the second part of the essay, I consider how terrorism is similar to and different from ordinary street crime. These similarities and differences have important implications for policing terrorism. Perhaps most importantly, terrorism more closely resembles crimes that have gained prominence in the last half century, like hate crimes, drug-related crimes, and gang violence, than crimes with older, common law roots, like homicide or robbery. In the third part of the essay, I consider some of the ways that the 9/11 attacks changed policing. Because much of the police work aimed at preventing terrorist attacks happens at the federal level, I will examine in particular major changes in FBI strategies since 9/11. The move toward a more proactive approach to terrorism after 9/11 has important implications for policing at all levels. And, finally, I conclude by taking the information from the first three sections and considering some of the implications for policies on policing terrorism in the twenty-first century.

The Nature of the Terrorist Threat

At present, the longest running terrorism event database that includes both domestic and international terrorist attacks is the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) maintained by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), headquartered at the University of Maryland (LaFree and Dugan 2007; LaFree 2012). Terrorism in the GTD is defined as *the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by non-state actors, in order to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation*. At the time this essay was written, the GTD included information on more than 98,000 terrorist attacks from around the world from 1970 to 2010 (www.start.umd.edu/gtd/). In the next section, I use the GTD to indicate the nature of the global terrorist threat, the threat from foreign groups that target the United States both at home and abroad, and the threat of terrorism within the United States.

Global Terrorism Trends

Figure 1 shows total and fatal terrorist attacks from 1970 to 2010 from the GTD.[1] I include a marker to distinguish attacks before and after 9/11. Total attacks rose sharply during the 1970s and 1980s, reaching a

---

[1] Our data record no domestic attacks for 1993. The original data on which the GTD is based were collected by the Pinkerton Global Intelligence Service, which lost the data for 1993 in an office move. We have never been able to completely reconstruct these missing data.

series peak in 1991—just before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Attacks then fell off even more sharply so that total attacks just before 9/11 were at about the same level as they were in the late 1970s. Following the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, total attacks again rose sharply, coming close to a series high during the last three years of the series (2008 to 2010). Fatal attacks are much less common but are significantly correlated with total attacks. In general, there was a greater gap between total and fatal attacks during the 1980s and early 1990s than there was before or since. The total number of fatal attacks from 2008 to 2010 is at about the same level as it was in the peak year of 1992 (about 2,000 attacks per year).

Terrorist Organizations that Target the United States

My colleagues Sue-Ming Yang and Martha Crenshaw and I recently tracked the attack patterns of fifty-three terrorist organizations identified by the US Department of State as representing the most serious threat to the United States (LaFree, Yang, and Crenshaw 2009). Collectively, these foreign terrorist groups were linked to nearly 17,000 attacks. However, we found that just 3 percent of these attacks by designated anti-US groups were actually directed at the United States. Moreover, 99 percent of attacks targeting

Figure 1. Worldwide Total and Fatal Terrorist Attacks 1970–2010
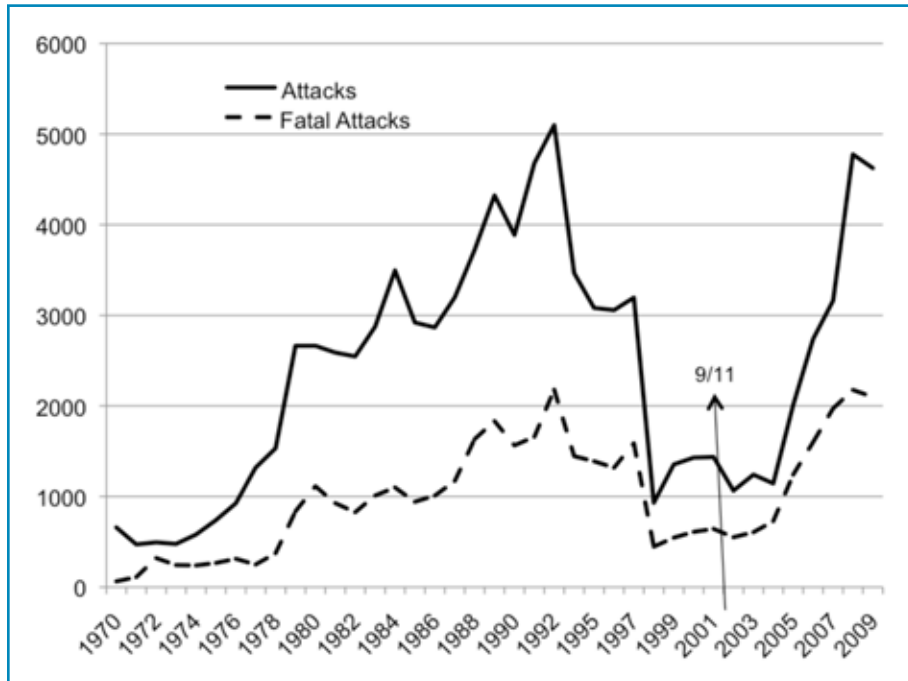
Source: Global Terrorism Database (www.start.umd.edu/gtd).

the United States did not occur on US soil but were aimed at US targets in other countries (e.g., embassies, multinational corporations). We also found that more than 90 percent of the non-US attacks were domestic (i.e., nationals from one country attacking targets of the same nationality in the same country). We used group-based trajectory analysis (Nagin 2005) to examine the different developmental trajectories of strikes that targeted the United States, and concluded that four trajectories best captured the attack patterns. As shown in Figure 2, these trajectories constituted three very distinct terrorist waves—which occurred in the 1970s (including the Red Brigades and People's Liberation Forces), 1980s (Shining Path, Farabundo Marti

National Liberation Front), and the early twenty-first century (al-Qa'ida, the Taliban)—as well as a trajectory that did not exhibit wave-like characteristics but instead was characterized by irregular and infrequent attacks (including the Popular Liberation Army and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front).

The results of this analysis underscore the importance of proximity for terrorist targeting. Terrorists, like ordinary criminals, are likely to choose targets close to their operational base. However, when attacks occur further from the terrorists' home bases, they are more deadly. In framing counterterrorism policies, our results highlight the need to put threats into perspective by acknowledging that international attacks are the exception and local

domestic attacks are the rule. The fact that most terrorism is local underscores the importance of strong local policing.

Trends in Terrorism Attacks Within the United States

Developing a valid data source for terrorist attacks within the United States has been challenging. Most early terrorism event databases (e.g., ITERATE, RAND) excluded domestic attacks and, as a matter of policy, the US Department of State did not publish data on domestic terrorist attacks in its *Patterns of Global Terrorism* series. Brent Smith and his colleagues (Smith 1994; Smith, Shields, and Damphousse 2011a) have contributed a great deal to our knowledge of domestic terrorism by codifying FBI arrests and prosecutions for terrorism, but these data are limited to federal cases. The GTD includes data on both domestic and international terrorism going back to 1970; however, the original data provided no simple mechanism for separating domestic from international cases. With funding from the US Department of Homeland Security's Human Factors/ Behavioral Science Division, for the last three years my colleagues and I in the START Consortium have been building a database on terrorist attacks against the United States, called Terrorism and Extremist Violence in the United States (TEVUS).

Figure 2. Trajectories of Attacks on the United States of 53 Anti-US Terrorist Groups 1970–2004
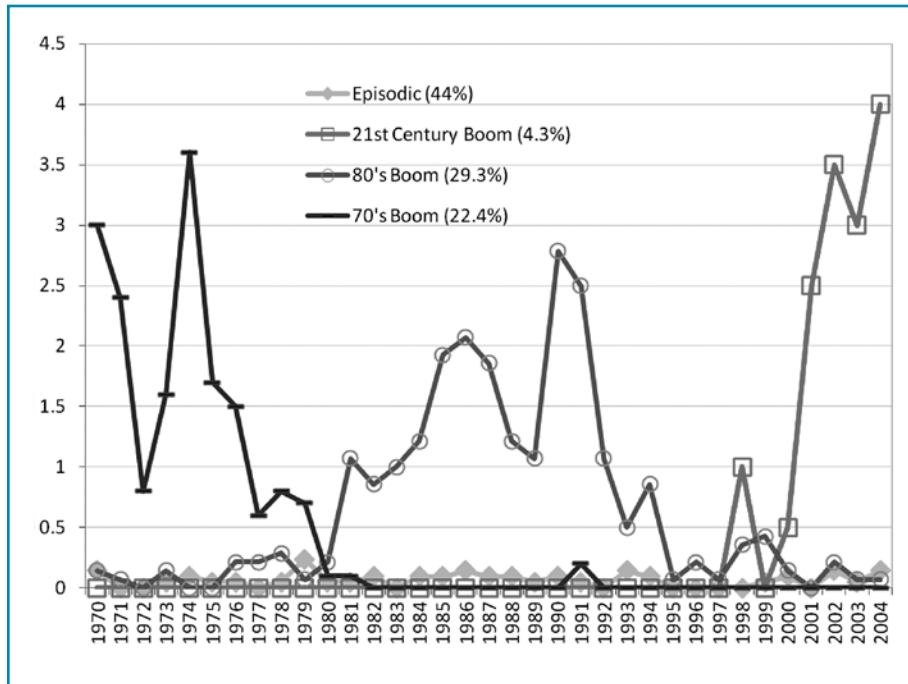
Source: LaFree, Yang, and Crenshaw (2009).

As these data have been assembled, we have been able to develop a more accurate picture of trends in terrorist attacks in the United States over the past four decades. In Figure 3, we show a map of total terrorist attacks in the United States from 1970 to 2010. The dots are proportional to the number of events taking place in specific areas (larger dots representing a high frequency of events). Figure 3 shows the concentration of attacks in big cities, with clearly visible clusters in New York City, Washington, DC, Miami, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. In fact, nearly 30 percent of all attacks took place in one of these five metropolitan areas. The same general pattern holds true for just those events that produced fatalities: a small portion of metropolitan areas account for a large portion of total attacks. San Francisco had the largest number of fatal attacks ($n = 22$, 9.9 percent), followed by New York City ($n = 15$, 6.8 percent), Los Angeles ($n = 12$, 5.4 percent), Miami ($n = 10$, 4.5 percent), and Washington, DC ($n = 8$, 3.6 percent). At the same time, it is interesting to observe that every single state in the United States has at least one attack during the past forty years.

Figure 4 shows trends in US total and fatal attacks from 1970 to 2010. Perhaps the most striking feature of Figure 4 is the dramatic decline in US domestic terrorism over time. Attacks were most common in 1970 with over 450 per year. After steep declines in the early 1970s, attacks reached a secondary peak of 142 in 1975. Attack rates again declined throughout the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, falling below fifty attacks per year for most years. Interestingly, the total number of domestic attacks since 9/11 has generally been lower than at any other period during the past forty years. The most active groups in the 1970s were the New World Liberation Front and the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional. The most active groups in the 1980s were anti-abortion extremists and the Jewish Defense League. The most active groups in the 1990s were again anti-abortion extremists and the World Church of the Creator. And the most active groups since 2000 have been the Earth Liberation Front and the Animal Liberation Front.

It is also clear from Figure 4 that total attacks are strongly correlated with fatal attacks ($r = .72$, $p < .01$). Thus, the number of fatal attacks decreased rapidly after the early 1970s, from a high of twenty-five in 1970 to a low of seventeen for the first decade of the twenty-first century. However, the most deadly groups for attacks against the United States have been quite different from the most active groups. Thus, in the 1970s, the most deadly groups were the Black Liberation Army and the Death Angels. The most deadly groups in the 1980s were the Posse Comitatus, the Justice Commandos for the

Armenian Genocide, and the Jewish Defense League. The most deadly groups in the 1990s were various right wing extremist groups and the World Church of the Creator. And the most deadly group since 2000 has been al-Qa'ida.

Conclusions on Terrorist Threats to the United States

Thus far, the international terrorist organizations that pose the greatest threat to the United States have rarely attacked on US soil. However, as the events of 9/11 so shockingly demonstrated, in the increasingly global world in which we live it has become a more realistic possibility. Attacks on the United States by groups that originate in the United States are far more common, although the largest number of these attacks occurred in the 1970s. While terrorist attacks are concentrated in big cities, every single US state has had at least one terrorist attack in the GTD since 1970. So the challenge police face in responding to terrorism is that it is possible anywhere but likely in a relatively small number of highly populated areas. In a way, police in most parts of the country face the same challenge in protecting local communities from terrorist attacks as emergency management personnel face in protecting citizens from earthquakes and other uncommon natural hazards
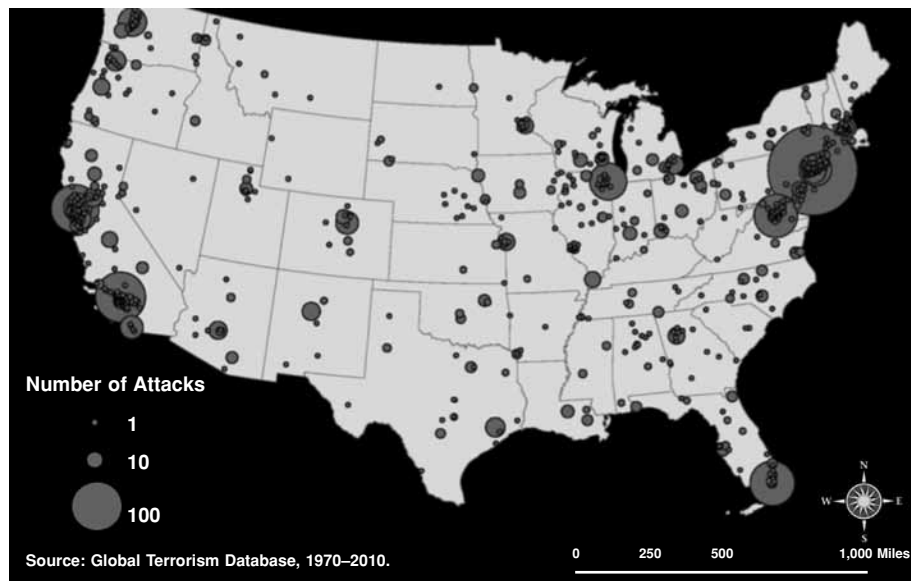
—how to guard against a rare but potentially devastating event.

Terrorism Versus More Ordinary Crime

Edwin Sutherland's classic definition of criminology as the study of ". . . the breaking of laws and reactions to the breaking of laws" unambiguously encompasses terrorist attacks (Sutherland and Cressey 1978, 3). Indeed, Clarke and Newman (2006, vii) have stated directly that "terrorism is a form of crime in all essential respects," and predict that terrorist attacks will cluster in time and space in the same way as more ordinary crimes. Rosenfeld (2004) argues that criminology theories are highly relevant to terrorism, and in recent years a growing number of researchers have begun to apply criminological theories to the understanding of terrorism (for a review, see LaFree and Dugan 2009). Moreover, LaFree and Dugan (2004, 67) point out that criminal events look much the same as terrorist events in that "both . . . can be counted and display non-random temporal and spatial patterns that are likely associated with endogenous and exogenous characteristics of offenders, targets, and situations." Because much criminological research emphasizes the understanding of crime patterns across spatial and temporal dimensions, research methods commonly used in criminology should be highly relevant in the study of terrorism. And indeed, much recent research on terrorism (e.g., Weisburd, Hasisi, Jonathan, and Aviv 2010; Miller 2012) has applied methods popular in the study of crime to the study of terrorism. There are also obvious investigatory and forensic similarities. The same
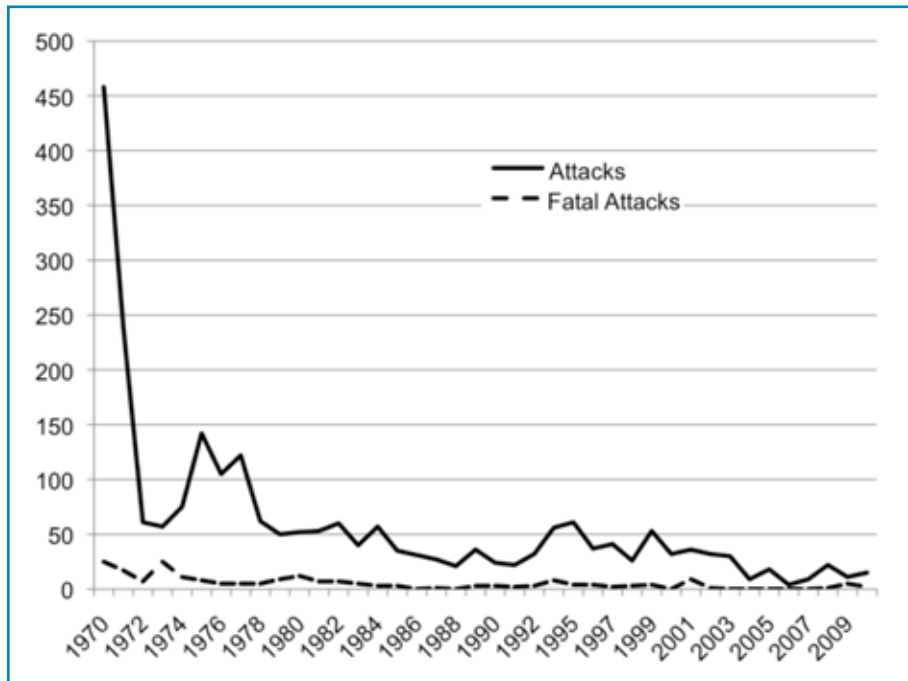
Source: Global Terrorism Database (www.start.umd.edu/gtd).

forensic methods used for crime scene investigation are likely to be useful for investigating terrorist attacks.

However, there are clearly differences as well as similarities between terrorism and more common types of crime. In a review comparing terrorism and crime, my colleague Laura Dugan and I argued that major similarities between the two are that both are disproportionately committed by young men, both exhibit major differences between how laws governing the illegal behavior are written and applied, and both can undermine social legitimacy of communities and institutions. Some conceptual differences include the fact that terrorist attacks often constitute multiple crimes (e.g., murder,

kidnapping, extortion); that, compared to common crimes, responses to terrorism are less likely to be local; and that most terrorists, unlike most common criminals, view themselves as altruists (LaFree and Dugan 2004).

Empirical comparisons of terrorism and crime in the United States have so far been rare. However, my colleague Bianca Bersani and I recently did direct comparisons of county-level homicide and total Index crimes from the Uniform Crime Reports and terrorist attacks from the GTD from 2000 to 2008 (LaFree and Bersani 2012). We found a significant correlation between terrorist attacks and ordinary crime. Compared to counties that had not experienced

a terrorist attack since 2000, the 116 counties that had experienced a terrorist attack also had higher Index crime rates ($r = .251$; $p \leq .001$) and homicide rates ($r = .085$; $p \leq .001$). In a county-level multivariate analysis, we found that counties with higher ordinary crime rates and levels of language diversity had a higher probability of experiencing terrorist attacks, while counties with more concentrated disadvantage (a composite measure including percent families below the poverty line, percent unemployed, percent female-headed households with minor children, percent low-wage unemployment, and percent receiving public assistance) and more residential stability had a lower probability of experiencing terrorist attacks. We found no significant relationship between the likelihood of terrorist attacks and the percentage of the population that was foreign-born or the racial composition of the population of the county. Although the relationship between terrorism and crime was significant, the strength of the correlation was only moderate ($r = .08$ to $.25$, depending on specific measure of crime used) (see LaFree and Bersani 2012, 24). In short, this empirical analysis is in line with earlier observations about similarities between terrorism and more common types of crime: there are substantial similarities but also important differences.

In general, terrorism has fewer similarities to the traditional

common law crimes that have been enshrined since 1930 in the Uniform Crime Report Index than with other crimes, including several that have only gained prominence in recent years. For example, unlike the Index crimes, but similar to organized, hate, or gang-related crime, terrorist attacks are often linked to groups that have an ongoing organizational structure. Similarly, terrorists, like those involved in organized, gang, and hate crime, are often part of sustained campaigns of crime and violence where groups with more or less coherence may operate for years or even decades. One of the important implications of this distinction for policing is that the kind of reactive policing that is common in ordinary crime cases like robbery or auto theft is less effective in the case of terrorism.

How Policing Has Changed Since 9/11

Changes in the policing of terrorism in the United States since 9/11 have been substantial. Perhaps the strongest evidence of these changes can be seen in raw statistics on terrorism-related arrests and prosecutions. We noted above that, overall, terrorist attacks on US soil reported in the GTD have generally declined during the past decade. In fact, according to the GTD, there were more terrorist attacks on US soil in 2001 (thirty-six) than in any year since. In all of 2009 and 2010, the GTD recorded

only twenty-one terrorist attacks in the United States. However, this number tells only part of the story because the GTD only counts an event as terrorism if the perpetrators have actually taken some specific action to initiate an attack. Thus, the GTD does not include cases where individuals have only planned an attack but not actually begun to carry it out. This means that the GTD does not track most foiled plots.

To get a look at terrorist attacks against the United States that have been planned but foiled before they could be carried out, Erik Dahl (2011) used open source unclassified data to develop a database on foiled or failed terrorist attacks. Dahl tracked 176 terrorist plots against American targets that had been thwarted or otherwise failed during the past twenty-five years; 103 of these plots were planned and carried out within the United States and the other 73 were aimed at US targets outside the United States (e.g., embassies and military bases). According to Dahl, 126 (71.6 percent) of the plots were inspired by radical Islamism and 42 (23.9 percent) by domestic right-wing and anti-government extremism. Dahl shows that between 1990 and 2000 there were a total of twenty-nine failed and foiled terrorist attacks in the United States. By contrast, from 2001 to 2010 the total of foiled and failed attacks had increased by more than two and one-half times, to seventy-one attacks.

This large increase in the number of foiled and failed terrorist attacks being processed in the United States reflects a major recent shift in the strategies used by federal law enforcement against terrorism. Smith, Shields, and Damphousse (2011a) argue that prior to 9/11 the FBI was primarily a "reactive" agency in which preventive intelligence gathering was deemphasized. After 9/11, policy makers and the public demanded a more proactive, intelligence-driven stance on the part of federal law enforcement. These shifting goals were supported by major policy changes, including the creation of fusion centers and the National Counterterrorism Center and the passage of new and less restrictive investigative guidelines (Smith, Shields, and Damphousse 2011a, 10). Congress also passed, and the president signed, the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001, which greatly expanded the involvement of federal law enforcement in domestic terrorism cases. These legislative changes, as well as non-legislative administrative changes, have had a major impact on policing terrorism.

Changes in the system start with investigations. Before 9/11, much of the FBI's efforts to stop terrorism revolved around infiltrating terrorist organizations either through undercover operations or by convincing terrorist operatives to become informants. After 9/11, the FBI began to downplay these strategies—which were extremely

time consuming—in favor of faster, more proactive strategies. Preliminary research by Smith, Shields, and Damphousse (2011a) shows that the effect of these changes has been profound. In federal cases processed between 1980 and September 11, 2001, their study found that 29 percent involved undercover agents (p. 15). For cases processed after 9/11, this number fell to only 3 percent. At the same time, the FBI considerably ramped up the number of terrorism cases being pursued. Smith, Shields, and Damphousse (2011b) report that in the twenty-one years from 1980 to 2001, the government prosecuted approximately 500 individuals on terrorism-related charges (p. 14). By contrast, the government prosecuted about the same number on terrorism-related charges in just the four years after 9/11. By the end of 2009, this number increased to nearly 1,000 prosecutions.

These changes in strategy have important implications for policing at all levels. Responding to a terrorist attack has much different implications for police than stopping a terrorist attack before it happens. The former can be handled in large part by traditional policing methods. For example, the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center (WTC) was handled mostly as an ordinary crime by local police working with federal agencies. Though the cause of the blast was not immediately known, agents and bomb technicians from the

New York Police Department (NYPD), as well as the ATF and the FBI, quickly responded to the scene. While combing through the rubble in the underground parking area of the WTC, a bomb technician found a vehicle identification number on a piece of truck axle, which gave investigators a crucial lead that eventually broke the case. In March 1994, two suspects were convicted in the World Trade Center bombing and several months later were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Consider how different this case is from the 2009 case of Najibullah Zazi, who admitted to plotting to conduct a coordinated, multiple person attack on the New York City subway system. Zazi, a permanent legal resident of the United States, was born in Afghanistan, grew up in Pakistan, and attended high school in Queens, New York. He underwent weapons and explosives training at an al-Qa'ida training camp in Pakistan in 2008, then returned to the United States and settled in the Denver area. In September 2009, he drove from his home to New York City with a plan to detonate explosives on the New York City subway during rush hour. However, when he was warned by a local imam that authorities were inquiring about him, he abruptly returned to Denver. He was arrested days later, and in February 2010 pled guilty to conspiring to use weapons of mass destruction, conspiring to commit murder, and

providing material support to a terrorist organization.

In fact, the steps leading up to the arrest and sentencing of Zazi were in no way typical of the treatment of someone suspected of committing a more common type of crime. Perhaps most importantly, compared to the 1993 WTC bombing case, the role of policing in the Zazi case was extraordinarily proactive. From what we can tell from open sources, Zazi had been under intense surveillance by US authorities for months before his arrest (Baldor 2009). It appears that the CIA initially learned of Zazi through sources in Pakistan and then informed the FBI. There is also evidence that British intelligence provided early information (*The Telegraph* 2009). When Zazi staged his cross-country drive to New York City, FBI agents were following him every step of the way. The trip was so well covered that local law enforcement officials were enlisted to help by pulling him over several times for speeding (Dahl 2011, 633). As he approached New York City, Zazi's car was stopped and searched on the George Washington Bridge in an operation coordinated between the FBI and the NYPD (p. 634). President Obama reportedly received regular briefings, sometimes updated several times a day (Baldor 2009). The same day that Zazi's car was stopped on the George Washington Bridge, officials from NYPD's intelligence division

approached an imam in Queens about the case. Shortly after, the imam alerted both Zazi and Zazi's father. Federal officials, who had not known about the NYPD's actions, learned of the imam's involvement because they were monitoring Zazi's phone conversations. This led the federal authorities to move in quickly to make an arrest.

Note the very different implications of these two cases for local and state policing. In the first case, a crime has already been committed and police are called in to use more or less traditional investigative and forensic methods to solve it and bring the offenders to justice. In the 1993 case, local authorities worked closely with federal authorities. The case was clearly an extremely high-profile event receiving much more attention than a typical case; nevertheless, the procedures resembled procedures that would be followed in any high-profile homicide. In the second case, the role of local and state police and their connections to federal law enforcement efforts were far more complex. This complexity was especially apparent in the NYPD effort to gather additional information from the imam in Queens—an action that inadvertently tipped off the suspect. Moreover, it is easy to see how this kind of police focus on gathering intelligence from local sources such as imams could in the long run threaten the legitimacy of the NYPD and its connections to the communities it polices.

Toward a Policy for Policing Terrorism

Faced with growing responsibilities and shrinking local budgets, it will be tempting for state and local police departments to simply step away from a concern with policing terrorism. This would be a grave mistake. At present, there are more than 750,000 full-time sworn police officers in the United States (Reaves 2011). Compare this to a little more than 2,000 FBI special agents working on terrorism cases—a number likely to decline as we move farther away from 9/11. It is hard to imagine a credible anti-terrorism strategy that does not heavily rely on state and local police. The police are critical both in terms of preventing terrorism as well as calming public fears in the wake of a terrorist attack. On the prevention side, criminologists David Bayley and David Weisburd (2009, 92) have recently observed that, "Once terrorists are in the country, police, not the FBI or the CIA, have the best tools for detecting and preventing these crimes." In fact, these assertions are strongly supported by Eric Dahl's research (2011).

Dahl attempted to determine why the terrorist plots in his study failed and, especially, what kinds of intelligence and security efforts were most successful in preventing them. He finds that of the 176 plots, 128 (89 domestic and 39 overseas), 72.7 percent, were foiled as a result of actions by law enforcement, security, and intelligence officers. The most common method for foiling domestic plots was human intelligence (60 percent of the cases). Moreover, for the most part, this human intelligence was not from secret agents penetrating terrorist cells (previously a favorite tool of the FBI in countering terrorism), but rather from undercover agents and informants and tips from the public. For example, a plot to attack a Bronx, New York, synagogue and a National Guard base in Newburgh, New York, on May 20, 2009, was foiled when the plotters attempted to recruit an undercover informant who was operating in a mosque in Newburgh. In many cases, informants were placed inside groups of plotters after authorities first received tips from the public. For example, this was the case in the 2006 plot by a group of men in Miami that planned to attack the Sears Tower in Chicago and iconic buildings in several other cities. After reviewing his results, Dahl (2011, 635) concludes that "the most important step toward preventing future attacks is to focus on local and domestic intelligence and to figure out how to gather the necessary intelligence while still maintaining the proper balance between civil liberties and security."

However, state and local police are also critical in calming public

fears in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. This point is well made in research on policing and terrorism in Israel, a country that is all too familiar with terrorist attacks. Criminologists David Weisburd, Tal Jonathan, and Simon Perry (2009, 1270) point out that Israeli police have developed an established protocol for reducing the fear of terrorist attacks by communicating to the press and the public accurate details of the attack, indicating areas that have been shut down and supplying suggestions for alternate routes. These efforts are specifically aimed at minimizing public fear and psychological distress.

And of course the police must aid in preventing attacks and restoring public confidence while at the same time not threatening civil liberties. As criminologist Jack Greene has noted (2011, 229), when police do venture into intelligence gathering, they always risk losing public trust. This is a critical point because an impressive body of research has demonstrated the importance of public perceptions of police legitimacy and fairness in carrying out their duties (Tyler 2001; Tyler and Huo 2002). However, I would argue that, for at least two reasons, maintaining an active role for local and state police in responding to terrorist threats on American soil is challenging rather than hopeless.

First, there is growing evidence that the best practices for policing in democratic societies, captured especially by catch phrases like community-oriented policing (COP) and problem-oriented policing (POP), may also be best practices for responding to the threat of domestic terrorism. For example, Jack Greene (2011) points out that the potential conflict between the performance of traditional policing activities and the more specialized activities associated with terrorism-related policing may be smoother in departments that have strong traditions of community-oriented and problem-oriented policing. Ultimately, this may be the best solution for the balancing act faced by local and state police in terms of responding to terrorist threats. To the extent that building stronger police departments through COP, POP, and related programs also leads to more effective counterterrorism strategies, there is an opportunity for successfully incorporating police into counterterrorism efforts. However, this is likely to always require a good deal of vigilance to make sure that local police are not sacrificing their legitimacy in the eyes of the public in order to be effective in dealing with the relatively rare situations where a terrorist threat is imminent.

And, second, as we have seen above, while the crime of terrorism is quite different in many ways from the traditional crimes embodied in Part I of the Uniform Crime Reports, it shares much in common with other important crimes that are routinely handled by police. That terrorist attacks are frequently orchestrated by groups with ongoing institutional support and long-term organizational goals is not that different from the challenges police have faced for decades in countering organized crime and criminal gangs. That terrorists often have political goals and direct their attacks at specific racial, ethnic, or religious groups is not that different than what police face in countering hate crimes. And the proactive emphasis on stopping terrorist attacks before they happen is not that different than the proactive efforts police have had to engage in for stopping many other types of crime, including drug offenses and white collar crimes. Interestingly, all of these other types of non-terrorist crime continue to raise challenges for police in terms of balancing crime fighting efforts while maintaining public confidence. Clearly, 9/11 and the threat of more attacks have produced a new set of challenges for police. But police are absolutely critical in fashioning effective policies to counter these threats.

Tight state and local budgets pose challenges to police across the nation. But despite these challenges, an effective national strategy for preventing terrorism and responding to its aftermath absolutely depends on the hundreds of thousands of sworn police officers that serve the United States. Securing police support in an era of fiscal austerity

requires an unprecedented level of cooperation across federal, state, and local jurisdictions. Taking seriously the public's desire to be safe from terrorist threats while at the same time maintaining the trust of the local communities being served is likely to be a continuing challenge for policing in the twenty-first century, but it is one that should not be ignored.

References

Baldor, Lolita. 2009. NYC suspect had senior al-Qaida contact. *Associated Press*, October 6.

Bayley, David H. and David Weisburd. 2009. Cops and spooks: The role of the police in counterterrorism. In *To Protect and To Serve: Policing in an Age of Terrorism*, eds. David Weisburd, Idit Hakimi, Thomas E. Feucht, Simon Perry, and Lois F. Mock, 81–100. New York: Springer.

Clarke, Ronald V. and Graeme R. Newman. 2006. *Outsmarting the Terrorists*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International.

Dahl, Erik J. 2011. The plots that failed: Intelligence lessons learned from unsuccessful terrorist attacks against the United States. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34:621–648, doi: 10.1080/1057610X .2011.582628.

Greene, Jack R. 2011. Community policing and terrorism: Problems and prospects for local community security. In *Criminologists on Terrorism and Homeland Security*, eds. Brian Forst, Jack R. Greene, and James P. Lynch, 208–244. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

LaFree, Gary. 2012. Generating terrorism event databases: Results from the Global Terrorism Database, 1970 to 2008. In *Evidence-Based Counterterrorism Policy*, eds. Cynthia Lum and Leslie W. Kennedy, 41–64. New York: Springer.

LaFree, Gary and Bianca Bersani. 2012. *Hot Spots of Terrorism and Other Crimes in the United States, 1970–2008*, final report to the Human Factors/Behavioral Sciences Division, Science and Technology Directorate, US Department of Homeland Security, January 12. College Park, MD: University of Maryland, START.

LaFree, Gary and Laura Dugan. 2004. How does studying terrorism compare to studying crime? In *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: Criminological Perspectives*, ed. Mathieu Deflem, 53–74. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

———. 2007. Introducing the Global Terrorism Database. *Political Violence and Terrorism* 19:181–204, doi:10.1080/0954655070 1246817.

———. 2009. Research on terrorism and countering terrorism. In *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research* 38:413–477, ed. Michael Tonry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

LaFree, Gary, Sue-Ming Yang, and Martha Crenshaw. 2009. Trajectories of terrorism: Attack patterns of foreign groups that have targeted the United States, 1970 to 2004. *Criminology and Public Policy* 8:445–473.

Miller, Erin. 2012. Patterns of onset and decline among terrorist organizations. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 28:77–101, doi: 10.1007/s10940-011-9154-6.

Nagin, Daniel S. 2005. *Group-Based Modeling of Development over the Life Course*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Reaves, Brian A. 2011. *Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, 2008*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, US Department of Justice. http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=2216

Rosenfeld, Richard. 2004. Terrorism and criminology. In *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: Criminological Perspectives*, ed. Mathieu Deflem, 19-32. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Smith, Brent L. 1994. *Pipe Bombs and Pipe Dreams*. Albany: State University Press.

Smith, Brent L., Chris Shields, and Kelly R. Damphousse. 2011a. *Patterns of Intervention in Federal Terrorism Cases,* a report to Human Factors/Behavioral Sciences Division, Science and Technology Directorate, US Department of Homeland Security. College Park, MD: University of Maryland, START.

Smith, Brent L., Chris Shields and Kelly R. Damphousse. 2011b. "Prosecution and Sentencing of Terrorists" (unpublished report, Terrorism Research Center, University of Arkansas).

Sutherland, Edwin H. and Donald R. Cressey. 1978. *Criminology*, 10th ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott.

The Telegraph (London). 2009. British spies help prevent al-Qaeda-inspired attack on New York subway. November 9.

Tyler, Tom R. 2001. Public trust and confidence in legal authorities: What do majority and minority group members want from the law and legal institutions? *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 19:215–235.

Tyler, Tom R. and Yuen J. Huo. 2002. *Trust in the Law: Encouraging Public Cooperation with the Police and Courts*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Weisburd, David, Badi Hasisi, Tal Jonathan, and Gali Aviv. 2010. Terrorist threats and police performance: A study of Israeli communities. *British Journal of Criminology* 50:725–747, doi: 10.1093/bjc/azp064.

Weisburd, David, Tal Jonathan, and Simon Perry. 2009. The Israeli model for policing terrorism: Goals, strategies, and open questions. *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 12:1259–1278, doi: 10.1177/0093854809345597.

ABOUT THE POLICE FOUNDATION

The Police Foundation is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting innovation and improvement in policing through its research, technical assistance, communication, and professional services programs. Established in 1970, the foundation has conducted seminal research in police behavior, policy, and procedure, and works to transfer to local agencies the best new information about practices for dealing effectively with a range of important police operational and administrative concerns. Motivating all of the foundation's efforts is the goal of efficient, humane policing that operates within the framework of democratic principles and the highest ideals of the nation

---

POLICE FOUNDATION

**1201 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036-2636
(202) 833-1460 • Fax (202) 659-9149 • E-mail: pfinfo@policefoundation.org
www.policefoundation.org**