THE FUTURE TERRORISTS IN AMERICA

Joseph R. Carlson
University of Nebraska at Kearney

DOMESTIC TERRORISM IN THE 1990s

In the United States we have witnessed an international terrorist attack that shocked our nation into realizing that we were not invulnerable to terrorist actions. That event was the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City on February 26, 1993, in which six individuals were killed and an estimated 1,000 others injured. Due to the media coverage of that single event, most Americans were shocked about our vulnerability and the potential damage which terrorists can cause. Chiefs of police in American cities reviewed their counter-terrorist and emergency disaster plans to ensure they would be ready in the event they were next on the target list.

However, with most of the media’s emphasis on Middle Eastern terrorists, little has been reported on the potential of home grown domestic terrorist groups. Those individuals responsible for the security of our largest cities have not been asked who the most dangerous potential terrorist groups within the United States might be. Nor have chiefs of police been provided with analyzed projections of who their peers perceive as the key players in terrorism within the United States during the next two years.

This paper will look at the self-reported perceptions of chiefs of police in a majority of American cities with a population of over 100,000 persons. It will identify, both by region and on a national basis, those internal domestic groups that have the greatest potential for terrorist violence within the next two years. Hopefully, this information will better inform police departments of where future domestic violence will be
coming from and the groups most likely to be involved. Finally, this paper will identify potential reporting problems with terrorist incidents.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Terrorism is neither new nor unique to the United States. To begin with, a review of the definition of terrorism will be in order to thoroughly confuse those of us who thought we knew what the definition really was! The designated leading investigative police agency on terrorism in the United States is the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which has jurisdiction over terrorist incidents. They have provided this definition of terrorism which was used on the survey sent to all chiefs of police:

Terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (US Department of Justice, 1993:20).

Other definitions include this, from Brian Jenkins, Director of Political Science Research for the Rand Corporation (1984): “the use or threatened use of force designed to bring about a political change.” In 1987, Walter Laqueur, Professor of History at Georgetown University, included an interesting element in his definition which indicated that terrorism constituted the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective when innocent people were targeted. A definition supported by Ted Robert Gurr and espoused by Thomas P. Thornton in 1964 is that terrorism is a symbolic act designed to influence political behavior by extra-normal means and entailing the use or threat of violence (Slater and Stohl, 1988:115). With a slight modification of the US Department of State’s 1983 definition, Michael Stohl promotes the following: “The purposeful threat or use of violence for political purposes by individual or groups, whether acting for, or in opposition to established governmental authority, when such actions are intended to influence the victim and or a target group wider than the immediate victim or victims” (Slater and Stohl, 1988:156). Other thoughts include those of social scientists such as Martha Crenshaw, which includes the ideology that terrorism is socially and politically unacceptable violence aimed at an innocent symbolic target to achieve a psychological effect (White, 1991:6).
Based on the above definitions, it should be clear to the reader that there is not a true consensus on what the definition of terrorism is. In fact, in 1983, after analyzing the definitions of one hundred scholars and experts in the field, Alex Schmid concluded that there was no true or correct definition, but that terrorism is an abstract concept with no real essence (White, 1991:7). While the reading of the various definitions may be tedious, there is a message that needs to be pointed out. Whatever definition is used, it will probably include the concepts of fear, violence and influencing political thought. These sub-elements are critical to examining whether violent acts conducted by members of the violent fringe of anti-abortion elements fall into the definition of terrorism or into the criminal category. Currently, the FBI does not recognize actions taken by members of the violent fringe anti-abortion groups to symbolize terrorist activity according to their own definition of terrorism. However, from looking at the above definitions, it would appear violent acts by these fringe anti-abortionists fall within the official definition, and thus should be classified as terrorist actions. If this is the case, then a policy decision at the FBI is in order to rectify the non-reporting of these events as part of terrorist activity. Additionally, the FBI should seriously consider the violent fringe elements of the anti-abortionists as terrorists because, when identifying potential terrorist threats in the United States for the coming two years, chiefs of police consistently rank violence from anti-abortion groups as being one of their top concerns.

Consideration was given to reviewing various typologies useful in identifying terrorism in this paper, but due to the fact that typologies are usually generalizations and only describe unstable environments and patterns among events, they were purposely left out. For more specific information on typologies of terrorism, look at the writings of Stohl and Schmid.

The next area that requires a review is one that identifies what kind of people are involved in terrorism. There are many theories, from the simple to the complex, that try to fit every terrorist into a category. For the purpose of this study, the early and simple concept advocated in 1977 by the noted psychiatrist Frederick Hacker was found adequate in helping to differentiate between types of terrorists. He divides terrorists into three different groups: crusaders, criminals and crazies. The crusader is one who seeks prestige and power in the service of a “higher cause” and acts to attain a collective goal. Criminals may commit acts of terrorism as individuals, such as the bank robber who tries to secure his getaway by seizing bank personnel or customers and holding them hostage, or as part
of the pattern of intimidation and coercion practiced by syndicated (organized) crime. Acts of terrorism – bombings or bomb threats, capture of hostages, killing of innocent persons – can be carried out by crazies, individuals who are mentally and emotionally disturbed (White, 1991:5). Based on the above division, it is rare to find a true terrorist who only fits into one of the categories; in fact, many overlap. Psychological problems may hamper the crusading terrorists, or they may even have been criminals prior to their seeing the “light and truth.” This was one of the warnings used by Hacker. These individuals can be male, female, young or old, rich or poor, and be from any race or ethnic group. In the words of Harvey Scholssberg, a well known instructor of hostage negotiations, “they are the persons who society normally thinks of as losers.”

During the early 1800s struggle by Russian anarchists to overthrow the Czar’s government, the concepts of “philosophy of the bomb” (the belief that violence was the only means of social change) and “propaganda by the deed” (committing terrorist acts to publicize a cause) were born (White, 1991:54). Those individuals fighting against the government found that using bombs to strike fear into the hearts of the leaders was the most effective tool they had and was much better than rhetoric. It also provided a safer method of killing a larger number of people and allowing those who planted the bomb a better chance to escape. However, there was a problem; indiscriminate use of bombs and violence without the common people knowing what significance the bombing represented was not effective in mobilizing public support.

Peter Kropotkin, the son of a Russian nobleman, adopted the phrase of propaganda by the deed and seemed to understand it better than his contemporaries. According to research by L. John Martin in 1985, Kropotkin identified the need of letting the common people know the purpose behind the violence. Martin states that Kropotkin understood that the violence or bombing must be picked up by the press if it was to be known by the common people and change government policies.

THE PLAYERS

In designing the list of potential generic terrorist groups that may pose a threat to the United States, there was no overall significance in the order in which they were listed. Due to the limited space on the survey instrument, the broadness of the geographical area covered, and the use of local names of potential terrorist groups, categories could cover more
than one specific group. In fact, it is common knowledge that many terrorist groups will change their names to confuse the authorities. A brief description of the activities of each group taken from the sources of *Terrorist Group Profiles* (1988), *The Antiterrorism Handbook* (Herman and Seger, 1990), *Target America* (Bodansky, 1993), *Terrorism 1982-92* (US Department of Justice, 1993), and *Terrorism in the United States 1991* (US Department of Justice, 1992) gives the highlights of each group. The following list of players or potential domestic terrorist groups are listed in descending order of their potential for violence as rated by the local chiefs of police.

**Anti-abortionists**

While there are many pro-life groups that oppose violence to stop abortions, there is a growing fringe element that has become frustrated with the ineffectiveness of blockades of abortion clinics, protest rallies, and the constant rhetoric that the non-violent pro-life groups use. These are the individuals/groups who advocate violence as the only means of stopping a doctor who is going to perform abortions. The justification they cite for their violence is that their response is the same self-defense they would use in protecting the life of a newborn child.

In the ABC newscast of *48 Hours* and *Nightline* by Ted Koppel on December 8, 1993, the following information was presented: per the statistics, 7,709 incidents of violence or disruptions since 1977 were directed at abortion clinics and doctors who perform abortions. Of these incidents, there have been 592 blockages of clinics, 86 bombings, two kidnappings, one attempted murder, and one completed murder.

Dr David Gunn was shot three times in the back and killed in Pensacola, Florida, on March 10, 1993. In Wichita, Kansas, on August 19 of that same year, Dr George Tiller was shot in both arms outside an abortion clinic by a protester from Oregon state. Certain groups are calling the shootings justified. One such group is the Defensive Action group headed by Paul Hill, an ex-Presbyterian minister who claims to have over 28 ministers and pro-life leaders within his group. Another group is Advocates for Life Ministries, which produces a monthly magazine called *Life Advocate* with over 4,000 subscribers nationwide. It was reported that past articles justifying violence were printed in this magazine. Other groups may include the Army of God-East Coast Division ("Bombings in Washington", *US News & World Report*, January 14, 1985), and fringes of Operation Rescue.
At the current time, anti-abortionists’ acts of violence are being handled as individual criminal acts, neither associated with an organized group nor labeled as acts of a terrorist group. The new US Supreme Court ruling that authorizes RICO statutes to be used may reduce the number of demonstrations in front of abortion clinics. Only time will tell.

White Supremacists

While violence and terrorist actions by such organizations as the Ku-Klux-Klan (KKK) are not new or currently dominating the national media, a wave of racial hatred appears to be cresting in our nation. It appears that the KKK has not utilized as much media recently to gain attention as other groups. In fact, while they are still active, their local memberships have either decreased or remained small due to successful federal prosecutions and actions by local police authorities in prosecuting individual members of the KKK who commit “criminal” attacks rather than “terrorist” attacks.

Currently, the FBI is of the stated opinion that unless the attack is officially claimed by an organization, not individuals within that organization acting on their own, it will be reported as a criminal action and not a terrorist act.

The new white supremacist groups that are growing in the nation are loosely tied together under a right-wing theology called Christian Identity. The movement was initially headed by the Reverend Wesley Swift, a right-wing anti-Semitic preacher from California, shortly after World War II and included overtones of racism and religious superiority in its theology (White, 1991:184). These ideas have been carried on since his death by such groups as the Aryan Nations, Posse Comitatus, the Covenant, Sword and Arm of the Lord, the Mountain Church of Jesus Christ, and the Church of Jesus Christ Christian. Other groups that fit into the white supremacy movement include the American Nazi Party, the Bruder Schweigen Strike Force, the Christian Patriots Defense League, and some skinhead groups. On the edge of this movement are some “survivalist groups” who seem to be preparing for a war, though the groups have not turned violent. They include the Arizona Patriots, the Iowa Society for Educated Citizens, and the Oregon Militia (White, 1991:190). A follow-up or retroactive study may be necessary to specify which groups of white supremacists pose the greatest threat.

One of the most violent white supremacist groups was an offshoot of the Aryan Nations, called The Order of the Silent Brotherhood,
and was founded by Robert Matthews. Under his direction a series of robberies were planned and executed during 1983 and 1984 in the Northwest to finance their movement. This was followed by three murders, including that of a Denver-based, radio talk-show host. The series of robberies and the murders just mentioned gave this group national recognition. Later in 1984, Matthews was killed in Washington state in a shoot-out with FBI agents. Since that time this group has been inoperative, except that similar bombing actions took place in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, in 1986, which were attributed to “Affiliates of the Aryan Nations” by the FBI (US Department of Justice, 1993:27). It is interesting to note that in the ten-year summary of domestic terrorist actions by the FBI, the events mentioned above by The Order were not considered terrorist in nature or included within the summary. In fact, the last violent white supremacist actions that the FBI has classified as being terrorist were reported in September 1986 with the bombings in Idaho (US Department of Justice, 1993:27). Whether being reported as terrorist or criminal actions, violence by right-wing groups and individuals within those groups appears to be increasing and has caused the police community to identify this as one of the most potentially dangerous terrorist groups.

Middle East Terrorists

Over the past 20 years, many Americans have come to associate most terrorists with the Middle East region. This is probably due to such incidents as the killing of the Israeli athletes in Munich by “Black September”, the numerous skyjackings, the bombing of the US Marine barracks in Lebanon, and the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City, to name a few. Today, there are numerous organizations that believe they can obtain their political objectives through terrorist acts. The latest example was the bombing of the World Trade Center which also led to finding the plans for the planned bombings of New York City’s Federal Building, the United Nations, and both the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels. Assassinations had also been planned including those of Senator Alfonse D’Amato (R., N.Y.) and UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Adams, 1993:77). However, through good police work and a few lucky breaks, the majority of those involved in the bombing of the World Trade Center have been apprehended.

In February 1993, it was reported that 300 Muslim emissaries from 50 nations gathered in Iran for special training in terrorist acts, such
as bombing landmark buildings and lacing a large city’s water supply with a deadly botulism toxin being developed in Iran (Adams, 1993:76).

Some of the better known active Middle East terrorist groups include the Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, Hamas, Palestine Liberation Organization (currently, it is not politically correct to refer to them as being terrorists), Palestinian Liberation Front, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command, Abu Nidal Group, and numerous other smaller groups. For a more detailed list of actions these groups have participated in, look at the descriptions in either the book by White (1991) or Hermann and Seger (1990).

In the past, Libyan terrorists have been very active. Currently, efforts are underway to extradite two individuals from Libya – in connection with the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988, over Lockerbie in Scotland – to the United States or the United Kingdom for trial.

The book, Target America by Yosseff Bodansky (1993), published since the bombing of the World Trade Center, offers new ideas about why we will see a continued increase in terrorist acts from the Middle East and, specifically, from groups directed by Iran. It is not hard to see why there is such a hatred by certain Islamic leaders towards the United States when they are constantly declaring that the United States is “the Great Satan, that there must be no leniency in the war against it, and that their struggle with the West is both imminent and inevitable” (Bodansky, 1993:397). While there is not a completely safe city that could not be struck by such groups, the logistics and the ability to blend into the community within the United States is limited to the larger cities with a population base from the Middle East. This is probably one of the reasons that Middle East terrorists were not rated as high as other domestic groups.

Black Militants

To many people this term brings back images of the Black Panthers from the 1970s; however, the image has changed and is still vague. It is likely that the recent Los Angeles riots in 1993, along with the media coverage of such gangs as the Crips and Bloods, have contributed to the labeling of racially exclusive gangs as potential terrorist groups. By definition, with an organized call for violence by such gangs to change political policies, they would be within the parameter of being a full-fledged terrorist group. One of the latest black militant groups was known
as Yahweh or the Black Hebrew Israelites of Miami. In 1992, seven members were convicted of conspiracy to commit murder and nine were released (US Department of Justice, 1993:5).

As reported in the article “Feeding the Fire” in the February 1994 issue of *US News and World Report*, another potentially active organization may be the Nation of Islam, whose leader is Louis Farrakhan. Their current rhetoric is mostly directed against Jewish people.

**Latin American Terrorists**

The Frente Farabundo Marti De La Liberacion Nacional (FMLN), a coalition of different groups in El Salvador, has been involved with killing American servicemen in that country. However, as at writing, no known terrorist actions have been committed within the US.

Possibly the greatest amount of violence from Latin and South American countries comes in the form of criminal activity from those individuals who are involved in drug trafficking for profit, not for political change.

**European Terrorists**

European terrorist groups have constantly been active but primarily in Europe, with limited attention directed against the United States with the exceptions of attacks directed towards military personnel and bases. On the main European continent, some of the most active groups have been the Neo-Nazis, Red Army Faction, and Red Brigades. While there are numerous other groups, they have not recently been as active in targeting American interests.

With the break up of the Soviet Union and the current civil strife in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia, we may see a spillover into the United States especially as it relates to the United Nations.

The struggle in Northern Ireland with the Provisional Irish Republican Army, its various splinter groups, and the Ulster Defence Force are also considerations. But the “peace initiative” may have dulled this. However, it appears these groups would be more likely to attempt obtaining funds and weapons from the United States, rather than influencing political action by committing violent terrorist acts on American soil.
There are numerous separatist and nationalist groups on the European continent that are violent within their local areas and which could target American interests. However, as viewed by most experts, they have enough problems and targets on their own continent and do not seem interested in coming to America to leave their political messages. Apparently, this is also how the chiefs of police in America view them due to their low ranking. It also appears that there will be constant assassination attempts on dissenters living in the United States by groups from their original country.

**Puerto Rican Separatists**

They have been some of the most violent terrorists in the past ten years within the United States. In 1983, a group calling themselves the Partido Revolucionario De Los Trabajadores Puertoriquena (PRTP) Ejercito Popular Boricua (ETB), or Macheteros, were involved in a $7.2 million armed robbery of a Wells Fargo depot in Connecticut. Their stated objective was to gain the independence of Puerto Rico through acts of violence such as murders and bombings. Targets are generally Federal and local government officials and facilities (US Department of Justice, 1993:6). Other groups that have participated in terrorist actions within the US or Puerto Rico are: the Popular Liberation Army, Pedro Albizu Group Revolutionary Forces, and Guerrilla Forces of Liberation. While the FBI identifies these groups as the most active, the majority of their terrorist actions have taken place in Puerto Rico and not on the mainland of the United States. The last reported incident on the mainland was of a bombing incident in Washington DC in August 1983.

In late 1993, an election was held in Puerto Rico to determine what the people wanted. The majority voted to keep their commonwealth status with only a small portion desiring a separate country. This shows that there is not strong public support for such groups as noted above.

**South American Terrorist Groups**

They have been extremely active and violent; however, they have remained within their own countries and have not been overtly involved with political actions in the United States. Some of the most violent groups are the Sendero Luminoso or Shining Path, located in Peru. Within the last ten years, this group has killed approximately 30,000
persons, one of whom was an American, in Peru, in 1989. Information provided by the FBI to the Peruvian National Police resulted in the capture of the murderer (US Department of Justice, 1993:5). Recently, the leader of the Shining Path, Abimael Guzman, was captured by government forces and actions by the group have decreased.

**Anti-Castro Cubans**

They were very violent in the early 1980s. Operating under names such as the Omega 7, they conducted a series of bombings in Miami, Florida, before being caught. Their last reported bombings were in 1983.

**Jewish Extremists**

They have generally been associated with the Jewish Defense League (JDL) operating out of New York City and were given credit for bombings in New York, New Jersey and California during 1985-86. They currently do not appear to be very active.

**Other**

This category contained such groups as environmentalists, and animal rights activists. Selections were too irregular to identify a single group.

**METHODOLOGY**

On October 13, 1993, survey letters were sent to the chiefs of police of cities with over 100,000 persons. All 140 cities in the United States with a population over 100,000 were selected. The reasons the survey population base was set at this number were to limit the amount of surveys sent out and because the larger cities were usually those targeted in the past for terrorist acts.

A cover letter identified the reason for the survey and indicated that an executive summary of the findings would be sent to each department that assisted in the survey. Eighty-six out of 140 chiefs of police responded for a 61 percent response rate. It is significant to note
that those from both Washington DC and New York City responded, as both sites are considered primary centers of terrorist opportunity.

On the survey itself were listed ten specific groups and one “Other” category of terrorists to select from. The chiefs were asked to rank the top four groups that, in their opinion, were the most likely to commit a terrorist act within the next two years. The groups were placed in random order. Three of the specific groups, anti-Castro Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Jewish Extremists were taken from the 1982-1992 *Terrorism* book published by the FBI (US Department of Justice, 1993). In addition, the two groups identified by the FBI as right-wing and left-wing were specified as white supremacists and black militants. The Middle East terrorist groups were all combined into one category. Other categories were European terrorists, South American and Latin American groups. A category of anti-abortionists was added due to the increase of violence of fringe elements in this area within the United States. Currently, the FBI does not recognize this as a true terrorist group and therefore does not keep a record of their acts. This is also the case with their not including specific acts by white supremacists as terrorist acts, but rather individual criminal acts (with the exception of four bombings in Idaho in 1986).

Since we had the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York, it was expected that the majority of the respondents would select Middle East terrorist groups as the number one threat to the United States within the next two years. The topic of abortion clinic bombings was in the news, so it was expected that this category would rank near the top. However, since there were only five FBI listed bombings by white supremacists back in 1986, it was suspected that this category would not even rank in the top four. It was also expected that there would be a perception difference between the chiefs from different geographical areas of the United States. Since the FBI in their reporting procedure separated the United States into Northeastern, North Central, Southern and Western regions, the same distinctions were made in this study. The perceptions by the chiefs in these separate areas are shown for a comparison of potential threat in the different regions.

**FINDINGS**

On a national basis, the number of times a particular group was selected as one of the top four potential terrorist groups to conduct terrorist activities within the United States are listed in Table 1.
As can be determined from Table 1, white supremacists received the most votes as one of the top four potential terrorist groups; however, it was only selected 12 times as being the number one terrorist threat.

Anti-abortionists received 43 votes or 50 percent of all votes cast, which identified them as being the number one domestic terrorist threat in the United States within the next two years.

The second most dangerous group could be identified as either white supremacists or Middle East terrorists depending on the importance the reader gives to either being selected the most times in the top four, or being selected more times as the number one most likely group to commit acts. Would white supremacists, who were identified as having the most selections in the top four most likely terrorist groups, or Middle East terrorists, who received the second highest number of selections in the number one category, be the most likely to commit a terrorist act? It probably makes little difference and would be safe to say that they should both be of equal concern to law enforcement officials. It is also interesting to note the considerable gap in selections following the fourth place black militants and the fifth place Latin American terrorists.

The other groups have either not been as active in the last few years, such as the anti-Castro Cubans and Jewish Extremists, or they have become localized to certain cities or geographical areas, such as the Puerto Rican
Ricans who have been extremely active in bombings within Puerto Rico. In the “Other” category, groups identified as environmentalists or animal rights activists were the predominant responses.

Figure 1 shows how the Northeast respondents viewed potential terrorist groups. Among the respondents were chiefs from both New York City and Washington, DC. As the chart depicts, there was an almost equal number of votes in the top four categories of potentially active terrorist groups, with anti-abortionists being selected slightly less as the number one threat. This could be because transportation links to the Northeast make it easier for potential Middle East and European terrorist groups to have access to large metropolitan areas near the seaboard, especially to world renowned cities such as Washington, DC and New York City.

Figure 2 indicates that the North Central region shows a significant concern with the four groups identified nationally as having the most potential for terrorist acts within the United States. Selecting anti-abortionist extremists as the number one threat shows there is a significant

![Figure 1: 1994-1995 Terrorist Group Violence Predictor by Chiefs of Police. Comparison of the times a group was selected as being one of the top four potentially violent groups versus being selected as the number one most likely terrorist group Northeast Region.](image-url)
difference between its selection as the number one threat and the selection of the other three groups as being equal in threat potential. The other identified groups all had low responses and were not considered as seriously as the top four groups.

In the Southern geographical region (Figure 3), the anti-abortionists were still considered the number one threat, with white supremacists gathering the most selections as being one of the top four threats. Such things as the strong religious influence in the South against abortion and previous involvement by the Ku-Klux-Klan in terrorist activities should be considered when evaluating this chart. It was only in this geographical region that the anti-Castro Cubans received more than one vote as being in the top four threats or as being a number one threat.

In the Western geographical region (Figure 4), there was a tie for being one of the top four threats between white supremacists and anti-abortionists. But again there was a significant difference in favor of anti-abortionists when considering the number one threat. In fact, only three of
the groups which were ranked in the top four nationally received any votes for being a number one threat. Black militants did not receive any votes for being the most dangerous, which is interesting, especially after the Los Angeles riots in 1993 that were brought on by the Rodney King incident. Information was received from ten cities in California; seven listed anti-abortionists as their number one threat, and only three cities listed black militants as one of their top four choices.

Three of the four geographical regions selected either anti-abortionists or white supremacists as one of their top two choices as being in the top four potential threats to the United States. The same three areas selected anti-abortionists as the number one choice, with a significant difference between anti-abortionists and their second choice. Only in the geographical area of the Northeast was there almost no difference between Middle East terrorists, white supremacists, and anti-abortionists. This was also the only area that evenly identified all three as being equal in threat within the next two years.

Figure 3:
As the second part of this research, six questions were asked of each department to determine the perceived threat for their own city. The results are shown in Table 2, by question and by geographical response.

In the analysis of the six questions asked, the most important finding was that in the responses there was not much difference in perceptions by the chiefs of police from the different regions in the United States. Only on question 4, regarding the frequency of having command post exercises, was there more than a 1.0 difference in responses. Information is not available at this time to identify what caused this slight difference.

From looking at the data in questions 1 and 2 combined, it can be seen that most chiefs of police perceive that they have significant targets which terrorists may hit. However, they do not feel as threatened or vulnerable as either Washington DC or New York City. In fact, they were slightly below the neutral position in the disagreement area.

![Figure 4: 1994-1995 Terrorist Group Violence Predictor by Chiefs of Police. Comparison of the Times a Group was Selected as Being One of the Top Four Potentially Violent Groups Versus Being Selected as the Number One Most Likely Terrorist Group Western Region](image-url)
Results from question 3, regarding whether emphasis on counterterrorism has intensified, indicates responses slightly below neutral. This could mean that they have neither increased nor decreased their counterterrorism training since the bombing incident in New York City.

Question 4 concerns the number of times a command post exercise has been held within the last 12 months. Results indicate that three of the regions appear not to have had one. This is not surprising considering the cost to the city of holding an exercise. Only in the Southern region did they report an increase.

### Table 2
**Question Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Northeast</th>
<th>North Central</th>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Western</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1. Within our community there are significant targets of opportunity that would allow terrorists to “leave their political message” as well as they could in Washington, DC or New York City.</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2. In my opinion, I believe that there is a strong possibility of terrorists hitting our city.</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3. Since the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and the exposed attempts to blow up the Lincoln Tunnel, our emphasis on counterterrorism has intensified.</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4. As a precaution against terrorist attacks, in the last 12 months, our city has had at least one command post exercise where police and city government officials planned actions to control a terrorist incident.</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5. If the US does not have another significant terrorist action within the year, I would expect that the fear from a terrorist threat such as was generated by the bombing of the World Trade Center will have diminished and the priority for counterterrorism precautions will have decreased.</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 6. With the recent peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, I would expect the terrorist threat in the US to decrease.</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale: 5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree
In looking at the results from question 5 regarding what will happen if we do not have a significant terrorist attack within the next year, all respondents agreed that counterterrorism precautions will decrease. Question 6 could be looked at in two ways: either they do not believe that the peace agreement will hold or, since they chose anti-abortionists and white supremacists as their number one threats, peace in the Middle East really would not decrease the potential domestic terrorist threat in the United States.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Three major findings have emerged from this research. First was the prediction of 61 percent of all chiefs of police in the United States, in cities of over 100,000 persons, in regard to which domestic terrorist groups they perceived as the most likely to conduct terrorist acts within 1994 and 1995. On a national level, in their opinion, the most likely domestic terrorist attacks will be performed by anti-abortionists, white supremacists, Middle East terrorists, and black militants (Table 1). When compared by geographical regions, these same four groups are still considered the most likely to conduct terrorist acts, with anti-abortionists being ranked the number one threat in three of the four regions. Only in the Northeast region was there no significant difference between the top four groups as to their potential threat.

The second main finding demonstrated the lack of a significant difference in the way each geographical region viewed its own vulnerability to terrorist attack or its concern over possible terrorist attacks. Each of the geographical areas viewed their own likelihood of being hit by terrorists less than that of Washington, DC and New York City. However, almost all indicated that they had significant political targets within their own communities. Another interesting piece of information indicated that there has neither been a significant increase in the emphasis on counterterrorism, nor an increase in the number of yearly command post exercises to plan for such a situation. When looking into the future, the police chiefs did not have a lot of hope in the Israeli and PLO peace agreement to reduce terrorist activities in the United States. It could not be determined if this was a result of their skepticism about the peace plan or because they had chosen anti-abortionists and white supremacists to be the most likely terrorists in the next two years.
The third major finding is potentially damaging to our national efforts in clearly defining terrorism; specifically, the manner in which the FBI has chosen not to report certain terrorist incidents is troubling and subject to serious question. Currently, they have reported all of the 86 bombings of abortion clinics and the murder of Dr David Gunn in 1993 as criminal acts rather than terrorist acts. The reasoning appears to be that there was not a single group of anti-abortionists that claimed credit for organizing these events, but they were considered to be carried out by individuals not under the direction of the group. The other area of concern is that of reported white supremacists’ acts. In looking at the FBI’s published data from 1982-1992 of reported incidents, only five bombings which took place in 1986 in Idaho by affiliates of the Aryan Nations, as part of white supremacist terrorists, could be identified. Why were events such as the murder of the talk show host in Denver by members of the Silent Brotherhood not reported, whereas in the case concerning the organization of Yahweh, also know as Black Hebrew Israelites of Miami, seven members were reported as being a terrorist organization and convicted of conspiracy to commit murder in 1992 (US Department of Justice, 1993:5-6)? In looking at the alleged attacks by white supremacists as reported by the Klanwatch Intelligence Report (1989), a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, there appears to be some discrepancies in the reporting of terrorist acts. It was interesting to note that according to the FBI report, the Ku-Klux-Klan has not been involved in any known terrorist activities within the last ten years. However, according to other sources, individuals of the Klan or other white supremacist groups have been quite active.

The purpose of this paper was not to discredit the reporting procedures of the FBI; however, it is suggested that they reconsider their own definition of what constitutes a terrorist act. It may be that they will consider that the “political correctness” of labeling a terrorist act does not apply to those potential voters within the violent anti-abortion fringes. They may also choose to limit the number of reported terrorist acts by white supremacists to only those that are “officially claimed” by such groups, regardless of whether these acts are committed by individual members with or without the official sanction of the leaders. If this is the case, it may be more logical not to separate terrorist groups from organized criminal elements for reporting purposes and to classify all such acts as only being criminal.

Another perplexing question is, if we have not had any terrorist acts of violence in the past by such groups as anti-abortionists and white supremacists, why then did 61 percent of the chiefs of police of our nation’s largest cities consider these two groups to have the most potential for terrorist
actions within the next two years? It is hard to believe that all of these responding chiefs of police would select such groups unless they recognized them for what they are, and that is, fitting the definition of being terrorists.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Martin, L.J. (1985), The Media’s Role in International Terrorism, Terrorism.