

Kay Collins

# Terrorism

## Locating sources of information

**S**tories about terrorism are on the news every day. Terrorist acts occur in some form in places around the world as a constant reminder that the United States and many other places are no longer the safe havens so many assumed they were. During the Cold War, the threats seemed more remote and not on our soil. Today the strategy of the terrorist is to communicate the immediacy of the threat. They use not only the media but the Internet to publicize their intents so that their threats cannot be hidden and ignored. In response to these threats, government agencies and law enforcement services have had to change their operations as counterterrorism becomes a priority for activities and budgets.

What is presented in this column is primarily information in the English language, but there is a similar amount of information in foreign languages and publications; especially languages that do not use the Roman alphabet are more difficult to use in a column such as this. However, translations of some of those sources can be located through the sources presented.

### Definitions/terminology

The topic of terrorism is not simple to categorize and discuss. It is very multi-dimensional. That one little word, *terrorism*, is packed with emotion, history, and politics and has been for years. Almost every book or encyclopedic entry on terrorism mentions how complex it is to define. However, it takes just a cursory search for information on the topic before seeing a common thread in almost every discussion. Any serious publication, whether an encyclopedia or scholarly book, all contain some variation of this phrase:

One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter/hero/patriot or revolutionary. The ensuing discussion is usually lengthy but important. In general, the discussion then centers around terrorism as a tool, who uses that tool and who is the target of that tool. There can often be many tools, issues, victims and users involved.

Doing research on this topic requires not only knowing the definition of the topic but looking at all of the facets involved and breaking down and analyzing the topic of research to insure looking in all the relevant sources available. And they are growing. Whereas just a few years ago the researcher would have searched books and periodical articles, in this day and age research is moving into the Library 2.0 realm of news sources, RSS feeds, Web pages, wikis, blogs, Facebook, and YouTube. Think of it as Terrorism Research 2.0.

### Encyclopedias

Encyclopedias can be useful not only for definitions, but also as a good place to begin a search. In addition to traditional print encyclopedias, such as *Encyclopedia of Terrorism* (Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications, 2003), *Encyclopedia of Terrorism* (New York, New York, Facts on File, 2002), *Encyclopedia of World Terrorism, 1996-2002* (Amonk, New York, Sharpe Reference, 2003) and *Weapons of Mass Destruction: An encyclopedia of worldwide policy, technology*

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and history (Santa Barbara, ABC-Clio, 2005), several online encyclopedias provide good entry points to terrorism research.

- **Encyclopedia Britannica Online.** This online version of the classic print source has a special publication on terrorism. *Access:* <http://www.britannica.com/>.

- **Oxford Reference Online and Oxford Reference Online Premium.** These titles provide both dictionary and encyclopedia entries. Cross-searching is available, and the results help illustrate the cross-disciplinary nature of this topic. *Access:* <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/GLOBAL.html?authstatuscode=200> Paid subscription.

- **Reference Universe.** This source from Paratext is an online guide to reference resources, including encyclopedias, and can be useful in locating reference sources that discuss terrorism. *Access:* <http://refuniv.odyssi.com/>. (Paid subscription)

### Government documents

Official publications of various government and international government organizations can be especially useful in researching specific policies and studies. Listed here are a few samples.

- **Catalog of U.S. Government Publications.** Cross-disciplinary subject database of U.S. government publications can be found here, including resources applicable to terrorism research. Many recent publications may be available online. *Access:* <http://catalog.gpo.gov/F>.

- **Country Reports on Terrorism.** This annual U.S. Department of State report covers developments in countries in which acts of terrorism have occurred, countries that are state sponsors of terrorism, and countries determined by the Secretary of State to be of particular interest in the global war on terror. *Access:* <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/>.

- **Department of Energy (DOE) Information Bridge.** This site provides free public access to full-text documents and bibliographic citations of DOE research report literature, including many documents related

to terrorism research. *Access:* <http://www.osti.gov/bridge/>.

- **Google U.S. Government Search.** Google's government-specific search tool is a good place to locate U.S. government documents dealing with specific terrorism topics on the Web. *Access:* <http://www.google.com/ig/usgov>.

- **UN Counter-Terrorism Online Handbook.** This site provides current and relevant information on the United Nations and its entities' work and resources contributing to countering terrorism. Information is searchable and browsable by theme, entity, or geographic region. *Access:* <http://www.un.org/terrorism/cthandbook/index.html>.

### News articles and news magazines

Current newspapers, news magazines, and similar news resources serve a variety of functions in researching terrorism. Often they are sources for finding background information on a specific topic or major happening. Historical newspapers are available both in microfilm, and a select (but growing) number are available online, especially for U.S. papers.

ProQuest, for example, provides a number of major news resources in their databases, notably the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Chicago Tribune*. *Access World News* from *Newsbank* and *LexisNexis Academic* also provide full-text access to archives of many newspapers. Many U.S. and international newspapers make their content available online as well.

- **Aljazeera.** English-language version of this well-known Middle Eastern news source. *Access:* <http://english.aljazeera.net/>.

- **Arab News.** Arab News provides English translations of news stories from many Middle Eastern sources. *Access:* <http://www.arabnews.com/>.

- **Google News.** Google's news service can help identify many news sources. The articles identified, however, may or may not be freely available. Despite the varying access methods, Google News can be an invaluable search tool to locate both recent and historical

news articles and concepts as portrayed in the press. Access: <http://news.google.com>.

- **Haaretz Daily.** Daily news site that covers many terrorism-related stories from the Israeli perspective. Access: <http://www.haaretzdaily.com/>.

- **New York Times.** Access to the *New York Times* is now freely available on the Web, as well as being included in other databases. Access: <http://www.nytimes.com/>.

- **The Times (London).** The *Times of London* provides a counterpoint to perspectives of U.S. sources on current terrorism topics. The historical coverage in the archive dates back to the French Revolution and Reign of Terror. Access: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/>. (Paid subscription)

- **Wise News.** News from various Asian countries in their native languages. A subscription is required to access content. Access: <http://wisenews.wisers.net>.

## Journals

- **Homeland Defense Journal.** Current issue and archives of publication covering homeland defense issues. Text of several special reports on topics such as port safety and cybersecurity are also available. Access: <http://homelanddefense.epubxpress.com/>.

- **Homeland Security Affairs.** Publication of the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security. Access: <http://www.hsaj.org/>.

- **Studies in Conflict and Terrorism.** This journal is devoted to mostly the military and strategic aspects of terrorism. It was formed from two previous titles, *Conflict* and *Terrorism*. Abstracts of articles dating back to 1977 are available online, but a subscription is required to view full-text articles. Access: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713742821~db=all>.

## Bibliographic databases

The following databases are recommended for their coverage of specific subject areas that can be useful when searching for information on a specific type of terrorism. Many subscription databases such as *America History and*

*Life*, *Historical Abstracts*, *Worldwide Political Science Abstracts*, *PsycINFO*, *Sociological Abstracts*, *ATLA Religion Database PAIS*, and *PAIS Archive* can provide citations and full text of articles related to terrorism topics. There are also numerous Web-based subject databases to consider.

- **Public Science and Technology Information Network (STINET).** This resource from the Defense Technical Information Center searches military reports available to the public. Many reports are available in linked full text. Access: <http://stinet.dtic.mil/>.

- **PubMed.** This database from the National Library of Medicine includes citations and abstracts from articles dealing with medical or health issues related to terrorism. Access: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed>

- **Web of Science.** Despite its name, Web of Science is a very productive tool for searching across all disciplines. In addition to keyword searching, it can limit by document type, such as research articles and book reviews. Subscription is required for access. Access: [http://apps.isiknowledge.com/UA\\_GeneralSearch\\_input.do?product=UA&search\\_mode=GeneralSearch&SID=2AcI@3BDN33cp4BhBHp&preferencesSaved=](http://apps.isiknowledge.com/UA_GeneralSearch_input.do?product=UA&search_mode=GeneralSearch&SID=2AcI@3BDN33cp4BhBHp&preferencesSaved=).

- **WorldCat.** This database is extremely good for identifying and locating for books covering terrorism-related topics in libraries around the world. Access: <http://www.worldcat.org/>.

## Organizations

- **Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT).** This is the Web site of a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization operating a training and education center informing the emergency response community, academia, and the public about terrorism-prevention issues. Access: <http://www.mipt.org/>.

- **RAND Terrorism and Homeland Security.** This is the clearinghouse for terrorism research and analysis reports by RAND divisions and centers. As a public service, RAND disseminates all unclassified research as printed documents or on-

line. Access: [http://www.rand.org/research\\_areas/terrorism](http://www.rand.org/research_areas/terrorism).

### Government agencies

- **Center for Contemporary Conflict (CCC).** As the research institute of the Naval Postgraduate



School's Department of National Security Affairs, CCC analyzes current and

emerging threats to U.S. national security. The agency publishes the e-journal *Strategic Insights*. Access: <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/>.

- **European Union, Fight Against Terrorism.** Information on the European Union's antiterrorism efforts, including action plans, prevention, and protection activities. Access: <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/s22011.htm>.

- **Financial Action Task Force.** This intergovernmental body was formed to counter terrorism through such activities as working to identify money laundering as a source of terrorist financing. The agency site contains standards, trends, links, and other resources dealing with the financial aspects of terrorism. Access: [http://www.fatf-gafi.org/pages/0,2987,en\\_32250379\\_32235720\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.fatf-gafi.org/pages/0,2987,en_32250379_32235720_1_1_1_1_1,00.html).

- **National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Terrorism Response.** NIOSH provides emergency response information covering topics such as building ventilation, anthrax, chemical hazards, infectious disease. Access: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/emres/terrorresp.html>.

- **United Nations Action to Counter Terrorism.** This resource helps track all U.N. actions related to terrorism and counterterrorism efforts. Access: <http://www.un.org/terrorism/>.

- **U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute.** According to its site, "the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College publishes security and strategic reports and publications which serve

to influence policy debate and bridge the gap between Military and Academia." The institute produces reports on regional and strategic issues related to many aspects of terrorism. All resources are freely available. Access: <http://www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil>.

- **U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism.**

The primary mission of this U.S. State Department Office is to forge partnerships with non-state actors, multilateral organizations, and foreign governments to advance the counterterrorism objectives and national security of the United States. The site provides detailed information about U.S. counterterrorism efforts, including lists of state sponsors of terrorism. Access: <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/>.

- **USA.gov.-Defense and International Relations.** Defense and International Relations is a very good Web site to identify government agencies at local, state, federal, and international levels. The site is an excellent place to begin terrorism research. Access: <http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Defense.shtml>.

### RSS feeds

For those who wish to keep current on happenings in the terrorism realm, there are some RSS feeds that would probably suffice to do that. There are numerous ones to select from, but the ones below may be the most useful.

- **About.com Terrorism Issues.** This Web directory provides links to many RSS feeds on terrorism issues. Access: <http://terrorism.about.com/gi/pages/stay.htm>.

- **U. S. Department of Homeland Security.** The Department of Homeland Security Web site has a series of terrorism-related RSS feeds available by agency or type of information. Feeds are currently available for homelands security news, press releases, speeches, testimony, and the *Department of Homeland Security Leadership Journal*. Access: <http://www.dhs.gov/xutil/feeds.shtm>. ❧