

Terrorism and Immigration

50 Years of Foreign-Born Terrorism on US Soil, 1975–2024

BY ALEX NOWRASTEH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Terrorism is a hazard to human life and material prosperity that should be addressed in a sensible manner whereby the benefits of government actions taken to contain it outweigh the costs. Whether policies are sensible depends on the risks that terrorism poses, the harms that terrorism inflicts, and the costs of anti-terrorism policies. This risk analysis of foreign-born terrorism is a crucial step in evaluating anti-terrorism policies related to immigration.

A total of 237 foreign-born terrorists were responsible for 3,046 murders on US soil from 1975 through the end of 2024. The chance of a person perishing in a terrorist attack committed by a foreigner on US soil over those 50 years was about 1 in 4.6 million per year. The hazards posed by foreigners who enter in different ways vary considerably. For

instance, the annual chance of being murdered in an attack committed by an illegal immigrant terrorist is zero.

The federal government has an important role in screening foreigners who enter the United States and excluding those who pose a threat to the national security, safety, or health of Americans, as foreign-born terrorists unequivocally do. This policy analysis does not make predictions about foreign-born terrorism on US soil; it merely analyzes the past risk posed by foreign-born terrorists on American soil. The past is the only source of data and information available about foreign-born terrorists on US soil, but because there is no guarantee that past trends will continue, those trends *could* change. Still, the data and information in this focused terrorism risk analysis can aid in the efficient allocation of scarce government resources to best counter the small threat of foreign-born terrorists.



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INTRODUCTION

The federal government's security resources should be allocated to the most efficient means of reducing the costs of terrorism. In the years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the government initially applied cost-benefit methods for evaluating the risk of terrorism, the cost of terrorism, and the supposed security benefits provided by the Department of Homeland Security. However, those methods were not well developed because cost-benefit analyses are anathema to decisionmakers at most government agencies, who are predisposed to assume that the benefits provided by their agencies offset high costs.¹ As a partial remedy to that long-running deficiency, the Strategic National Risk Assessment seeks to evaluate the risk of threats and hazards to help the government more effectively allocate resources to the security threats that pose the greatest risk.² Even so, the assessment does not include a thorough terrorism risk analysis of different visa categories or distinguish native-born terrorists from those born abroad. Substantial administrative impediments block foreign-born-terrorist infiltration from abroad through vigorous vetting procedures with low error rates.³ Any change in immigration policy for terrorism prevention should be subject to a cost-benefit calculation. Sensible terrorism screening policy must do more good than harm to justify its existence, meaning that the cost of the damage the policy prevents should at least equal the cost it imposes.

This paper identifies 237 foreign-born terrorists in the United States who killed 3,046 people in attacks on US soil from January 1, 1975, to December 31, 2024. Eighty-one of them entered the United States as lawful permanent residents; 44 were tourists on various visas; 29 were refugees; 25 were students; 16 were from Visa Waiver Program countries; 13 were asylum seekers; nine entered as illegal immigrants; two entered on parole; one entered on a K-1 fiancé(e) visa; one entered on an A-2 visa for government business or military training; and one was on an H-1B visa for skilled temporary foreign workers. The visas for the remaining 15 terrorists could not be determined and are recorded as "unknown." During that period, the chance of being murdered by a foreign-born terrorist on US soil was 1 in 4,559,768 a year. The annual chance of being murdered by someone other than a foreign-born terrorist in a normal homicide was about 330 times greater than the chance

of dying in a foreign-born terrorist attack. Foreign-born terrorists also injured 17,083 in attacks. The annual chance of being injured in an attack committed by a foreign-born terrorist on US soil was 1 in 813,033. Foreign-born terrorists motivated by Islamism accounted for about 68 percent of all foreign-born terrorists, over 99 percent of all murders in attacks, and more than 95 percent of all injuries.

This policy analysis is an update and simplification of four previous Cato policy analyses on the same topic that were published in 2016, 2019, 2023, and 2024. It differs from the 2016 and 2019 editions because it does not include the total number of visas issued during the years analyzed and does not include a cost-benefit analysis of different immigration policies intended to reduce the threat of foreign-born terrorism. It further differs from the 2019 version because it does not include native-born terrorists, and it includes a more detailed section on illegal immigration, the Terrorist Screening Dataset (TSDS), and terrorism along the US-Mexico border.

The risks of foreign-born terrorists on US soil are quantified by evaluating how many people they murdered and injured in attacks, the ideologies of the attackers, the visas on which the foreign-born terrorists entered the country, their countries of origin, and the costs of their terrorist attacks.

BRIEF LITERATURE SURVEY

Few researchers have tried to identify the specific visas used by terrorists, and none have used that information to produce a risk assessment for each US visa category or by nationality.⁴ From immediately after 9/11 through early 2015, John Mueller and Mark Stewart produced superb terrorism risk analyses but did not focus on the terrorism risks broken down by visa category or nativity.⁵ Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke wrote the most complete survey of visas used by foreign-born terrorists.⁶ However, their published work does not separate threats by country, and their analysis ended in 2006; in addition, their dataset is no longer available, and they did not produce a risk analysis.⁷ The US Government Accountability Office found that immigrants are overrepresented among those convicted of terrorist-related offenses post-9/11.⁸ Other scholars have scrutinized the broader links between immigration and terrorism but have not produced risk analyses.⁹

METHODOLOGY

Terrorism is the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a nonstate actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through coercion, fear, or intimidation.¹⁰ This analysis examines terrorism during the 50-year period from January 1, 1975, to December 31, 2024, which began with large waves of Cuban and Vietnamese refugees entering the country and ended with Mauritanian asylum seeker Sidi Mohamed Abdallahi shooting a Jewish man in Chicago.¹¹ It identifies foreign-born terrorists who were convicted of planning, attempting, or committing a terrorist attack on US soil and links them with the specific visa they were first issued, as well as the number of people, if any, each of them murdered and injured in their attacks; the countries where they were born; and the ideologies to which they subscribed (for simplification, illegal immigrants are included in a visa category called “illegal”). This report counts foreigners who were arrested at a port of entry while trying to legally enter the United States against the visa they tried to use, even if they were inadmissible. Terrorists who were discovered trying to enter the United States on a forged passport or visa are classified as illegal immigrants. Terrorists who were admitted to the United States on fraudulent passports, fraudulent visas, or on another person’s legitimate passport or visa are counted toward the visas they entered on. Asylum seekers usually arrive on a different visa with the intent of applying for asylum once they arrive, so they are counted under the asylum category unless they entered months before claiming asylum. If the special asylum designation here were not followed, there would be zero asylum-seeker terrorists. For instance, the Tsarnaev brothers, who carried out the Boston Marathon bombing on April 15, 2013, traveled here on tourist visas from Kyrgyzstan but are categorized as asylum seekers because their family, as ethnic Chechens living in Russia who feared state persecution, immediately applied for asylum.¹² If the terrorist’s asylum claim is pending at the time he committed an attack or was arrested for planning an attack, he is counted here as an asylum seeker.

Next, information on individual terrorists, their visa types, and the number of casualties they caused is compared with the monetized loss per casualty to quantify the loss. The monetized loss per casualty is based on an economic concept called the value of a statistical life, which reflects

the societal willingness to pay for risk reductions that prevent one statistical death in the aggregate. Crucially, this does not assign a value to a specific individual’s life. Where conflicting numerical estimates exist, the highest plausible figures are used to maximize the risks and costs of terrorism in terms of human life. The Appendix lists all the foreign-born terrorists identified by relevant date of attack or arrest, number of murders, number of injuries, visa type, country of birth, and ideology.

Finally, other costs of terrorism, such as injuries, property damage, losses to businesses, and reduced economic growth, are briefly considered. It is easy to draw comparisons between attacks regarding fatalities, but injuries are inherently difficult to compare because of their wide spectrum of severity. Therefore, the number of injuries is the least meaningful statistic, and readers should interpret it with caution. Only three terrorist attacks committed by foreigners on US soil created significant property and business damage, as well as broader economic damage: the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 9/11 attacks, and the Boston Marathon bombing. The costs of the government’s responses to terrorism, such as foreign wars and domestic counterterrorism spending, are excluded. This analysis is concerned primarily with the cost of human lives taken in terrorist attacks and considers the costs of injuries and property damage in subsequent sections.

COUNTING TERRORISTS AND THEIR VICTIMS

This policy analysis examines only foreign-born terrorists and thus excludes American-born terrorists. For attacks that were planned or carried out by native-born Americans in concert with foreign-born terrorists, the latter are credited entirely for the murders and injuries that resulted from the plot, even if the American-born terrorist committed many of the murders or injuries. This analytical choice increases the estimates of harm caused by foreign-born terrorists. For plots that included many foreign-born terrorists and victims, the number of victims is divided equally between the terrorists in each attack. For instance, the 1993 World Trade Center attack was committed by six foreign-born terrorists. Six people were murdered and 1,042 people were injured, making each terrorist responsible for one murder

and 173.67 injuries. Airplane hijackings that started but did not end in the United States, such as the September 10, 1976, hijacking of TWA Flight 355 out of New York's LaGuardia Airport by Croatian nationalists that eventually ended in Paris, are also included. However, this analysis excludes terrorist attacks in which the identities of the perpetrators are unknown, as well as attacks that occurred or were intended to occur (but were not successfully carried out) abroad. Those innocent people killed or injured by the police or security forces responding directly to a terrorist attack are counted as victims of the terrorist attacks. Assassinations of politicians and the targeted killings of other prominent individuals are counted as terrorism if there is a terroristic motivation. Terrorists are included if they made terroristic threats combined with an actual effort to commit the attack, purchased or otherwise acquired illegal firearms, had bombmaking experience or equipment, or if, by hoax, made it appear as if they had committed the attack.

Moreover, those who committed violent crimes domestically to fund terrorism on US soil, even if they never committed the actual terrorist attack, are counted as terrorists. Terrorists who were planning an attack from overseas but were killed, died of unrelated causes, or arrested before entering or attempting to enter the United States are not counted.¹³ If the terrorist was legally admitted to the United States and then left for any reason, including deportation, and planned a domestic attack from abroad, the terrorist is included.¹⁴ Convictions for weapons charges are not delineated as terrorism unless the weapons were bombs, dynamite, or poisons and their use was combined with terroristic threats. Mere possession of machine guns or other illegal firearms is not terrorism. People who teach others how to build a bomb are not counted as terrorists, nor are those who solicit others to commit terrorist attacks or who lie to law enforcement officers on behalf of their friends, family, or acquaintances who are terrorists or terrorism suspects. For instance, Georgian-born Michail Chkhikvishvili is not included even though he was a leader of the neo-Nazi Maniac Murder Cult and traveled to New York City to solicit others to commit attacks against nonwhites and Jews. He did not commit any attacks himself, he didn't plan any attacks, and there are no attacks linked to his activities.¹⁵ There are also edge cases where the motives of the criminal are unknown and likely not terrorism, like that of Russian-born

Peter Karasev, who was accused of bombing electrical facilities in California but whose motives were believed by prosecutors to be personal grievances rather than terrorism.¹⁶ Lastly, terrorists who were entrapped by the FBI are counted.¹⁷

The ideologies of foreign-born terrorists are broken down into the following categories:

- Islamism,
- Foreign nationalism,
- Right (involuntarily celibate ideology, anti-abortion, white supremacist, etc.),
- Religious (non-Islamist),
- Left (communism, animal rights, environmentalism, anti-white, etc.),
- Separatism of various kinds,
- Against specific religions (such as anti-Jewish or anti-Muslim), and
- Unknown or other.

The citizenship of terrorists is their country of origin at their birth. The most difficult challenge was distinguishing terrorism from so-called hate crimes, where the offender commits a violent or property crime targeting an individual or small group that is motivated by ethnic, racial, national, religious, or other forms of bigotry based on his personal opinions but with no broader political, economic, religious, or social goal.¹⁸ Terrorism, to repeat, is often motivated by personal hatred, but it must be aimed at a broader political, economic, religious, or social goal to be counted as terrorism. As is the case with most crimes, the perpetrator's intent is paramount in identifying the crime. Finally, calculating the risk of being murdered in a foreign-born-terrorist attack on US soil partly depends on the number of people in the United States. The Census Bureau and the American Community Survey record only the resident population for any one year, but there are many temporary travelers and tourists within the United States at any given time. Ideally, these individuals should be included in any risk calculation because they could also be murdered or injured in a terror attack. However, the previous versions of this policy analysis did not include them in the denominator for the risk calculations. This may seem like a small point, but considering there are several million tourists in the United States at any given time, their inclusion in the risk calculation would

lower the estimated chance of being murdered or injured in a terrorist attack for each year. Notably, Uzbek-born Sayfullo Habibullaevic Saipov murdered eight people in a terrorist attack in New York City on Halloween 2017, and five of his victims were Argentinian tourists.¹⁹ Undoubtedly, some of the people murdered or injured in other attacks have also been tourists or other nonresidents. Despite this, estimating the number of tourists in the United States at any given time over the last 50 years would require too many assumptions and estimates to be statistically reliable. Therefore, this policy analysis counts all people murdered or injured in terrorist attacks on US soil but counts only residents as the population for estimating the annual chance of being murdered in an attack. This methodological choice overestimates the risk of dying or being injured in a terrorist attack.

The 2019 policy analysis included information on native-born terrorists, their victims, their ideologies, and other characteristics. Counts of native-born terrorists are not included in this version for four main reasons. First, the collection and categorization of native-born American terrorists back to 1975 is costly. Second, no readers of the 2019 policy analysis remarked on the native-born-terrorist numbers; their attention was focused almost exclusively on foreign-born terrorists. Third, the data on native-born terrorists would not be as reliable as the data for foreign-born terrorists. The 2020 riots following the murder of George Floyd and the January 6, 2021, rioters who attempted to disrupt the count of electoral votes to certify Joe Biden's election present complex methodological challenges. In each case, some of the rioters undoubtedly committed violence for political purposes, but many did not. Identifying the *thousands* of people involved in each set of riots, separating property criminals and other hooligans from those who intended political violence, and uncovering their immigration statuses would be too difficult and involve too many ad hoc decisions by the author. However, not including the violence from those two politically inspired spasms of disorder would also give an incomplete view of native-born-terrorist incidents, since most perpetrators in the George Floyd and January 6 riots were native-born Americans.²⁰ Fourth, large segments of the public disagree on whether the riots in 2020 and 2021 would rise to the level of terrorism analyzed in this paper. In contrast, there is little disagreement over whether the incidents that are included here, such as the 9/11 attacks, were terrorism.

SOURCES

The terrorists' identities come from 18 main datasets and documents. The first is *Terrorism Since 9/11: The American Cases*, edited by John Mueller.²¹ This voluminous work contains biographical and other information related to many terrorist attacks and cases since September 11, 2001. Mueller's work is indispensable because he focuses on actual terrorism cases rather than questionable instances of people who were investigated for terrorism, then cleared of terrorism and convicted under nonterrorism statutes, but whose convictions the government ultimately counted as "terrorism-related." For instance, a 2017 Department of Justice National Security Division "Chart of Public/Unsealed International Terrorism and Terrorism-Related Convictions from 9/11/01–12/31/15" included 627 terrorism-related convictions, of which only 280, or 45 percent, were convicted under an actual terrorism statute.²² Seventy of those 280 convictions were for planning or executing an attack on US soil, and only 40 of the 70 people were foreign-born. Many of those terrorism-related convictions were for citizenship fraud, passport fraud, or false statements to an immigration officer by immigrants who never posed an actual terrorism threat to the homeland. The convictions of Nasser Abuali, Hussein Abuali, and Rabi Ahmed provide further context for the government's use of the term "terrorism-related." An informant told the FBI that the trio tried to purchase a rocket-propelled grenade launcher, but the FBI found no evidence supporting the accusation. The three individuals were instead charged with and convicted of receiving two truckloads of stolen cereal.²³ The government classified their convictions as terrorism-related despite the lack of a terrorist connection, terror threat, planned attack, conspiracy, or any tentative steps toward the execution of a terror attack. As a result, Nasser Abuali, Hussein Abuali, and Rabi Ahmed are not included in this analysis. While this incident is especially absurd, it is similar to many of the other 346 terrorism-related convictions in the Department of Justice report.

The second source is the Fordham University Center on National Security's terrorism trial report cards, a compilation of all the trials for terrorism cases for Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) members in the United States, as well as statistical analyses and overviews.²⁴

Third are the 2010 and 2013 Congressional Research Service reports, "American Jihadist Terrorism: Combating a Complex Threat."²⁵

The fourth source of terrorist identities is a combination of the RAND Corporation's Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI), which covers the years 1968–2009, and other RAND publications on terrorism.²⁶

Fifth is the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) maintained by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism at the University of Maryland, College Park, and other research produced by the GTD.²⁷ The RDWTI and GTD overlap considerably, providing a valuable check.

Sixth are the results of numerous Freedom of Information Act requests by various organizations and individuals asking for all terrorism-related convictions since 9/11.²⁸

Sources 7 through 17 are the New America Foundation; *The Intercept*; the Investigative Project on Terrorism; the research of University of North Carolina sociology professor Charles Kurzman; the George Washington University Program on Extremism; the Center for Immigration Studies; the Southern Poverty Law Center; research by the National White Collar Crime Center; the Terrorism Research Center at the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas; a dissertation by Catlyn Kenna Keenan; numerous FBI reports from 1982 to 2005 on terrorist incidents in the United States; and press releases, statements, or speeches issued by the Department of Justice.²⁹

Individual immigration information for the terrorists, their ideologies, and their countries of origin comes from the sources mentioned above, as well as news stories, court documents, and other government reports. Many of the foreign-born terrorists analyzed here entered the United States on one visa but committed their terrorist attack after they switched to another visa, were naturalized, or lost immigration status. This report classifies those foreign-born terrorists under the visa they had when they initially entered the country. The only exception is for asylum seekers, who are counted under the asylum visa category. That exception is important because those individuals usually make their claim at the US border or after they have entered on another visa, often with the intention of applying for asylum. As an example of the general methodology, Faisal Shahzad is counted in the student visa category because he initially entered on that visa and then obtained an H-1B visa before he unsuccessfully attempted to set off a car bomb in Times Square in 2010.

THE ATTACKERS

These datasets identify 237 foreign-born terrorists in the United States from 1975 to the end of 2024, of which 81 entered as lawful permanent residents; 44 were tourists on various visas; 29 were refugees; 25 were students; 16 were from Visa Waiver Program countries; 13 were asylum seekers; nine entered as illegal immigrants; two entered on parole; one entered on a K-1 fiancé(e) visa; one entered on an A-2 visa for government business or military training; and one was on an H-1B visa for skilled temporary foreign workers. The visas for the remaining 15 terrorists could not be determined.

The number of murder victims per terrorist attack comes primarily from government reports, the RDWTI, the GTD, John Mueller's research, and media reports. From 1975 through 2024, those 237 foreign-born terrorists murdered 3,046 people, 97.8 percent of whom were killed in the September 11, 2001, attacks. The other 2.2 percent of murder victims were dispersed over the 50-year period, with spikes in 1993 and 2015. These spikes in victims are from the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, which killed six people, and the combination of two 2015 attacks—the Chattanooga, Tennessee, shooting on July 16, 2015, which killed five people, and the San Bernardino, California, attack on December 2, 2015, which killed 14 people.

From 1975 through 2024, the approximate annual chance that an American resident would be murdered in a terrorist attack carried out by a foreign-born terrorist was 1 in 4,559,768. At one end of the spectrum, foreigners on the Visa Waiver Program killed one American resident in a terrorist attack, resulting in a risk of about 1 in 13.9 billion per year. At the other end of the spectrum, those on other tourist visas killed 2,829.4 people, resulting in a risk of about 1 in 4.9 million a year. The approximate chance that an American would be killed in a terrorist attack committed by a refugee was 1 in 3.5 billion a year. Of the roughly 1,003,705 total murders committed in the United States from 1975 to the end of 2024, a total of 3,046 (or 0.30 percent) were in attacks committed by foreign-born terrorists.³⁰ Those risk statistics are summarized in Table 1. The annual chance of being murdered by a common criminal was about 330 times as great as dying in an attack committed by a foreign-born terrorist on US soil.

The US murder rate declined from 9.7 per 100,000 in 1975 to 4.8 per 100,000 in 2024, whereas the 1975–2024 rate of murder committed by foreign-born terrorists was 0.02 per

100,000 per year, only spiking at 1.05 in 2001 (Figure 1). In 32 of the 50 examined years, zero Americans were killed in a domestic attack committed by foreign-born terrorists. In the 23 years after 9/11, only six years were marred by foreign-born-terrorist attacks that resulted in one or more murders.

Figure 1 shows a single perceptible blip for terrorism—the 9/11 attacks—in an otherwise flat line.

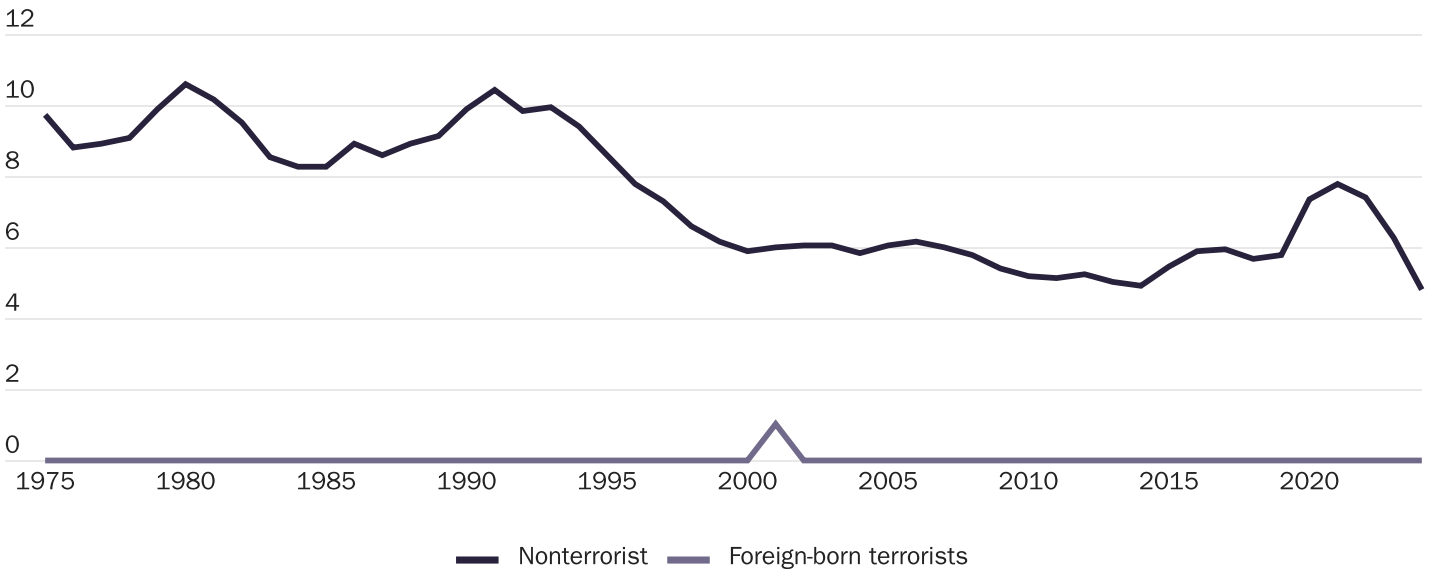
From 1975 through 2024, 237 foreign-born terrorists injured 17,083 people in attacks on US soil, injuring 5.6 people for every person they murdered (Table 2). Of all

Table 1
Chance of dying in an attack by a foreign-born terrorist, 1975–2024

Visa category	Terrorism deaths per visa category	Annual chance of being killed
All	3,046.0	1 in 4,559,768
Tourist	2,829.4	1 in 4,908,815
Student	158.8	1 in 87,468,353
Lawful permanent resident	23.0	1 in 603,871,905
K-1 fiancé(e)	14.0	1 in 992,075,272
Asylum	9.0	1 in 1,543,228,201
Refugee	4.0	1 in 3,472,263,452
Unknown	3.8	1 in 3,655,014,160
Government (A-2)	3.0	1 in 4,629,684,603
Visa Waiver Program	1.0	1 in 13,889,053,808
H-1B	0.0	0
Illegal	0.0	0
Parole	0.0	0

Sources: See Methodology section for detailed breakdown; “American Community Survey,” US Census Bureau; and author’s estimates and calculations.
Note: Nonwhole numbers for deaths result from dividing the number of victims of a single incident equally among multiple terrorist perpetrators.

Figure 1
US murder rates from foreign-born terrorism and nonterrorism homicides, per 100,000



Sources: See Methodology section for detailed breakdown; “WONDER: Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; “American Community Survey,” US Census Bureau; and author’s estimates and calculations.

those injuries, 86.9 percent—14,842—were injured on 9/11. From 1975 through 2024, the annual chance of being injured in an attack carried out by a foreign-born terrorist was 1 in 813,033. Illegal immigrants injured zero American residents in terrorist attacks (with a caveat below), whereas those on tourist visas injured 1 in 930,537 a year. The approximate chance that an American would be injured in a terrorist attack committed by a refugee was 1 in 646 million a year.

In 29 of the 50 years, zero people were injured in terror attacks committed by foreign-born terrorists. The last two people injured in an attack committed by a foreign-born terrorist were Paul Pelosi, the husband of former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who was attacked in his San Francisco home in 2022 by Canadian-born terrorist David DePape, and a Jewish man shot by Mauritanian asylum seeker Sidi Mohamed Abdallahi in 2024.³¹ The three most injurious attacks were 9/11 (14,842 people injured); the 1993 World Trade Center attacks (1,042 people injured); and the 1984 Rajneeshee bioterror attack in The Dalles, Oregon (751 people sickened).

UNIQUENESS OF 9/11

The foreign-born-terrorist murder rate has a single spike in 2001 and is virtually a flat line for every other year

(Figure 1). The foreign-born-terrorist murder rate of 1.05 per 100,000 in 2001 is 177 times greater than the next-highest annual rate, 0.0059 in 2015. The statistical mode (meaning the most common number) of the annual murder rate by foreign-born terrorists is zero.

The 9/11 attacks killed 2,979 people (not counting the 19 hijackers). These attacks were a horrendous crime, but they were also a dramatic statistical outlier. Excluding 2001, 2015 was the deadliest year in the period examined, with 19 Americans killed by foreign-born terrorists. Fourteen of those victims were killed in the San Bernardino attack—the second-deadliest attack committed by foreign-born terrorists on US soil during the 50-year period. The 9/11 attacks killed about 213 times more people than were killed in San Bernardino.

Government officials frequently remind the public that we live in a post-9/11 world, where the risk of terrorism is so extraordinarily high that it justifies enormous security expenditures and curtailments of civil rights.³² The period from 1975 to September 11, 2001, had 23 murders committed by 28 foreign-born terrorists out of a total of 97 who planned, attempted, or successfully carried out an attack (Table 3). From September 12, 2001, to December 31, 2024, 44 people were murdered on US soil by a total of 9 foreign-born terrorists out of a total of 119 foreign-born terrorists who planned, attempted, or committed attacks.

Table 2
Chance of being injured in an attack by a foreign-born terrorist, 1975–2024

Visa category	Terrorism injuries per visa category	Annual chance of being injured
All	17,083.0	1 in 813,033
Tourist	14,925.8	1 in 930,537
Student	1,083.0	1 in 12,824,675
Lawful permanent resident	348.3	1 in 39,872,882
K-1 fiancé(e)	17.0	1 in 817,003,165
Asylum	674.0	1 in 20,596,718
Unknown	1.0	1 in 13,889,053,808
Refugee	22.0	1 in 646,002,503
Government (A-2)	8.0	1 in 1,736,131,726
Visa Waiver Program	4.0	1 in 3,472,263,452
H-1B	0.0	0
Illegal	0.0	0
Parole	0.0	0

Sources: See Methodology section for detailed breakdown; “American Community Survey,” US Census Bureau; and author’s estimates and calculations.
Note: Nonwhole numbers for injuries result from dividing the number of victims of a single incident equally among multiple terrorist perpetrators.

Prior to 9/11, the chance of being murdered by a foreign-born terrorist was about 1 in 277 million per year. After 9/11, the chance of being murdered by a foreign-born terrorist was about 1 in 165 million per year. The horrendous death toll from the terrorist attacks of 9/11 overwhelms the number of deaths from other attacks. On that one day, the chance of dying in a terrorist attack was 1 in 95,659.

Before 9/11, 1,814 people were injured on US soil by a total of 25 foreign-born terrorists, and the chance of being injured by a foreign-born terrorist was about 1 in 3.5 million per year (Table 4). After 9/11, the chance of being injured by a foreign-born terrorist was about 1 in 17 million per year. More than 6.6 times as many people were injured in the 9/11 terrorist attacks than in all other foreign-born-terrorist attacks combined.

TERRORISM DEATHS AND INJURIES BY IDEOLOGY

Islamism is the dominant ideological motivation for foreign-born-terrorist attacks during the 50-year period analyzed here. Of the 237 foreign-born terrorists who were active from 1975 through 2024, 68 percent were Islamists. Some 15 percent were foreign nationalists, such as Armenians who murdered people in vengeance for

the genocide carried out by the Turkish government or Croatians who wanted independence for their country from Yugoslavia. The rest were spread out across other ideologies (Table 5). When broken down by ideology, the number of murders committed by foreign-born terrorists is even more lopsided. Including the 9/11 attacks, foreign-born Islamist terrorists murdered 99.4 percent of all people killed in a terrorist attack on US soil. Of all people murdered by foreign-born terrorists, 97.8 percent died in the 9/11 attacks. The approximate annual chance of being murdered in an attack committed by a foreign-born Islamist was about 1 in 4.6 million per year. That chance drops substantially to 1 in 2.3 billion annually for foreign-born nationalists. The distribution of injuries is similarly skewed toward Islamists, with 95.4 percent being inflicted by foreign-born Islamist terrorists.

TERRORISTS WHO CROSSED THE US-MEXICO BORDER

Illegal immigrant terrorists who crossed either a land or water border into the United States have killed or injured zero people in attacks on US soil. Nine illegal immigrant terrorists have attempted to commit attacks in the United States during the 50-year period analyzed here. Of those nine illegal

Table 3
Chance of being killed in a foreign-born-terrorist attack, 1975–2024

Period	Number of successful terrorists	Murders in terrorist attacks	Annual chance of dying in terrorist attack
Pre–9/11	28	23	1 in 276,740,143
9/11/2001	19	2,979	1 in 95,659
Post–9/11	9	44	1 in 164,524,126
1975–2024	56	3,046	1 in 4,559,768

Sources: See Methodology section for detailed breakdown; “American Community Survey,” US Census Bureau; and author’s estimates and calculations.

Table 4
Chance of being injured in a foreign-born-terrorist attack, 1975–2024

Period	Number of successful terrorists	Injuries in terrorist attacks	Annual chance of being injured in terrorist attack
Pre–9/11	25	1,814	1 in 3,508,827
9/11/2001	19	14,842	1 in 19,200
Post–9/11	22	427	1 in 16,953,306
1975–2024	66	17,083	1 in 813,033

Sources: See Methodology section for detailed breakdown; “American Community Survey,” US Census Bureau; and author’s estimates and calculations.

immigrant terrorists, five illegally crossed the US-Canada border, one stowed away on a ship, and three illegally crossed the US-Mexico border.³³ The three illegal immigrant terrorists who crossed the US-Mexico border are brothers Dritan Duka, Shain Duka, and Eljvir Duka. They are ethnic Albanians from Macedonia who illegally crossed from Mexico into the United States with their parents in 1984 when they were aged five or younger. Twenty-three years after they illegally crossed into the United States, all three were arrested and later convicted for a planned attack on Fort Dix, New Jersey, in 2007.³⁴ The Duka brothers were “got aways,” which means that they were illegal border crossers who were directly or indirectly observed to have illegally entered the United States, weren’t apprehended while entering, and did not turn back to Mexico.³⁵ There is no evidence that they plotted to commit a terrorist attack in the United States when they originally entered the United States. Although zero Americans have been killed or injured in attacks committed by illegal immigrant terrorists, the possibility remains that an illegal immigrant who crosses the US-Mexico border or enters another way could commit an attack that injures or kills Americans in the future.³⁶

Sidi Mohamed Abdallahi crossed the US-Mexico border illegally in 2023 and quickly applied for asylum before being charged with a state-level terrorism offense for shooting a Jewish man in Chicago in 2024.³⁷ The visa classification

methodology for this and earlier iterations of this terrorism risk analysis requires Abdallahi to be labeled as an asylum seeker because migrants who ask for asylum must be on US soil to make the request, which means that they have already traveled here on another visa or have entered illegally. If that methodology were not followed, there would be zero terrorists who entered on asylum because they have all entered either illegally or on another visa. The methods here mirror the implicit methods of other terrorism analysts who followed the description of Ramzi Yousef in the *9/11 Commission Report*—as having entered the US as an asylum seeker because he asked for asylum even though he arrived with fraudulent documents.³⁸

Although every version of this risk analysis and analyses by other terrorism experts and commentators follows this convention either implicitly or explicitly, a reasonable reader could disagree with those methods overall or in the particular case of Sidi Mohamed Abdallahi. Suppose one wishes to classify the data differently and count Abdallahi as an illegal immigrant rather than an asylum seeker. In that case, one must subtract one terrorist and one injury from the asylum visa category, add them to the illegal visa category, and then look more closely at the immigration histories of every other asylum seeker and make a similar adjustment if the facts justify a reclassification. Under such an alternative analysis, the number of attacks committed by an illegal

Table 5
Chance of being murdered or injured in a terrorist attack, by the ideology of the attacker, 1975–2024

Ideology	Number of terrorists	Murders in terrorist attacks	Annual chance of being murdered in terrorist attack	Injuries in terrorist attacks	Annual chance of being injured in terrorist attack
Islamism	161	3,028	1 in 4,586,874	16,302	1 in 851,984
Foreign nationalism	36	6	1 in 2,314,842,301	5	1 in 2,777,810,762
Right	15	11	1 in 1,262,641,255	17	1 in 817,003,165
Religious (non-Islamist)	10	0	0	751	1 in 18,494,080
Left	12	1	1 in 13,889,053,808	7	1 in 1,984,150,544
Separatism	1	0	0	1	1 in 13,889,053,808
Unknown/other	1	0	0	0	0
Anti-specific religion	1	0	0	0	0
All foreign-born terrorists	237	3,046	1 in 4,559,768	17,083	1 in 813,033

Sources: See Methodology section for detailed breakdown; “American Community Survey,” US Census Bureau; and author’s estimates and calculations.

immigrant terrorist rises from zero to one, the number of injuries committed in attacks by an illegal immigrant terrorist rises from zero to one, and the annual chance of being injured in a terrorist attack committed by a foreign-born terrorist rises from zero to 1 in 13.9 billion per year over the last 50 years.

ESTIMATING THE COST PER TERRORIST VICTIM

When regulators propose a new rule or regulation to enhance safety, they routinely estimate how much it will cost to save a single life under their proposal, acknowledging that human life is valuable but not infinitely so.³⁹ Depending on the risk-reward trade-off, Americans are willing to take risks that increase their chance of violent death or murder, such as enlisting in the military, living in cities that have more crime than rural areas, or driving at high speeds—actions that would be unthinkable if individuals placed infinite value on their own lives. It then stands to reason that there is a value between zero and infinity that people place on their lives. In public policy, a review of 132 federal regulatory decisions concerning public exposure to carcinogens found that regulators do not undertake action when the individual fatality risk is lower than 1 in 700,000, indicating that risks are deemed acceptable when annual fatality risk is lower than that figure.⁴⁰ Using a similar type of analysis for foreign-born terrorism will help guarantee that scarce resources are devoted to maximizing the number of lives saved relative to the costs that are incurred.

In 2010, the Department of Homeland Security produced an initial estimate that valued each life saved from an act of terrorism at \$6.5 million, then doubled that value (for unclear reasons) to \$13 million per life saved.⁴¹ An alternative valuation by the scholars Robert W. Hahn, Randall Lutter, and W. Kip Viscusi uses data from everyday risk-reduction choices made by the American public to estimate that the value of a statistical life is \$15 million.⁴² This paper relies on the \$15 million estimate to remove the possibility of undervaluation.

Other costs of terrorism should ideally be included here, such as property damage, medical care for the wounded, and disruptions to economic growth.⁴³ However, those costs are highly variable and confined to three major terrorist attacks

caused by foreigners: the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 9/11 attacks, and the Boston Marathon bombing. The highest plausible cost estimates for those three attacks are \$1 billion, \$170 billion, and \$25 million, respectively.⁴⁴ Those costs do not count the cost of the government's reactions. The monetized cost of terrorism in terms of lives lost was greater than the value of property and other economic damages in every terrorist attack examined here, except for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the 9/11 attacks.

FOREIGN-BORN TERRORISTS BY VISA CATEGORY

This policy analysis categorizes terrorists' visa status using the visa under which a terrorist first entered the United States, with an exception for those who entered on another visa or illegally and immediately asked for asylum. Terrorists who were admitted to the United States on fraudulent passports, fraudulent visas, or on another person's legitimate passport or visa are counted toward those categories. For example, Iyman Faris originally entered the United States from Pakistan on a student visa and a passport that belonged to another person.⁴⁵ While Faris applied for asylum four months later and received a green card through marriage more than a year after that, for the purposes of this report he entered on a student visa.

The terrorist risk for each visa category can be understood in different ways. The following sections will present the number of foreign-born terrorists in each visa category and the number of murders and injuries committed by terrorists in each visa category. Multiplying the number of murders in each visa category by the \$15 million cost per victim yields the estimate of the costs of terrorism during the 1975–2024 period.

NUMBER AND COST OF TERRORISM VICTIMS FOR ALL VISA CATEGORIES

As previously noted, 3,046 people were murdered by foreign-born terrorists in attacks in the United States from 1975 to the end of 2024. Table 6 shows the types of visas that foreign-born terrorists used to enter the United States and how many victims were murdered in attacks committed by terrorists on each visa. Foreign-born terrorists on tourist visas

have killed more Americans in attacks than those on any other type of visa, followed distantly by those who entered on student visas. The 2,979 deaths from the 9/11 attacks account for all but 67 murders in foreign-born-terrorist attacks.

Those terrorist attacks cost \$45.69 billion in human life over the 50-year period, or about \$914 million per year on average, as displayed in Table 7 (no discount-rate adjustment). Of the 237 foreign-born terrorists, 181 did not murder anyone in a terrorist attack. Many of them were arrested before they attacked, or else their attacks failed to kill anyone. However, they did injure 839 people in their attacks. On average, each terrorist killed about 13 people, for a total human cost of \$192.8 million, and injured about 72 people.

Only 56 of the 237 foreign-born terrorists killed anyone in an attack. Of those terrorists, each one killed an average of 54.4 people, for a cost of \$815.9 million in human life. Prior to 9/11, only two terrorists, Mir Aimal Kasi (also known as Mir Aimal Kansi) from Pakistan and Eduardo Arocena from Cuba, killed more than one person each: Mir Aimal Kasi shot and killed CIA employees Frank Darling and Lansing Bennett as they were waiting in traffic outside CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, on January 25, 1993; Eduardo Arocena assassinated Eulalio José Negrín on November 25, 1979, and Félix García on September 11, 1980. Over time, the number of terrorists per year has shrunk, but their individual deadliness has increased.

There were nine deadly terrorists after 9/11; they killed 44 people, with each terrorist being responsible for an average of about five murders. Egyptian-born Hesham Mohamed Ali Hedayet murdered two people on July 4, 2002, at Los Angeles International Airport; the Tsarnaev brothers murdered three people at the Boston Marathon bombing on April 15, 2013, and another two people during their subsequent run from the law; British-born Elliot Oliver Robertson Rodger murdered six people on May 23, 2014; Kuwaiti-born Mohammad Youssef Abdulazeez murdered five people on July 16, 2015; Pakistani-born Tashfeen Malik, along with her US-born husband, Syed Rizwan Farook, murdered 14 people on December 2, 2015, in San Bernardino, California; Sudanese-born Emanuel Kidega Samson murdered one person on September 24, 2017, in Antioch, Tennessee; Uzbek-born Sayfullo Habibullaev Saipov murdered eight people on October 31, 2017, in New York City; and Saudi-born Mohammed Saeed Alshamrani murdered three people on December 6, 2019, in Pensacola, Florida. Excluding the 9/11 attacks, each terrorist who killed at least one person in an attack killed an average of 1.8 people.

The injuries caused by foreign-born terrorists in attacks on US soil are also important to consider, although the range of monetized costs from the injuries is enormous. At the low end are negligible injuries, including scratches and blown-out eardrums, while at the high end are major injuries,

Table 6

All foreign-born terrorists, murders, and injuries, by visa category, 1975–2024

Visa category	Number of terrorists	Murders in terrorist attacks	Injuries in terrorist attacks
All	237	3,046.00	17,083.00
Lawful permanent resident	81	23.00	348.33
Tourist	44	2,829.41	14,925.84
Refugee	29	4.00	21.50
Student	25	158.79	1,082.99
Unknown	15	3.80	1.00
Visa Waiver Program	16	1.00	4.00
Asylum	13	9.00	674.33
Illegal	9	0.00	0.00
Parole	2	0.00	0.00
K-1 fiancé(e)	1	14.00	17.00
Government (A-2)	1	3.00	8.00
H-1B	1	0.00	0.00

Sources: See Methodology section for detailed breakdown; “American Community Survey,” US Census Bureau; and author’s estimates and calculations.

including brain damage, amputation, and paralysis. As a result, it is very difficult to make comparisons of injuries in different terrorist attacks. Regardless, injuries are a source of costs that terrorist attacks impose on Americans. The number of people injured by foreign-born terrorists in attacks in the United States from 1975 to the end of 2024 was 17,083 (Table 6).

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR FOREIGN-BORN TERRORISTS

The country of origin for the largest number of foreign-born terrorists is Saudi Arabia, which accounts for 19 of the 237 foreign-born terrorists from 1975 through 2024 (Table 8). Saudis were also the deadliest; combined, they murdered 2,354.8 people and injured 11,725.4 (nonwhole numbers result from dividing the number of victims of a single incident equally among multiple terrorists). Sixteen foreign-born terrorists from Croatia murdered three people in terrorist attacks and injured four during the 1970s. Sixteen foreign-born terrorists from Pakistan murdered 17 people and injured 194 in terrorist attacks on US soil. Individual terrorists from the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Lebanon were the deadliest.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT TERRORISTS, THE US-MEXICO BORDER, AND THE TERRORIST SCREENING DATASET

The number of noncitizens encountered by Border Patrol along the US-Mexico border who are listed in the Terrorist Screening Dataset (TSDS), also known as the “watchlist,” increased from two in fiscal year (FY) 2017 to 103 in FY 2024 (Figure 2).⁴⁶ The US government uses the TSDS to screen visa applicants, travelers, immigrants, those seeking access to military bases, and people as a routine part of FBI investigations, as well as to bolster federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement.⁴⁷ The increase from two to 103, coinciding with a rapid escalation in illegal border entries along the US-Mexico border since late 2020, caused alarm in Congress and among the public.⁴⁸ There has not been a single person murdered in an attack committed by a terrorist who entered the United States illegally in the last 50 years; there has been at most one injury in a single attack, depending on how one classifies mode of entry (a different classification methodology than the one used in this policy analysis). No attack was committed or planned by an illegal immigrant who was on the TSDS, but alarm over the number of illegal immigrants apprehended on the TSDS persists for understandable reasons.⁴⁹ There are no

Table 7
Deadliness of all foreign-born terrorists, by visa category, 1975–2024

Visa type	Murders	Percent	Costs per death (\$)	Costs per visa (\$)
All	3,046.0	100.0%	15,000,000	45,690,000,000
Lawful permanent resident	22.0	0.7%	15,000,000	330,000,000
Tourist	2,829.4	92.9%	15,000,000	42,441,157,895
Refugee	4.0	0.1%	15,000,000	60,000,000
Student	158.8	5.2%	15,000,000	2,381,842,105
Unknown	4.8	0.2%	15,000,000	72,000,000
Visa Waiver Program	1.0	0.0%	15,000,000	15,000,000
Asylum	9.0	0.3%	15,000,000	135,000,000
Illegal	0.0	0.0%	15,000,000	0
K-1 fiancé(e)	14.0	0.5%	15,000,000	210,000,000
Government (A-2)	3.0	0.1%	15,000,000	45,000,000
H-1B	0.0	0.0%	15,000,000	0
Parole	0.0	0.0%	15,000,000	0

Sources: See Methodology section for detailed breakdown; “American Community Survey,” US Census Bureau; and author’s estimates and calculations.
Note: Nonwhole numbers for deaths result from dividing the number of victims of a single incident equally among multiple terrorist perpetrators.

Table 8

Foreign-born terrorists, fatalities, and injuries, by country of origin

Countries	Terrorists	Percent terrorists	Murders	Percent murders	Injuries	Percent injuries
Afghanistan	6	2.5%	0.0	0.0%	33.0	0.19%
Albania	2	0.8%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Algeria	3	1.3%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Armenia	6	2.5%	1.0	0.0%	1.0	0.01%
Australia	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	125.0	0.73%
Azerbaijan	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Bahamas	2	0.8%	1.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Bangladesh	7	3.0%	0.0	0.0%	4.0	0.02%
Bosnia	2	0.8%	0.0	0.0%	3.0	0.02%
Canada	5	2.1%	0.0	0.0%	1.0	0.01%
China	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Croatia	16	6.8%	3.0	0.1%	4.0	0.02%
Cuba	12	5.1%	5.0	0.2%	1.0	0.01%
Dominican Republic	2	0.8%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Egypt	13	5.5%	160.8	5.3%	961.0	5.62%
Eritrea	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Estonia	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Ethiopia	3	1.3%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
France	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Germany	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	1.0	0.01%
Ghana	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Guinea	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	4.0	0.02%
Guyana	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Haiti	3	1.3%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Honduras	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
India	8	3.4%	0.0	0.0%	125.0	0.73%
Iran	12	5.1%	0.0	0.0%	9.0	0.05%
Iraq	4	1.7%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Japan	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Jordan	6	2.5%	1.0	0.0%	174.0	1.02%
Kenya	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Kosovo	2	0.8%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Kuwait	3	1.3%	6.0	0.2%	176.0	1.03%
Kyrgyzstan	2	0.8%	5.0	0.2%	280.0	1.64%
Lebanon	11	4.6%	157.8	5.2%	784.0	4.59%
Macedonia	3	1.3%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Mauritania	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	1.0	0.01%
Morocco	3	1.3%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%

Table 8 (continued)

Foreign-born terrorists, fatalities, and injuries, by country of origin

Countries	Terrorists	Percent terrorists	Murders	Percent murders	Injuries	Percent injuries
Netherlands	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Nigeria	2	0.8%	0.0	0.0%	1.0	0.01%
Pakistan	16	6.8%	17.0	0.6%	194.0	1.13%
Palestine	5	2.1%	3.0	0.1%	353.0	2.07%
Philippines	2	0.8%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.73%
Qatar	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Saudi Arabia	19	8.0%	2,354.8	77.3%	11,725.4	68.64%
Serbia	2	0.8%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Sierra Leone	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Somalia	6	2.5%	0.0	0.0%	25.0	0.15%
South Africa	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	125.0	0.73%
South Korea	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Sudan	7	3.0%	1.0	0.0%	7.0	0.04%
Syria	2	0.8%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Taiwan	2	0.8%	1.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Trinidad and Tobago	2	0.8%	1.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
Tunisia	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	2.0	0.01%
Turkey	2	0.8%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.00%
United Arab Emirates	2	0.8%	313.6	10.3%	1,562.0	9.15%
United Kingdom	8	3.4%	6.0	0.2%	264.0	1.55%
Uzbekistan	3	1.3%	8.0	0.3%	11.0	0.06%
Vietnam	1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	1.0	0.01%
Total	237	100%	3,046.0	100%	17,083.0	100%

Source: See Methodology section for detailed breakdown.

Note: Nonwhole numbers for deaths or injuries result from dividing the number of victims of a single incident equally among multiple terrorist perpetrators.

known terrorism charges against, convictions of, or attacks committed by terrorists who were on the TSDS despite several being accidentally released over the last several years.⁵⁰ However, at least two 9/11 hijackers were on pre-TSDS databases of some kind.⁵¹ Details about the TSDS, what it means to be listed there, and how names are added to the watchlist are all reasons to be less concerned about the terrorism risk posed by TSDS identifications along the US-Mexico border or elsewhere.

The TSDS is a US government database that contains biographic and biometric identifying information on known or suspected terrorists (KSTs), known affiliates of

other people on the watchlist, and additional individuals who represent a potential threat to the United States.⁵²

President George W. Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive-6 in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks to direct the government to consolidate watchlists and its approach to maintaining them, and to facilitate information sharing in and between governments.⁵³ In response, the attorney general, secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), secretary of state, and CIA director created the Terrorist Screening Center (TSC) to manage the new consolidated terrorist watchlist, which was originally called the Terrorist Screening Database and subsequently

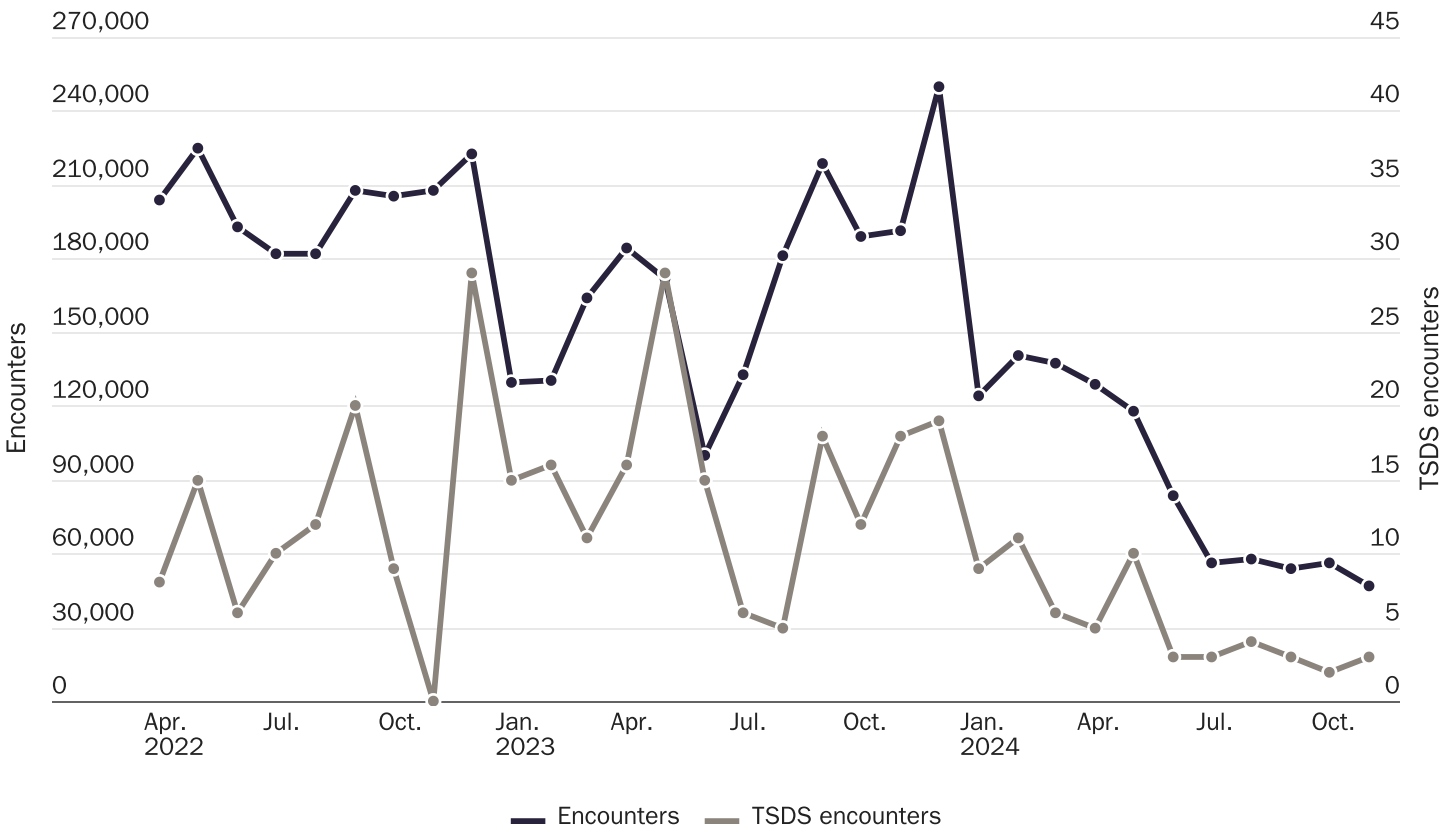
renamed the Terrorist Screening Dataset in 2021.⁵⁴ The TSDS is administered by the FBI in coordination with DHS, the Department of State, the Department of Justice, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.⁵⁵

The process for adding an individual to the TSDS begins with a government department or agency nominating an individual for inclusion in the National Counterterrorism Center’s (NCTC) Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) and/or TSDS.⁵⁶ The nominator first reviews available information to determine whether the individual meets the criteria to be placed on the watchlist. The nominator then passes nominations with a supposed nexus or relationship to international terrorism to the NCTC for inclusion in TIDE. If the nominations are deemed eligible at that point, they are passed to the TSC. The TSC then reviews the information to ensure that each nomination satisfies the criteria for inclusion in the TSDS.⁵⁷

For a KST to be included in the TSDS, the information on the nominee must satisfy a reasonable suspicion standard

that the person is “engaged, has been engaged, or intends to engage in conduct constituting, in preparation for, or in aid or in furtherance of terrorism and/or terrorist activities.”⁵⁸ That standard is supposed to include consideration of other circumstances that may contextualize or attenuate an individual’s association with terrorism. The assessment must be based on articulable information combined with rational inference from that information; mere guesses, hunches, or reporting of suspicious behavior are insufficient for reasonable suspicion.⁵⁹ For inclusion, the nominee’s last name must be known in addition to one other piece of identifying information, such as a first name or birth date.⁶⁰ However, to be placed on the TSDS, the KST does not need to meet even the thin reasonable suspicion standard described above in all cases. The TSDS also includes identifying information of some individuals who are connected to or associated with known or suspected terrorists but who may not themselves meet the reasonable suspicion standard.⁶¹ These people are included only to aid in the screening of

Figure 2
Monthly Border Patrol encounters of TSDS individuals and all encounters along the US-Mexico border, April 2022–November 2024



Source: Customs and Border Protection.
Note: TSDS = Terrorist Screening Dataset.

applicants for visas issued by the State Department and for immigration enforcement by DHS.⁶²

According to the FBI, a known terrorist is “an individual whom the US Government knows is engaged, has been engaged, or who intends to engage in terrorism and/or terrorist activity, including an individual (a) who has been charged, arrested, indicted, or convicted for a crime related to terrorism by US Government or foreign government authorities; or (b) identified as a terrorist or member of a designated foreign terrorist organization pursuant to statute, Executive Order or international legal obligation pursuant to a United Nations Security Council Resolution.”⁶³ A suspected terrorist is “an individual who is reasonably suspected to be, or has been, engaged in conduct constituting, in preparation for, in aid of, or related to terrorism and/or terrorist activities based on an articulable and reasonable suspicion.”⁶⁴ Other people included on the watchlist are known affiliates of others on the watchlist and additional individuals who represent a potential threat to the United States, who are added to assist immigration enforcement.⁶⁵

Very few people on the TSDS are terrorists, for two main reasons. The first is that there are few terrorists in the world. The second is the loose reasonable suspicion standard used for TSDS inclusion that the government waives for traveler and immigration vetting purposes. Periodic reevaluations of the TSDS show just how easy it is to include names. Of the 1,558,710 nominations to the TSDS from FY 2009 to FY 2013, only 14,183 (0.9 percent) were rejected.⁶⁶ As of October 2020, TIDE contained about 2.5 million people, up from 1.6 million in February 2017, 99 percent of whom were neither US citizens nor permanent residents. From 2011 to 2017, NCTC deleted about 228,000 people from TIDE, and 100,000 from 2015 to 2020.⁶⁷ It’s unlikely that a process that approves over 99 percent of nominations has a rigorous standard for inclusion.

In addition to the standards above leading to few terrorists being included on the TSDS, one result of such an overly inclusive watchlist is several false positives. In one instance in late 2022 or early 2023, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) arrested a 29-year-old Iranian national named Alireza Heidari at a traffic stop in Val Verde County as he was being smuggled with other illegal immigrants. DPS handed Heidari over to Border Patrol, who then initially

identified Heidari as a match for somebody on the TSDS, which the media reported; DHS investigated further and found that Heidari was a false positive, not a TSDS match.⁶⁸

Figure 2 has monthly data for TSDS encounters by Border Patrol along the US-Mexico border back to April 2022, the earliest data where monthly data can be reconstructed from Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) online source.⁶⁹ Fluctuations in the number of TSDS encounters closely correlate with the number of total Border Patrol encounters and most closely with the number of Colombians and Peruvians apprehended by Border Patrol. The number of Colombians and Peruvians who were apprehended by Border Patrol crossing the US-Mexico border soared to a record high after late 2020 and their numbers likely explain a large share of the TSDS encounters. Of the eight currently or formerly designated foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) from countries in the Americas, five are Colombian and two are Peruvian. CBP does not disclose the nationalities of immigrants who were a match with the terror watchlist. However, data obtained by the *Washington Examiner* showed that 25 of the 27 KSTs arrested by Border Patrol in the first six months of 2022 were citizens of Colombia and likely members or former members of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (commonly known as FARC, which was delisted as an FTO in 2021), the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (delisted as an FTO in 2014), FARC–People’s Army, Segunda Marquetalia, or the National Liberation Army.⁷⁰ For instance, Border Patrol apprehended Isnardo Garcia-Amado in Arizona in early 2022 and released him into the country on April 18, 2022. Three days later, Garcia-Amado was flagged by the TSC as a positive hit on the TSDS. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested him on May 6, 2022.⁷¹ There is no indication that he intended or was involved in any terrorism, which is unsurprising because there have been zero convictions of or attacks committed by Colombian or Peruvian terrorists in the United States since 1975.

The TSDS includes too many individuals. Some of the people in the watchlist are terrorists who pose a threat to American lives, liberties, and property, but they are likely very few and greatly outnumbered by others who do not pose any threat whatsoever. An individual apprehended by Border Patrol who is in the TSDS is probably more likely to be a terrorist than an unlawful border crosser who is not in

the TSDS, but the risk gap between the two is unknown and probably smaller than would be justified in the name of public interest. In summary, the TSDS is likely a positive indication of terrorism risk that is heightened, but not by much.

CONCLUSION

Terrorism presents a real threat to the life, liberty, and property of Americans. That has led many Americans to worry about foreign-born terrorists entering the United States, either legally or illegally, and carrying out disastrous attacks. But foreign-born terrorism on US soil is a low-probability event that poses small risks and low costs on Americans as a whole.⁷² From 1975 through 2024, the average chance of dying in an attack committed by a foreign-born terrorist on US soil was 1 in 4,559,768 a year, and the annual chance of being injured was about 1 in 813,033. By comparison, the annual chance of being murdered by a common criminal in the United States was about 1 in 13,838 during the same time. In other words, the annual chance of being murdered in a normal homicide is about 330 times as great as dying in an attack committed by a foreign-born terrorist on US soil.

There are several lessons for policymakers. First, relative to other risks and the absolute danger posed by foreign-born terrorism, the federal government likely spends too many resources on reducing the threat of foreign-born terrorism. Second, the threat posed by foreign-born terrorists is not a good reason to reduce immigration to the United States,

because the costs of such a policy would exceed the benefits from the inflow of immigrants and their substantial contributions to the US economy and society. Third, illegal immigrants are not a significant terrorist threat: There were only nine terrorists who were illegal immigrants, they were arrested in the plotting stages of their planned attacks, and they killed or injured zero people over the entire 50-year period analyzed here. Fourth, the threat of foreign-born terrorism has diminished in recent years. Zero Americans were killed in a foreign-born-terrorist attack on US soil during the Biden administration, the lowest death toll during any presidential administration since 1975.

This policy analysis examines the past and does not project future trends in foreign-born terrorism, which could be quite different going forward. For instance, illegal immigrant terrorists, who have hitherto murdered or injured zero people in attacks on US soil according to the methodology of this policy analysis, could commit an attack in the future. Nonetheless, the past is the best guide to understanding what could happen with foreign-born terrorism in the coming years, and any rational analysis should start with what we know about the past before making predictions about the future.

APPENDIX

All identified foreign persons who attempted or committed terrorism in the United States during the 50-year period of 1975 through 2024 are listed in Table A1.

Table A1
Identified foreign-born persons who attempted or committed terrorism on US soil, 1975–2024

Name of terrorist	Month	Day	Year	Fatalities*	Injuries	Visa upon entry	Country of birth	Ideology
Hernandez, Valentin	January	21	1975	1.00	0.00	R	Cuba	Right
Kajevic, Stojilko	June	22	1975	0.00	0.00	R	Serbia	Foreign nationalism
Otero, Rolando	October	17	1975	0.00	0.00	R	Cuba	Right
Busic, Zvonko	September	10	1976	1.00	3.00	R	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Matanic, Petar	September	10	1976	0.00	0.00	L	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Pesut, Frane	September	10	1976	0.00	0.00	L	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Vlasic, Slobodan	September	10	1976	0.00	0.00	L	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Diaz, Alvin Ross	September	21	1976	1.00	0.50	R	Cuba	Right

Table A1 (continued)

Identified foreign-born persons who attempted or committed terrorism on US soil, 1975–2024

Name of terrorist	Month	Day	Year	Fatalities*	Injuries	Visa upon entry	Country of birth	Ideology
Sampol, Guillermo Novo	September	21	1976	1.00	0.50	L	Cuba	Right
Brekalo, Jozo	June	14	1977	0.00	0.33	U	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Buconjic, Marijan	June	14	1977	0.00	0.33	U	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Dizdar, Vladimir	June	14	1977	0.00	0.33	U	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Kelava, Bozo	August	17	1978	0.00	0.00	R	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Kodzoman, Mile	August	17	1978	0.00	0.00	U	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Bagaric, Milan	September	28	1978	0.20	0.00	U	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Ljubas, Ante	September	28	1978	0.20	0.00	U	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Logarusic, Vinko	September	28	1978	0.20	0.00	T	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Markich, Mile	September	28	1978	0.20	0.00	U	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Primorac, Ranko	September	28	1978	0.20	0.00	U	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Caran, Ante	November	22	1978	0.50	0.00	U	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Rudela, Marijan	November	22	1978	0.50	0.00	U	Croatia	Foreign nationalism
Jimenez, Eduardo Guerra	June	12	1979	0.00	0.00	R	Cuba	Left
Kavaja, Nikola	June	20	1979	0.00	0.00	L	Serbia	Foreign nationalism
Asadi, Hormoz	November	09	1979	0.00	0.00	F	Iran	Islamism
Ghodoosi, Feraidonoon	November	09	1979	0.00	0.00	F	Iran	Islamism
Heidary, Hady	November	09	1979	0.00	0.00	F	Iran	Islamism
Noori, Mohammad	November	09	1979	0.00	0.00	F	Iran	Islamism
Stamboulis, Antoun	November	09	1979	0.00	0.00	F	Sudan	Islamism
Garcia, Andres	March	25	1980	0.00	0.00	R	Cuba	Right
Losada-Fernandez, Eduardo	March	25	1980	0.00	0.00	R	Cuba	Right
Perez, Alberto	March	25	1980	0.00	0.00	R	Cuba	Right
Remon, Pedro	March	25	1980	0.00	0.00	R	Cuba	Right
Arocena, Eduardo	September	11	1980	2.00	0.00	A	Cuba	Right
Sassounian, Harout	October	06	1980	0.00	1.00	L	Armenia	Foreign nationalism
Laaman, Jaan	December	21	1981	0.00	0.00	R	Estonia	Left
Chirinian, Varant Barkev	January	01	1982	0.00	0.00	L	Armenia	Foreign nationalism
Kozibioukian, Hratch	January	01	1982	0.00	0.00	L	Armenia	Foreign nationalism

Table A1 (continued)

Identified foreign-born persons who attempted or committed terrorism on US soil, 1975–2024

Name of terrorist	Month	Day	Year	Fatalities*	Injuries	Visa upon entry	Country of birth	Ideology
Kozibioukian, Stranouche	January	01	1982	0.00	0.00	L	Armenia	Foreign nationalism
Sassounian, Harry	January	28	1982	1.00	0.00	L	Armenia	Foreign nationalism
Tcharkhutian, Vicken	February	22	1982	0.00	0.00	L	Armenia	Foreign nationalism
Berberian, Dikran Sarkis	October	01	1982	0.00	0.00	A	Lebanon	Foreign nationalism
Hovsepian, Viken	October	01	1982	0.00	0.00	L	Lebanon	Foreign nationalism
Sarkissian, Karnig	October	01	1982	0.00	0.00	L	Syria	Foreign nationalism
Yacoubian, Viken	October	01	1982	0.00	0.00	L	Lebanon	Foreign nationalism
Kholya, Hussein Shey	February	15	1983	0.00	0.00	F	Iran	Islamism
Croft, Sally-Anne	August	29	1984	0.00	125.17	T	United Kingdom	Religious (non-Islamist)
Hagan, Susan	August	29	1984	0.00	125.17	T	United Kingdom	Religious (non-Islamist)
McCarthy, Ann Phyllis	August	29	1984	0.00	125.17	T	South Africa	Religious (non-Islamist)
Onang, Diane Yvonne	August	29	1984	0.00	125.17	L	Philippines	Religious (non-Islamist)
Sheela, Ma Anand	August	29	1984	0.00	125.17	F	India	Religious (non-Islamist)
Stork, Catherine Jane	August	29	1984	0.00	125.17	T	Australia	Religious (non-Islamist)
Tun, Wu	October	01	1984	0.50	0.00	U	Taiwan	Foreign nationalism
Tung, Kuei-sen	October	01	1984	0.50	0.00	U	Taiwan	Foreign nationalism
Tran, Be Tu van	March	18	1986	0.00	1.00	R	Vietnam	Right
Birk, Gurpartap Singh	April	08	1987	0.00	0.00	L	India	Religious (non-Islamist)
Singh, Sukhvinder	April	09	1987	0.00	0.00	L	India	Religious (non-Islamist)
Sandhu, Jasbir	April	10	1987	0.00	0.00	L	India	Religious (non-Islamist)
Singh, Virinder	April	11	1987	0.00	0.00	L	India	Religious (non-Islamist)
Kabbani, Walid	October	23	1987	0.00	0.00	I	Lebanon	Foreign nationalism
Mourad, Walid	October	23	1987	0.00	0.00	T	Lebanon	Foreign nationalism
Younan, George	October	23	1987	0.00	0.00	T	Lebanon	Foreign nationalism
Kikumura, Yu	April	13	1988	0.00	0.00	T	Japan	Left
Hawamda, Mousa	July	20	1988	0.00	0.00	L	Jordan	Foreign nationalism
Francis, Glen Cusford	January	31	1990	1.00	0.00	V	Trinidad and Tobago	Islamism
Alexander, Billy	January	01	1991	0.50	0.00	U	Bahamas	Foreign nationalism
Joseph, Glossy Bruce	June	01	1991	0.50	0.00	U	Bahamas	Foreign nationalism
Daryani, Asad	April	05	1992	0.00	0.00	F	Iran	Islamism
Parvaresh, Kambiz	April	05	1992	0.00	0.00	F	Iran	Islamism

Table A1 (continued)

Identified foreign-born persons who attempted or committed terrorism on US soil, 1975–2024

Name of terrorist	Month	Day	Year	Fatalities*	Injuries	Visa upon entry	Country of birth	Ideology
Savari, Mehrdad	April	06	1992	0.00	0.00	V	Iran	Islamism
Fattahi, Ali	April	07	1992	0.00	0.00	V	Iran	Islamism
Farokhy, Amir	April	08	1992	0.00	0.00	U	Iran	Islamism
Kasi, Mir Aimal	January	25	1993	2.00	3.00	T	Pakistan	Islamism
Abouhalima, Mahmud	February	26	1993	1.00	173.67	T	Egypt	Islamism
Ayyad, Nidal A.	February	26	1993	1.00	173.67	L	Kuwait	Islamism
Ismoil, Eyad	February	26	1993	1.00	173.67	F	Jordan	Islamism
Nosair, El Sayyid	February	26	1993	1.00	1.00	L	Egypt	Islamism
Salameh, Mohammad	February	26	1993	1.00	173.67	T	Palestine	Islamism
Yousef, Ramzi	February	26	1993	1.00	173.67	A	Pakistan	Islamism
Ajaj, Ahmed	March	09	1993	1.00	173.67	A	Palestine	Islamism
Ali, Siddig Ibrahim Siddig	June	01	1993	0.00	0.00	L	Sudan	Islamism
Elhassan, Tarig	June	01	1993	0.00	0.00	L	Sudan	Islamism
Haggag, Abdo Mohammed	June	01	1993	0.00	0.00	L	Egypt	Islamism
Khalafalla, Fares	June	01	1993	0.00	0.00	T	Sudan	Islamism
Saleh, Matarawy Mohammed Said	June	01	1993	0.00	0.00	L	Egypt	Islamism
Abdelgani, Amir	June	24	1993	0.00	0.00	T	Sudan	Islamism
Abdelgani, Fadil	June	24	1993	0.00	0.00	T	Sudan	Islamism
Rahman, Omar Abdel	June	24	1993	0.00	0.00	T	Egypt	Islamism
Baz, Rashid Najib	March	01	1994	1.00	3.00	F	Lebanon	Islamism
Elgabrowni, Ibrahim	March	04	1994	0.00	0.00	L	Egypt	Islamism
Thurston, Darren	January	01	1996	0.00	0.00	I	Canada	Left
Saleh, Mohammed	January	18	1996	0.00	0.00	L	Jordan	Islamism
Abu Kamal, Ali Hassan	February	23	1997	1.00	6.00	T	Palestine	Islamism
Paulson, Karen Simon	May	03	1997	0.00	1.00	V	Germany	Separatism
Mezer, Gazi Ibrahim Abu	July	01	1997	0.00	0.00	I	Palestine	Islamism
Rubin, Rebecca	November	30	1997	0.00	0.00	V	Canada	Left
Meskini, Abdelghani	December	01	1999	0.00	0.00	I	Algeria	Islamism
Ressam, Ahmed	December	01	1999	0.00	0.00	I	Algeria	Islamism
Al Ghamdi, Ahmed	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Al Ghamdi, Hamza	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Al Ghamdi, Saeed	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Al Hazmi, Nawaf	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Al Hazmi, Salem	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Al Haznawi, Ahmad	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Al Mihdhar, Khalid	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Al Nami, Ahmed	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Al Omari, Abdul Aziz	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism

Table A1 (continued)

Identified foreign-born persons who attempted or committed terrorism on US soil, 1975–2024

Name of terrorist	Month	Day	Year	Fatalities*	Injuries	Visa upon entry	Country of birth	Ideology
Al Shehhi, Marwan	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	United Arab Emirates	Islamism
Al Shehri, Mohand	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Al Shehri, Wail	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Al Shehri, Waleed	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Al Suqami, Satam	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
al-Qahtani, Mohammed	September	11	2001	0.00	0.00	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Atta, Mohamed	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Egypt	Islamism
Banihammad, Fayez	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	United Arab Emirates	Islamism
Hanjour, Hani	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	F	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Jarrah, Ziad	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Lebanon	Islamism
Moqed, Majed	September	11	2001	156.79	781.16	T	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Moussaoui, Zacarias	September	11	2001	0.00	0.00	V	France	Islamism
al-Marri, Ali Saleh Kahlah	December	01	2001	0.00	0.00	F	Qatar	Islamism
Reid, Richard	December	22	2001	0.00	0.00	V	United Kingdom	Islamism
Mandhai, Imran	February	01	2002	0.00	0.00	L	Pakistan	Islamism
Jokhan, Shueyb Mossa	May	01	2002	0.00	0.00	L	Trinidad and Tobago	Islamism
Hedayet, Hesham Mohamed Ali	July	04	2002	2.00	4.00	T	Egypt	Islamism
Kim, Steve	October	03	2002	0.00	0.00	L	South Korea	Right
Khan, Majid Shoukat	March	28	2003	0.00	0.00	A	Pakistan	Islamism
Faris, Iyman	May	01	2003	0.00	0.00	F	Pakistan	Islamism
Abdi, Nuradin M.	November	28	2003	0.00	0.00	I	Somalia	Islamism
Siraj, Shahawar Matin	January	01	2004	0.00	0.00	A	Pakistan	Islamism
Barot, Dhiren	August	01	2004	0.00	0.00	F	India	Islamism
Shaffi, Qaisar	August	01	2004	0.00	0.00	V	United Kingdom	Islamism
Tarmohamed, Nadeem	August	01	2004	0.00	0.00	V	United Kingdom	Islamism
Aref, Yassin Muhiddin	August	04	2004	0.00	0.00	R	Iraq	Islamism
Hossain, Mohammed Mosharref	August	06	2004	0.00	0.00	L	Bangladesh	Islamism
Samana, Hammad Riaz	August	02	2005	0.00	0.00	L	Pakistan	Islamism
Taheri-azar, Mohammed Reza	March	03	2006	0.00	9.00	L	Iran	Islamism
Ahmed, Syed Haris	March	23	2006	0.00	0.00	L	Pakistan	Islamism
Abraham, Patrick	June	01	2006	0.00	0.00	T	Haiti	Islamism
Duka, Dritan	May	08	2007	0.00	0.00	I	Macedonia	Islamism
Duka, Eljvir	May	08	2007	0.00	0.00	I	Macedonia	Islamism
Duka, Shain	May	08	2007	0.00	0.00	I	Macedonia	Islamism
Shnewer, Mohamad Ibrahim	May	08	2007	0.00	0.00	L	Jordan	Islamism
Tatar, Serdar	May	08	2007	0.00	0.00	L	Turkey	Islamism

Table A1 (continued)

Identified foreign-born persons who attempted or committed terrorism on US soil, 1975–2024

Name of terrorist	Month	Day	Year	Fatalities *	Injuries	Visa upon entry	Country of birth	Ideology
Defreitas, Russell	June	01	2007	0.00	0.00	L	Guyana	Islamism
Mohamed, Ahmed Abdellatif Sherif	June	18	2008	0.00	0.00	F	Egypt	Islamism
Payen, Laguerre	May	20	2009	0.00	0.00	L	Haiti	Islamism
Hamzeh, Samy Mohamed	September	19	2009	0.00	0.00	R	Afghanistan	Islamism
Smadi, Hosam Maher Husein	September	24	2009	0.00	0.00	T	Jordan	Islamism
Abdulmutallab, Umar Farouk	December	25	2009	0.00	1.00	T	Nigeria	Islamism
Ahmedzay, Zarein	January	07	2010	0.00	0.00	R	Afghanistan	Islamism
Medunjanin, Adis	January	07	2010	0.00	0.00	R	Bosnia	Islamism
Shahzad, Faisal	May	01	2010	0.00	0.00	F	Pakistan	Islamism
Hasanoff, Sabirhan	June	30	2010	0.00	0.00	L	China	Islamism
Hassoun, Sami Samir	September	19	2010	0.00	0.00	L	Lebanon	Islamism
Ahmed, Farooque	October	27	2010	0.00	0.00	L	Pakistan	Islamism
Mohamud, Mohamed Osman	November	26	2010	0.00	0.00	R	Somalia	Islamism
Aldawsari, Khalid Ali-M	February	23	2011	0.00	0.00	F	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Ferhani, Ahmed	May	11	2011	0.00	0.00	A	Algeria	Islamism
Mamdouh, Mohamed	May	11	2011	0.00	0.00	L	Morocco	Islamism
Melaku, Yonathan	June	17	2011	0.00	0.00	L	Ethiopia	Islamism
Kodirov, Ulugbek	July	26	2011	0.00	0.00	F	Uzbekistan	Islamism
Arbabsiar, Manssor	October	11	2011	0.00	0.00	L	Iran	Islamism
Sherifi, Hysen	October	13	2011	0.00	0.00	R	Kosovo	Islamism
Pimentel, Jose	November	20	2011	0.00	0.00	L	Dominican Republic	Islamism
Osmakac, Sami	January	07	2012	0.00	0.00	R	Kosovo	Islamism
El Khalifi, Sidi Mohamed Amine	February	17	2012	0.00	0.00	T	Morocco	Islamism
Nafis, Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan	October	17	2012	0.00	0.00	F	Bangladesh	Islamism
Aldosary, Abdullatif Ali	November	30	2012	0.00	0.00	R	Iraq	Unknown/other
Qazi, Raees Alam	November	30	2012	0.00	0.00	L	Pakistan	Islamism
Qazi, Sheheryar Alam	November	30	2012	0.00	0.00	L	Pakistan	Islamism
Tsarnaev, Dzhokhar	April	15	2013	2.50	140.00	A	Kyrgyzstan	Islamism
Tsarnaev, Tamerlan	April	15	2013	2.50	140.00	A	Kyrgyzstan	Islamism
Fathi, El Mehdi Semlali	April	07	2014	0.00	0.00	A	Morocco	Islamism
Rodger, Elliot Oliver Robertson	May	23	2014	6.00	14.00	L	United Kingdom	Right
Mohamud, Abdirahman Sheik	April	01	2015	0.00	0.00	R	Somalia	Islamism
Siddiqui, Asia	April	01	2015	0.00	0.00	L	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Diaz, Miguel Moran	April	02	2015	0.00	0.00	R	Cuba	Islamism
Suarez, Harlem	April	03	2015	0.00	0.00	R	Cuba	Islamism
Abdulazeez, Mohammad Youssef	July	16	2015	5.00	2.00	L	Kuwait	Islamism

Table A1 (continued)

Identified foreign-born persons who attempted or committed terrorism on US soil, 1975–2024

Name of terrorist	Month	Day	Year	Fatalities *	Injuries	Visa upon entry	Country of birth	Ideology
Kurbanov, Fazliddin	August	12	2015	0.00	0.00	R	Uzbekistan	Islamism
Mumuni, Fareed	August	15	2015	0.00	0.00	L	Ghana	Islamism
Said, Mahamed Abukar	October	02	2015	0.00	0.00	L	Ethiopia	Islamism
Malik, Tashfeen	December	02	2015	14.00	17.00	K	Pakistan	Islamism
Elshinawy, Mohamed Yousef	December	14	2015	0.00	0.00	L	Egypt	Islamism
Al Hardan, Omar Faraj Saeed	January	01	2016	0.00	0.00	R	Iraq	Islamism
Barry, Mohamed	February	16	2016	0.00	4.00	L	Guinea	Islamism
Abdulkader, Munir	March	01	2016	0.00	0.00	L	Eritrea	Islamism
Alimehmeti, Sajmir	May	01	2016	0.00	0.00	L	Albania	Islamism
El Bahnasawy, Abdulrahman	May	01	2016	0.00	0.00	V	Kuwait	Islamism
Sandford, Michael Steven	June	18	2016	0.00	0.00	V	United Kingdom	Left
Jalloh, Mohamed Bailor	July	03	2016	0.00	0.00	L	Sierra Leone	Islamism
Mohammad, Yahya Farooq	July	03	2016	0.00	0.00	F	India	Islamism
Adan, Dahir Ahmed	September	20	2016	0.00	10.00	R	Somalia	Islamism
Rahimi, Ahmad Khan	September	20	2016	0.00	33.00	A	Afghanistan	Islamism
Das, Nelash Mohamed	September	21	2016	0.00	0.00	L	Bangladesh	Islamism
Artan, Abdul Razak Ali	November	28	2016	0.00	13.00	A	Somalia	Islamism
Kourani, Ali	June	01	2017	0.00	0.00	L	Lebanon	Islamism
Ftouhi, Amor	June	21	2017	0.00	2.00	V	Tunisia	Islamism
Samson, Emanuel Kidega	September	24	2017	1.00	7.00	R	Sudan	Left
Solano, Vicente Adolfo	October	01	2017	0.00	0.00	T	Honduras	Islamism
Saipov, Sayfullo Habibullaevic	October	31	2017	8.00	11.00	L	Uzbekistan	Islamism
Sheik Mohamud, Abdirahman	November	15	2017	0.00	2.00	L	Somalia	Islamism
Bolatete, Bernardino Gawala	December	01	2017	0.00	0.00	L	Philippines	Anti-specific religion
Ullah, Akayed	December	11	2017	0.00	4.00	L	Bangladesh	Islamism
El-Mofty, Ahmed Amin	December	22	2017	0.00	1.00	L	Egypt	Islamism
Dais, Waheba Issa	June	15	2018	0.00	0.00	L	Palestine	Islamism
Leveille, Jany	August	01	2018	0.00	0.00	T	Haiti	Islamism
Alam, Ashiqul	June	09	2019	0.00	0.00	L	Bangladesh	Islamism
Alowemer, Mustafa Mousab	June	19	2019	0.00	0.00	R	Syria	Islamism
Van Spronsen, Willem	July	13	2019	0.00	0.00	L	Netherlands	Left
Chudhary, Awais	August	30	2019	0.00	0.00	L	Pakistan	Islamism
Saab, Alexei	September	19	2019	0.00	0.00	L	Lebanon	Islamism
Rashid, Salman	November	25	2019	0.00	0.00	L	Bangladesh	Islamism

Table A1 (continued)

Identified foreign-born persons who attempted or committed terrorism on US soil, 1975–2024

Name of terrorist	Month	Day	Year	Fatalities*	Injuries	Visa upon entry	Country of birth	Ideology
Alshamrani, Mohammed Saeed	December	06	2019	3.00	8.00	G	Saudi Arabia	Islamism
Alameti, Fabjan	December	13	2019	0.00	0.00	L	Albania	Islamism
Masood, Muhammad	March	19	2020	0.00	0.00	H-1B	Pakistan	Islamism
Chike-Morah, Ebuka	June	01	2020	0.00	0.00	L	Nigeria	Left
Camovic, Dzenan	June	03	2020	0.00	3.00	T	Bosnia	Islamism
Ferrier, Pascale Cecile Veronique	September	20	2020	0.00	0.00	V	Canada	Left
Lung'aho, Mujera Benjamin	September	30	2020	0.00	0.00	L	Kenya	Left
Ahmed, Mohamed Ibrahim	October	20	2020	0.00	0.00	L	Ethiopia	Islamism
Miah, Khaled	December	01	2020	0.00	0.00	L	Bangladesh	Islamism
Gomez, Luis Manuel Vasquez	December	13	2020	0.00	0.00	L	Dominican Republic	Left
Awad, Khaled	July	06	2021	0.00	0.00	F	Egypt	Islamism
Akram, Malik Faisal	January	31	2022	0.00	0.00	V	United Kingdom	Islamism
Shihab, Shihab Ahmed Shihab	May	24	2022	0.00	0.00	A	Iraq	Islamism
DePape, David	October	28	2022	0.00	1.00	V	Canada	Right
Mehdiyev, Khalid	January	27	2023	0.00	0.00	L	Azerbaijan	Islamism
Roychowdhury, Hridindu Sankar	March	01	2023	0.00	0.00	F	India	Left
Kandula, Sai Varshith	May	22	2023	0.00	0.00	L	India	Right
Ergul, Tibet	June	14	2023	0.00	0.00	F	Turkey	Right
Merchant, Asif Raza	July	12	2024	0.00	0.00	P	Pakistan	Islamism
Pearson, Adam Richard	January	29	2024	0.00	0.00	V	Canada	Islamism
Hnaihen, Hashem Younis Hashem	July	11	2024	0.00	0.00	T	Jordan	Islamism
Tawhedi, Nasir Ahmad	October	07	2024	0.00	0.00	P	Afghanistan	Islamism
Akhi, Afghan Juvenile Name Withheld	October	07	2024	0.00	0.00	L	Afghanistan	Islamism
Abdallahi, Sidi Mohamed	October	28	2024	0.00	1.00	A	Mauritania	Islamism
Shakeri, Farhad	November	08	2024	0.00	0.00	L	Afghanistan	Islamism
Hassan, Abdullah Ezzeldin Taha Mohamed	December	19	2024	0.00	0.00	F	Egypt	Islamism

Notes: A = asylee; F = student on F or M visa; I = illegal; G = A-2 visa; H-1B = H-1B visa; K = K-1 fiancé(e); L = lawful permanent resident; P = parole; R = refugee; T = tourist on B visa; U = unknown; and V = Visa Waiver Program.

*If there are multiple attackers, all casualties are spread evenly across all attackers.

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