Internet Websites and Links for (Counter-)Terrorism Research

by Berto Jongman

Abstract
Since 9/11 the field of (Counter-) Terrorism Studies has expanded exponentially. With the simultaneous expansion of Internet-based resources, it has become almost impossible to maintain an overview of the field – the more so as a variety of sub-fields have emerged, dealing with specific aspects of the phenomenon of terrorism. Any researcher dealing with (counter-)terrorism issues on a regular basis would be aided by a guide of web links directing him or her to areas relevant for particular research needs. However, since the knowledge requirements of researchers differ, there can be no universal list that satisfies all. The following short list is admittedly subjective, serving my individual research needs. I have grouped them in 15 fairly general categories; much more specialised categories could be selected. By visiting these sites and exploring what is available on each of them, the reader might get further ideas as to where to look to satisfy his or her specific needs. Most of these websites have their own list of additional web resources which can also be very useful. In the following, I will introduce each category with some explanatory notes.

General Sites
If you do not know yet where to look for, you should start with general search engines and general sites. I list only half a dozen here. AboutCom provides general information about the history and causes of terrorism, types of terrorism, groups & tactics, US counter-terrorism policy, the global war on terrorism (GWOT - now replaced with the less pretentious term fight against violent extremism), homeland security, human and civil rights and emergency preparedness. There is also a section on books, TV and movies, plus sections called ‘must reads’ and ‘most popular’.

Anti-terrorisme is a Dutch site that brings together web resources in different categories, including terrorism in the Netherlands, foreign intelligence services, Europe and counterterrorism, NATO, weapons of mass destruction, maritime security, cyber terrorism and narco-terrorism. One can expand searches to more general topics like criminology, prisons, newspapers, foreign media, police and private security. There are many similar sites in other languages that categorise resources in such a way.

A good way to start are also major libraries which sometimes offer customer-tailed services. The US Library of Congress maintains so-called Portals to the World, which are electronic resources selected by subject experts. At the time of this writing the terrorism portal is temporarily taken down for a review of its content. The world’s largest library also has a section called Research Guides and Databases. It includes country studies and a global legal information
network that provides contextual background information if one is interested in counter-terrorism legislation for specific countries.

The Terrorism Starting Page brings together web resources related to the topic of aggression. Resources are categorised in groups like research institutes (domestic/foreign), specialists (domestic/foreign), electronic books, special files, an online encyclopaedia on terrorism and scientific journals (domestic/foreign).

- AboutCom: terrorism issues
  [http://terrorism.about.com/](http://terrorism.about.com/)
- Anti-terrorisme
  [http://anti-terrorisme.beginthier.nl](http://anti-terrorisme.beginthier.nl)
- Library of Congress: Portals to the world- terrorism
  [http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/hispanic/terrorism/terrorism.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/hispanic/terrorism/terrorism.html)
- Terrorism Starting Page
  [http://agressie-infobronnen.startpagina.nl/](http://agressie-infobronnen.startpagina.nl/)
- WWW Virtual Library: International Resources
  [http://www2.etown.edu/vl/](http://www2.etown.edu/vl/)
- Wikipedia: terrorism

News Portals

For those concentrating on current developments, news portals can be very useful. I selected just seven but there are many more sites that bring together selections of newspapers, magazines and journal articles. On the World News page one can select a topic or a country and will find related newspaper articles. For terrorism-related issues one generally has to search under “military and”/or “politics”. The Global Security site is a very useful site on security issues broadly defined, including terrorism. One can find there many official documents related to on-going armed conflicts. The focus is on situation reports, military issues, weapons of mass destruction, intelligence and homeland security. For each topic, there is a selection of web resources in the categories: NGOs, news, US government sites, other government sites. Most of the terrorism-related links can be found under Homeland Security; these are grouped in the following categories: policy shops, counterterrorism, transportation security, immigration and borders, bioterrorism, emerging response, civil liberties, extremist groups. Under the topic ‘Intelligence’ there is a whole section on private intelligence.
For current developments on terrorism, I find the British News Now site very helpful. One can narrow the news selection down to current affairs and terrorism. Under the heading “terrorism” one can select topics like AQ [Al-Qaeda], Bin Laden, counter-terrorism, Guantanamo, renditions, suicide bombers and terrorism trials. By clicking on one of these topics, the reader will find a variety of news items from sources in different world regions that have been published in the last 24 hours. One can also select news items on a specific date. The war & terrorism section includes topics like military news (US/UK), British forces, intelligence, terrorism, wars, war crimes, arms trade, cluster bomb ban, private security contractors, torture, world conflicts. This site is very useful to get a quick overview of terrorism-related incidents.

The Silobreaker site features news on global issues (including politics, conflicts & crime, environment and health), technology, science, business, energy and countries. A subscription permits researchers to use software that allows one to scan the content volume on specific topics, to use automatic network analysis on persons and entities as well as to identify hot spots. It also includes a Tweet section, a section on blogs, an audio/video section and a press release section.

Many websites are country-specific. Two examples: if you want Dutch news sources you should access the Villa Media site which contains links to most media sources (newspapers, magazines, journals, radio, TV) in the Netherlands. The Where-to-do-research site has a focus on the United States; it has links to the top 100 US daily newspapers. One can chose specific topics, some of which are terrorism related, e.g. terrorism and counter-terrorism, think tanks, reference & research, politics and history. Each topic has a selection of web resources. More media sources can be found on Arno Reuser’s Repertorium for Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) and the Toddington website with search tools and research resources for on line investigators. The US diplomatic cables published by Wikileaks are currently very much in the news. Cablesearch is an attempt to construct and maintain a user-friendly search engine of already published documents from Wikileaks.

-Alternative News Resources
  http://rinf.com/pages/resources.html

-Cablesearch
  http://cablesearch.org

-European Union

-Global security.org
  http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/?co=C005905

-[ British] News Now-terrorism
  http://www.newsnow.co.uk/h/Current+Affairs/War+&+Terrorism/Terrorism

-Arno Reuser’s Open Source Intelligence Resource Discovery Toolkit
  http://rr.reuser.biz/ShortVersion.html
Terrorism Databases

Terrorist databases can be very useful if one is interested in a specific group, a country or a specific terrorist tactic or target category.[2] There are several sites that plot news items on a world map. An example is the Global Incident Map. It lists incidents related to hazmat [hazardous materials] situations, forest fires, H1N1 pandemic, gang activity, border security issues, presidential threats, terrorism events predictions, drug interdictions, non-terrorist aviation incidents, earth quakes and the Iranian conflict. By clicking on a symbol on the map, one is directed to the original news item. In the free version there is, however, a 24-48 hour time delay while paying subscribers receive breaking news about incidents. There are features to filter the news by incident type, country, city and date.

The Worldwide Incidents Tracking Systems (WITS) of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) is the US government’s authoritative database on terrorist attacks. Users of the WITS database can filter and sort attack data by a broad range of characteristics, browse attack records, and derive statistics on terrorism by country, region or global. The website offers also information on foreign terrorist organisations, terrorism definitions, terrorist exclusion list designees and bomb threat call procedures. It further offers profiles of terrorist organisations and information on terrorists captured and killed. In addition, it presents several indicator lists (radiological incidents, suspicious financial activities, terrorist documents and chemical incidents).

The website of the International Association of Counterterrorism and Security Professionals (IACSP) keeps track of news in the following categories: global security, aviation security, corporate security, cyber security, homeland security, maritime security, law enforcement & intelligence. For each section, news sources are listed. Incidents can also be plotted on a counterterrorism news map. The IACSP website also has a Counterterrorism Solutions Center with a few useful features and produces the magazine CounterTerrorism.
The *RAND Corporation* has maintained a database on terrorist incidents since 1972. Its Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI) database contains information on over 36,000 incidents. Since the MIPT –RAND database was discontinued in March 2008, it has been revised and updated but is not yet fully available to the public. The subscription-based database of the *Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Center* (JTIC) is probably the only one that is up-to-date and not lagging behind months or even years as some other databases in the public domain do.

Incidents can be filtered by country, group, event, fatality number, target, tactic and date. By viewing at current news item a researcher can immediate click on group and country profiles to obtain more contextual information. The website also provides case studies on high profile attacks and offers country briefings. *Jane’s* website has an extensive section on web resources on countries (e.g. Australia, UK, US, New Zealand and Canada) and organisations (e.g. ASEAN, EU, NATO, UN, INTERPOL, OAS and OSCE). It also offers links on groups’ designations as terrorist organisations, government reports and anti-terrorism legislation. *Janes’s* produces a number of products that are very useful for professional researchers, including the Terrorism & Security Monitor, Terrorism Watch report, World Insurgency and Terrorism, Airport review, Country Risk Daily Report, Intelligence Review and the Islamic Affairs Analyst. However, this information comes at a price that goes beyond the budget of most academic researchers.

The *South Asia Terrorism Portal* is maintained by K.P.S. Gill in New Delhi and collects and analyses information on Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. For each country one can find assessment, bibliographies, data sheets, documents, timelines and information on terrorist groups. The datasheets are based on local news sources and are much more detailed and specific than international news sources. India and Pakistan are countries in the top 10 of international terrorism. This website provides very rich and detailed research materials, also offering statistics on fatalities among civilians, security forces and terrorists.

One of the largest databases on terrorism is the *Global Terrorism Database* (GTD) maintained by START of the University of Maryland. It has data on incidents that go back to 1970, now covering over 87,000 discrete incidents, both domestic and international. This publicly available website allows researchers to filter and search the data with the help of several analytical tools. The GTD Data Rivers tool, for instance, allows users to visualize trends in terrorism spanning almost four decades. START plans to continue to expand and enhance GTD in the coming years to ensure that these data remain relevant for trend analyses.

As suicide terrorism has become a characteristic tactic of jihadi terrorism since the early 1980s researchers of the University of Chicago around Robert Pape have developed a publicly available database on suicide attacks for the 1980-2009 period. The *Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism* (CPOST) database allows researchers to filter information on suicide attacks by year, location, group, campaign, target type, weapon and gender.

The most-widely used profiles on terrorist organisations are the ones produced by the US State Department. These are published annually in the *Country Reports on Terrorism*. Many links on
the internet lead to these profiles. These government data are freely available but not as extensive and current as those produced for its subscribers by Jane’s Terrorism and Insurgency Center.

- Global Incident Map
  http://globalincidentmap.com
- Jane’s Terrorism and Insurgency Centre
  http://jtic.janes.com/JDIC/JTIC/home.do
- The Long War Journal
  http://www.longwarjournal.org
- National Counter Terrorism Center: World Wide Incidents Tracking System (WITS)
  http://www.nctc.gov/site/other/wits.html
- Planet Data: The security news network: news map
  http://www.planetdata.net/newsmaps/intelligence.php
- RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents
- South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP)
  http://www.satp.org
- START: Global Terrorism Database
  http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/
- Total Intelligence Solutions: Intel Watch Map
  http://www.totalintel.com/content/intel-watch-map
- University of Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (CPOST): Suicide Terrorism Database
  http://cpost.uchicago.edu/search.php

Terrorism Archives

As the materials on specific terrorist incidents, campaigns, groups and tactics accumulate, archives, both private and public are created to house all the information. I mention only two here:

- National Security Archive, September 11th-George Washington University
  http://www.gwu.edu/~archive/NSAEBB/#911
- The Avalon project of Yale’s Law School
  http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/21st.asp

Terrorist Group Profiles
The monitoring of terrorist groups is a time-consuming and demanding activity. What is available in the public domain is usually incomplete, already dated and often unreliable. While there are several thousands of terrorist groups [3], only a few hundred are well-described. Three websites in this area are:

- Dudley Knox Naval Postgraduate School Library-Terrorist Group Profiles  
- IACPC: group profiles  
  http://www.planetdata.net/ct/terrorgroups.php
- US Department of State: Counterterrorism  
  http://www.state.gov/s/ct/index.htm

**Terrorism Journals/Magazines**

In this section I listed only two quality digital magazines that are available for free. They cover current topics and articles and are written by very knowledgeable experts. There are many more journals and magazines. Researchers may consult the websites of academic publishers like Sage, Wiley, Taylor & Francis or Elseviers – they all provide searchable lists of journals/magazines. The downside is that very often substantial costs (e.g. $25.- per article) are involved for downloading single articles from scholarly journals.

- Combating Terrorism Center at West Point: Sentinel  
  http://ctc.usma.edu/
- Jamestown Foundation: Terrorism Monitor  
  http://www.jamestown.org

**Terrorism Research Institutes/Centres**

In the section on research institutes I have limited myself as a recent issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism* (Vol. IV, No. 5) published a list of one hundred institutes/centres and programs. In addition to more academic institutes, there are many more policy-oriented think tanks, governmental in-house research centres, commercial security firms and NGOs with a research arm; these all engage in terrorism and counter-terrorism research of one sort or another. By visiting just a few institutes and consulting their web links to other sites and resources one can, however, easily feel overwhelmed. It very much depends on one’s research question which institute in which country can help you further. Here I list only two dozens of them.

- Brookings Institution-Project on Terrorism and American Foreign Policy  
  http://www.brookings.org/terrorism/
Center for Biodefense, Law and Public Policy
http://www.ttu.edu/biodefense.
-Center for Defense and International Security Studies (UK)-Terrorism program
http://www.cdiss.org/terror.htm
-Center for Terrorism and Counterterrorism, Leiden University - Campus The Hague http://www.campusdenhaag.leiden.edu/research/
-Center for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, University of St. Andrews (UK)
http://www.st-and.ac.uk/academic/intel/research/cstpv
-Center on Terrorism and Irregular Warfare
-Center for Terrorism Preparedness
http://seem.findlay.edu/PubInfoPages/default.asp
-Council on Foreign Relations
http://www.cfr.org/issue/135/
-Federation of American Scientists (FAS)
http://www.fas.org/terrorism/index.html
Forsvarets forskningsinstitutt (FFI)
[Norwegian Defence Research Establishment]
http://www.ffi.no
-Foundation for Defense of Democracies
http://www.defenddemocracy.org/
-The International Association for Counterterrorism & Security Professionals
http://www.iacsp.com
-The International Center for Terrorism Studies (ICTS)
http://www.potomacinstitute.org/academic/icts.cfm
-International Humanitarian Law Research Initiative
http://ihl.ihlresearch.org/
-The International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, ICD, Herzliya
http://www.ict.org.il
-International Peace Institute (IPI), New York (UN-focused)
www.ipinst.org/terrorism
Global Jihad

Developments related to the Salafist jihadist campaign with its global aspirations to conduct a holy war against alleged infidels and heretics are covered by many websites. I list here only a handful. The *Hudson Institute* specializes in detailed research on specific aspects of global jihad. The Jihadi Websites Monitoring Group of the *ICT* and *SITE* monitor jihadi websites; they are just two well-known organisations that re-publish selections of jihadist propaganda and ideological statements in English translations, accompanied by comments to put these into perspective. There are several good blogs that bring together Islam experts who offer religiously informed comments and perspectives. AIVD, the Dutch domestic intelligence agency and the Netherlands’ National Coordinator on Counterterrorism (NCTb) (see CT-section) produce, on a regular basis, assessments on developments regarding the global jihad. Most of these reports are translated into English and available for free on the respective websites.

-GLOBAL TERROR ALERT

http://www.globalterroralert.com/?co=C005905
Terrorist Financing

The idea that following the money trail will lead from the recipients of donations to the sources that finance terrorism has lead to institutions that focus on hawala and other forms of terrorist financing. Two sites can serve as starters:

- Financial Action Task Force
  http://www.fatf-gafi.org/pages/0,2987,en_32250379_32235720_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

- Financial Crimes Enforcement Network
  http://www.fincen.gov/

Terrorism Experts

This section on terrorism experts contains a handful of sites that bring together terrorism experts. The Counterterrorismblog is a good site of up-to-date information; its archives are very useful. The NEFA Foundation, linked to the events of Nine Eleven 2001, specialises in current
developments and produces research reports on jihadi organisations and terrorist plots in the US and Western Europe. The website has links to legal files on terrorist suspects which makes it a very valuable resource for researchers. Websites of networks of experts often contain useful information on on-going research and conferences. However, often they are not in the public domain. Publicly available are, inter alia:

- Counterterrorism Blog
  http://counterterrorismblog.org/
- NEFA Foundation
  http://www.nefafoundation.org
- Network of European Experts on Terrorism
  http://reet-neet.eu
- Network of Terrorism Research [in German]
  www.netzwerk-terrorismusforschung.de
- World Security Network
  www.worldsecuritynetwork.com

Early Warning

While forecasting in the field of terrorism is, due to the small size of terrorist groups and their clandestine modus operandi, notoriously difficult without specific human intelligence, general trends in the field of terrorism often reflect those of armed conflicts or political crisis situations. Helpful in this regard are the reports of the International Crisis Group which provide early warnings on likely conflict escalations. Nightwatch provides a nightly newsletter that tracks current news and assesses international security developments. An academic project at Kansas University tracks developments in several dozen countries where there is, in their estimate, a likelihood of civil unrest in the coming five years. The model successfully predicted civil unrest in Peru, Ireland, Ecuador, Italy and most recently Tunisia.

Domestic Political Violence Forecasting Model
http://radicalism.milcord.com.blog

International Crisis Group
http://www.crisisgroup.org/

Nightwatch
http://www.kforcegov.com/Services/IS/Nightwatch.aspx
Armed Conflict & Conflict Resolution

Terrorism is often linked to wider armed conflicts at home or abroad. Here are a few websites which offer information on armed conflicts and conflict resolution. The CIRI Human Rights Data Project monitors 15 separate human rights, including the life integrity rights (extra-judicial killings, torture and political imprisonment). The annual indexes for 195 countries produced by CIRI covering the period since 1981 can be used in correlation analysis.

- Center for Systemic Peace
  http://www.systemicpeace.org

CIRI Human Rights Data Project
  http://ciri.binghamton.edu

-Human Security Institute
  http://www.humansecuritygateway.com

-Institute for War & Peace Reporting
  http://iwpr.net/caucasus_index1.html

NATO
  http://natilibguides.info
  http://www.nato.int/libraries

-SIPRI
  http://www.sipri.org/

-Threats Watch
  http://threatswatch.org/

-United States Institute of Peace
  http://www.usip.org/

CBRN Terrorism

Despite the fact that most terrorist groups are, in their modus operandi, quite conservative, using time-tested tactics, there is apprehension that some of them might, with or without the support of rogue regimes, be able to access chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agents and materials. There are many websites on CBRN issues, including these:

Arms Control Association
  http://www.armscontrol.org
Cyber Terrorism

While there is plenty of cyber crime, cyber hacking, cyber espionage and cyber fraud, cyber terrorism in the narrow sense of the word has so far been almost non-existent. However, the term cyber-terrorism’ is often used very loosely and attention to this field, partly because terrorist propaganda and recruitment make use of computer networks, has been rapidly growing.

-Berkman Center for Internet and Society
http://cyber.law.harvard.edu

-The Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT) Counter-Terrorism issues page
http://www.cdt.org/policy/terrorism

-C4I.org
http://www.c4i.org/

-EFF "Censorship & Privacy-Terrorism Hysteria & Militia Fingerprinting
http://www.eff.org/Privacy/terrorism_militias/

-Electronic Privacy Information Center's Counter-Terrorism Proposals
http://www.epic.org/privacy/terrorism/

-Institute for Security, Technology & Society
http://www.ists.dartmouth.edu/

-The Surveillance Studies Network (SNN)
Counter-Terrorism

There are hundreds of websites focusing on countering terrorism. The following is but a brief selection. Most of these have features that refer researchers to more specialized sites.

- International Association for Counter Terrorism and Security Professionals (IACSP)
  http://www.antiterrorism.org/main.html
- Counter-Terrorism-Terrorism and Security Information
  http://www.disastercenter.com/terror.htm
- Counterterrorism: Training & Resources for Law Enforcement
  http://www.counterterrorismtraining.gov/
- Dutch Coordinator for Counterterrorism
  http://english.nctb.nl/
- Dutch Ministry of Interior: Counterterrorism
  http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/terrorismebestrijding
- European Union: fight against organised crime
- FEMA-Responder Knowledge Base
  https://www.rkb.us/
- Homeland Security
  http://www.dhs.gov/files/counterterrorism.shtm

International Security Resources
http://www.internationalsecurityresources.com/
- International Society of Explosives Engineers
  http://www.isee.org/
- International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security
  http://english.safe-democracy.org/keynotes/
- Military Education Research Library Network
  http://merln.ndu.edu/
- National Counterterrorism Center

http://www.surveillance-studies.net/
About the Author: Albert J. Jongman is a senior analyst with the Ministry of Defense, the Netherlands. Prior to this, he was data manager for PIOOM, a human rights monitoring programme at the University of Leiden. He has been responsible for various data collections, including several World Directories of Terrorist Groups and the PIOOM’s World Conflict and Human Rights Maps for which he received the Golden Candle Award from OSS.NET. He has published on armed conflict and political violence, incl. the edited volume Contemporary Genocides (1996).

Notes