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**'Analysis of Low-Tech Terrorism in
Western Democracies: Attacks with
Vehicles, Blades and Incendiary Devices'**

Josiah A. Witherspoon Carleton University, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs

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For more information, contact the Lorne Dawson, Department of Sociology and Legal Studies, University of Waterloo (ldawson@uwaterloo.ca).

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Address correspondence to

Josiah Witherspoon is an M.A. Candidate at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs. He can be reached at: josiahawitherspoon@carleton.ca

'Analysis of Low-Tech Terrorism in Western Democracies: Attacks with Vehicles, Blades and Incendiary Devices'

This study explores the issue of low-tech terrorism in Canada, France, Germany, the United States and the United Kingdom from 2001 through 2017. As a descriptive analysis, this study reveals significant trends, as well as the most common terrorist groups involved in low-tech terrorism, their weapon(s) of choice, target(s) of choice, and how low-tech terrorism differs among the selected countries. Relying primarily on data from the Global Terrorism Database for incidents between 2001 and 2016, this study also explores three specific cases from 2017 that have not yet been added to the Global Terrorism Database or any other respected database. In no way does this paper intend to break new grounds in terrorism research or provide solutions to policy-makers or security services tasked with addressing these issues. Rather, the purpose of this study is to offer important contextual data and points of discussion as western nations move forward in dealing with a form of terrorism that is at times impossible to detect, disrupt and prevent.

Introduction:

Terrorist tactics do not have to be sophisticated in order to be successful. Radicalized individuals within western countries have shown time and time again that they are willing to use simplistic tactics to commit effective acts of terrorism, and that these simpler methods are often much more difficult to detect and prevent. Rather than endeavouring to acquire and disperse a chemical agent, or manufacture a sophisticated explosive device, lone-actors inspired by extremist propaganda and ideology are opting for facile attacks that require nothing more than rudimentary tools. While the majority of these attacks produce few or no fatalities, others, such as the 2016 vehicle-ramming attack (VRA) in Nice, France, have produced over 80 fatalities.

The Issue

For the purpose of this paper, low-tech terrorism (LTT) is defined as the use of rudimentary or crude tools (e.g. vehicles, bladed instruments, incendiary devices) to carry out indiscriminate or targeted acts of violence against non-combatants, property, or infrastructure, for the purpose of achieving an ideological, religious, or socio-political aim. Specifically for this paper, LTT will refer to a terrorist attack or a series of attacks that applies one or more of the following weapon types: melee weapons, incendiary

weapons, or a vehicle. The GTD Codebook provides a definition for each weapon type. *Melee* refers to a weapon that does not involve a projectile (such as a bullet), in which the user and target (people, not property) are in contact with simultaneously, such as blunt or bladed instruments.¹ *Incendiary devices* refers to a weapon capable of catching or causing fire, such as Molotov cocktails, petrol bombs, gasoline, alcohol, or others simplistic acts of arson.² *Vehicle* attacks refer to the use of an automobile in a ramming attack (VRA's), without the incorporation of explosives, such as improvised-explosive devices (IED's).³

The challenge associated with LTT is that while it typically produces a lower bodycount, unsophisticated attacks are less predictable, difficult or impossible to detect and prevent, and are becoming more frequent in select western democratic states.⁴ It is therefore a concern that these countries will continue to experience unpredictable, unsophisticated attacks conducted by homegrown extremists who opt to carry out terrorist activities within the west, rather than traveling to join terrorist groups abroad. It is also a concern that coordinated LTT tactics could become operationally more sophisticated, involving multiple attackers in multiple locations, and employing all three of the weapon types listed above, in order to maximize casualties and to invoke fear and uncertainty within liberal democratic states. An additional challenge pertaining to LTT attacks is in how western liberal democracies react to such events. It is thus important to consider the potential perils of overreacting and under-reacting to this emerging threat. Jennifer Holmes addresses two risks associated with an under-reaction. First, if a democratic government responds too softly it could lose its credibility in being able to provide security to the public. Further, Holmes notes that under-reaction may be interpreted as weakness or intimidation, and could induce additional attacks.⁵ An overreaction may lead to unnecessarily harsh policies or practices, which may in turn outrage the public or springboard populist movements. Second, an overreaction may be capitalized on by the propaganda wings of terrorist groups seeking to justify their violence, or increase their own recruitment.⁶

¹ Global Terrorism Database: Codebook: Inclusion Criteria and Variables (Rep.). (2016). National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). pp. 27-28

² Ibid., 5, 27-28

³ Ibid., 27

⁴ Crabtree, J. (2017, March 24). Low-tech terror attacks like vehicle-ramming look set to rise: Analyst. Retrieved March 30, 2017, from <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/23/low-tech-terror-attacks-like-vehicle-ramming-look-set-to-rise-analyst.html>

⁵ Holmes, Jennifer, S. 2015. 'Developing and Implementing Counterterrorism Policy in a Liberal Democracy' in James J. F. Forest (Editor) Essentials of Counterterrorism (Santa Barbara, CA; Praeger) pp.38

⁶ Ibid., 40.

2001-2016: Data, Trends, Responsible Actors, Ideology

The following section will discuss trends in LTT for each country between 2001-2016 based on GTD data. This will reveal the most common weapon types employed, as well as the responsible actors and ideology associated with the incidents. This will contribute to an overall understanding of precisely who is using low-tech weaponry, what type of weapons are typically employed by each group or actor, and how LTT differs between each selected nation.

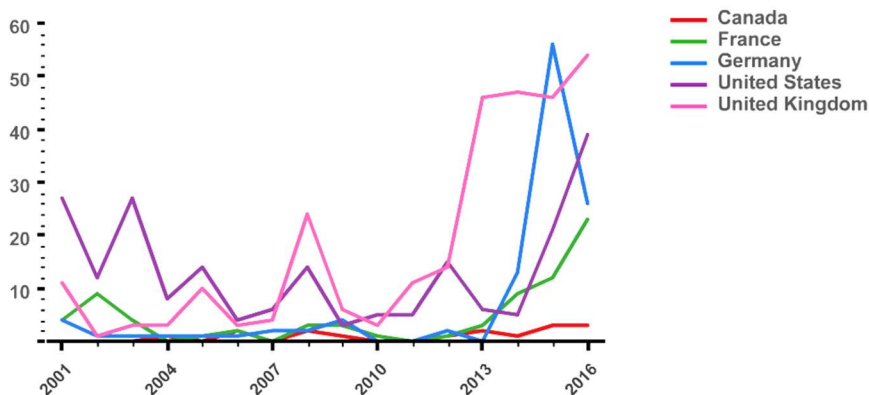


Figure 1 - LTT Incidents, All Countries (2001-2016)⁷

1. LTT in Germany:

Between 2001 and 2013, Germany experienced less than 10 LTT incidents annually. Then in 2013, Germany experienced a surge in LTT, with a high of over 50 attacks between 2014 and 2015. Many perpetrators within this timeframe (2001-2013) are unknown, however one attack in 2008 is suspected to have been conducted by a *Neo-Nazi* group, and another in 2009 by the *Hoodie Wearers*. Between 2013 and 2015, Germany experienced over 60 LTT incidents.⁸ Within this timeframe, the perpetrators include right-wing extremists, Neo-Nazi groups, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), radical anarchists (*‘Conspiracy of Cells of Fire’*), the German Resistance Movement (GRM), and some unaffiliated individual actors (or ‘lone-actors’).⁹ Interestingly, every right-wing extremist and Neo-Nazi attack during this time period employed incendiary weapons. One example of this can be found in August, 2015, when assailants threw an incendiary

⁷ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2016). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

device at a building housing refugees in Salzhemmendorf. No one was killed in the attack. Lastly, it is important to note that the perpetrators responsible for the majority of incidents in Germany between 2001-2016 are unknown, however the majority of LTT attacks in Germany within this timeframe employed incendiary weapons, rather than melee weapons or VRA's. While the attackers have remained unidentified, the majority of LTT attacks carried out during this time period have targeted refugees, refugee shelters, and mosques.¹⁰

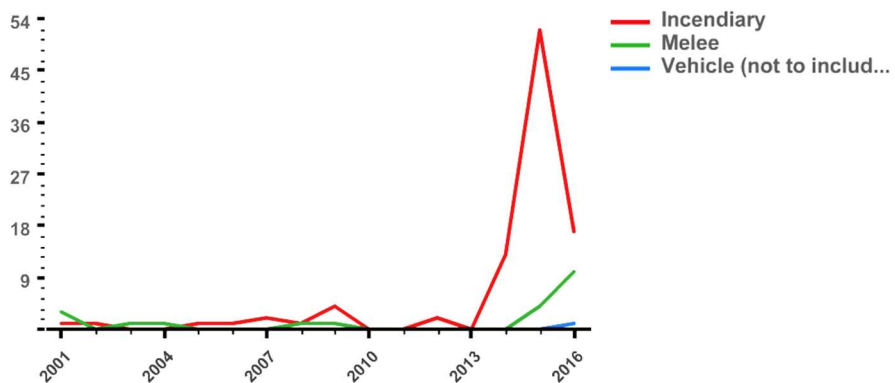


Figure 2 - LTT by Weapon Type, Germany (2001-2016)¹¹

2. LTT in France:

Like Germany, France experienced a rise in LTT following 2013. Between 2013-2015, France endured two attacks from the Jewish Defence League (JDL), two attacks from the ALF, and two attacks from the Breton Liberation Front (BLF).¹² In 2015, France experienced a total of 12 LTT incidents. Many of these 2015 attacks were carried out by unaffiliated individuals holding seemingly different motives. Some of these lone-actor attacks targeted Muslim immigrants (calling the victims “terrorists” prior to attacking them) and Jews, while others were carried out by known Muslim individuals who previously traveled to Turkey, allegedly with intentions of joining the so-called Islamic

¹⁰ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2016). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

¹¹ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2016). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

¹² Ibid.

State (IS).¹³ Also in 2015, known white extremists threw incendiary devices at a mosque in Elne.¹⁴ The seemingly far-right attacks targeting immigrants typically employed incendiary weapons and targeted property, whereas the attacks committed by Muslim individuals targeted private citizens and police officers, and used melee weapons and vehicles.¹⁵ Both incendiary and melee attacks have significantly increased between 2013 and 2016, corresponding with the rise in melee attacks in Germany. Vehicle ramming attacks have also become a more popular tactic since 2013, and are predominantly carried out by jihadist-inspired individuals. It thus appears that far-right terrorism, perhaps driven by anti-immigrant sentiments, as well as radical Islamic terrorism, have increased simultaneously while utilizing different rudimentary tools (i.e. far-right most often use incendiary weapons, and radical Islamists typically use melee weapons or vehicles). Lastly, it is important to note that the 2015 Paris attacks, which killed one-hundred and thirty people, are not included in this analysis given that the weapons used do not fit the criteria for this study.¹⁶

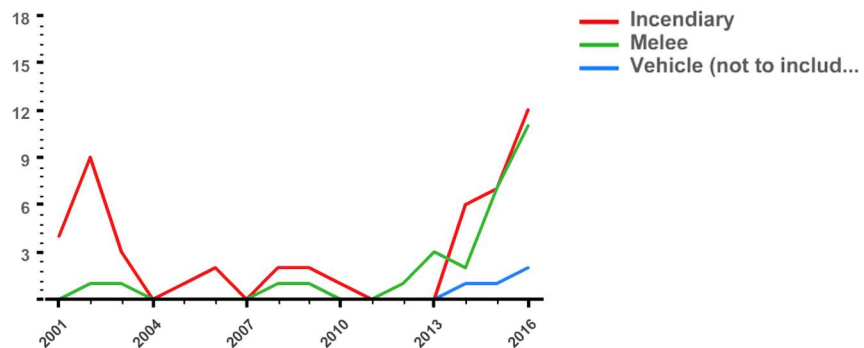


Figure 3 - LTT by Weapon Type, France (2001-2016)¹⁷

3. LTT in the United Kingdom:

¹³ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2016). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

¹⁴ No one was killed in the incident, however property was destroyed.

Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Paris attacks: What happened on the night. (2015, December 09). Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34818994>

¹⁷ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2016). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

Unlike Germany and France, the United Kingdom experienced relatively high levels of LTT before 2013. In 2008, the United Kingdom endured 24 LTT incidents. The majority of these 2008 incidents were carried out by unknown perpetrators who used incendiary devices. However, one attack on 27 September, 2008, was committed by a suspected Islamic extremist, and another by a suspected Irish Republic extremist.¹⁸ Although the number of attacks remained relatively low between 2009-2011, in 2012 the number of LTT incidents in the United Kingdom surged, reaching 47 incidents in 2014.¹⁹ Nearly all of these attacks were carried out using incendiary weapons, however. Despite the high number of LTT attacks, very few resulted in fatalities. The groups responsible for LTT attacks in the United Kingdom between 2012-2015 include: the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), anarchists, dissident republicans, and mutations of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), such as the so-called New Irish Republican Army and the Continuity Irish Republican Army.²⁰ The targets of each group vary, as do the weapon types they employ. While the ELF often targets businesses and property, anarchists often target police and military; however, both groups typically employ incendiary weapons in their attacks. In contrast, unaffiliated attacks carried out by individuals who were inspired by IS, such as Muhaydin Mire in 2015, opt for melee weapons, such as machetes, to carry out their indiscriminate attacks on private citizens.²¹ This is a similar trend that was found in GTD data for LTT incidents in France. Lastly, it can be noted that the majority of attacks between 2012-2016 were conducted by unknown perpetrators and unaffiliated individuals targeting private citizens and property, typically using incendiary devices.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Images of the black IS flag, and of the Paris attack, were found on Mire's mobile phone after the attack.

Gerard, T. (2015, December 08). Leytonstone Tube stabbing accused Muhaydin Mire's family contacted police three weeks before attack regarding 'mental health concerns' Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/leytonstone-tube-stabbing-accused-muhaydin-mires-family-contacted-police-three-weeks-before-attack-a6764276.html>

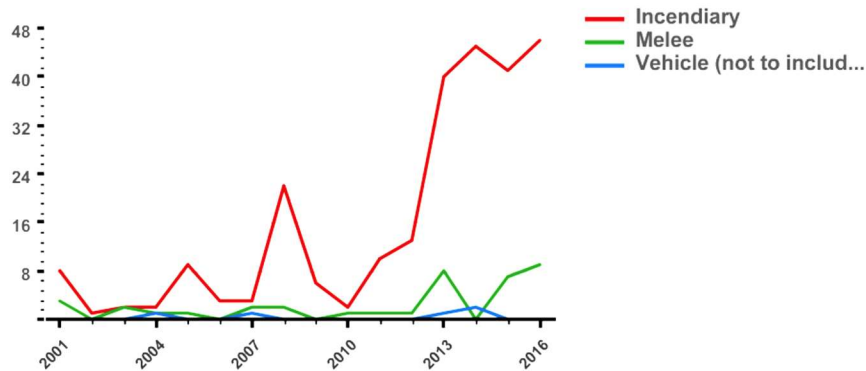


Figure 4 - LTT by Weapon Type, United Kingdom (2001-2016)²²

4. LTT in the United States:

The United States has experienced a fluctuation of LTT between 2001-2016, with relatively high spikes occurring in 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, and between 2015-2016. The majority of attacks within these high incident years involved incendiary weapons. Of the 14 incidents that occurred in 2015, half were committed by the ELF targeting property, businesses (e.g. car dealerships), and private citizens with incendiary devices. Three of the fourteen incidents in 2005 were carried out by anti-abortion activists targeting Planned Parenthood facilities, and one other incendiary incident was carried out by the ALF. The remaining 2005 incidents were carried out by unknown perpetrators whose motivations are unclear. None of the 2005 incidents produced fatalities. Another 14 incidents without fatalities occurred in 2008, of which three were committed by the ALF, two by Neo-Nazi groups (targeting hispanics and mosques), and many others by unknown and unaffiliated individuals.²³ Of the 13 incidents in 2012, 11 were carried out by unaffiliated individuals targeting places of worship, abortion clinics and property.²⁴ Every incident in 2012 used incendiary devices, and 2009 was the only year where more melee attacks occurred than incendiary attacks.²⁵ The United States experienced the highest number of LTT attacks between 2015-2016, with a total of 33 incidents. Seventeen

²² National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2016). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

²³ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2016). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

²⁴ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2016). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

²⁵ Ibid.

of the 21 attacks in 2015 employed incendiary weapons, and the remaining four used melee weapons. Only two of the 21 incidents were committed by known perpetrator groups: the ALF and anarchist extremists.²⁶ However, the majority of attacks carried out by unknown or unaffiliated individuals targeted mosques, property, abortion clinics and businesses. There are some cases where radical Islamic ideology (inspired by IS) appears to have inspired attacks, such as the melee attack on the campus of the University of California in 2015.²⁷ Nonetheless, majority of LTT attacks in 2015 were carried out by far-right individuals holding either anti-immigrant or strong ‘pro-life’ views. In 2015, LTT produced only two fatalities in two separate incidents, however eight people were injured in total.

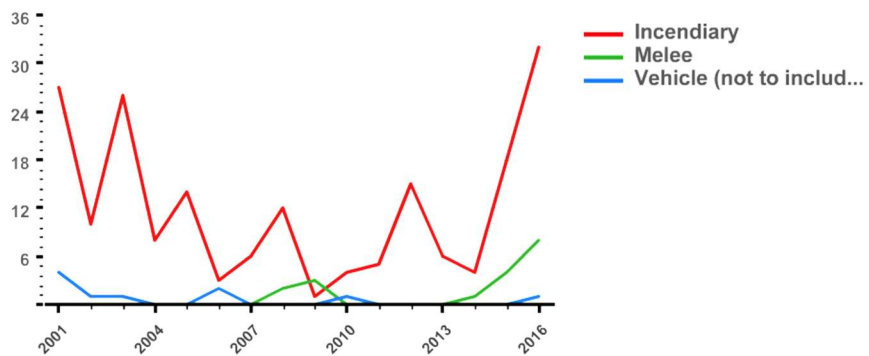


Figure 7 - LTT by Weapon Type, United States (2001-2016)²⁸

5. LTT in Canada:

Of all the countries selected for this study, Canada has experienced the least amount of LTT between 2001-2016, with a total of 14 incidents in the entire 15 year period (including the death of an attacker). Perpetrator groups responsible for LTT within this timeframe include the ELF, the ALF, the Anti-Gentrification Front, and a jihadist-inspired individual, Martin Couture-Rouleau.²⁹ Couture-Rouleau’s attack occurred two days before the 2014 shootings at Parliament Hill in Ottawa, when he used his vehicle to strike

²⁶ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2016). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

²⁷ Pearson, M. (2016, March 18). UC Merced stabbings terror-inspired, FBI says. Retrieved April 02, 2017, from <http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/18/us/university-of-california-merced-stabbings-terror-inspired-fbi/>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Gollom, M., & Lindeman, T. (2014, October 22). What we know about hit-and-run attack driver Martin Couture-Rouleau. Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/who-is-martin-couture-rouleau-1.2807285>

two Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) soldiers in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu city, Quebec. This resulted in the death of one of the CAF soldiers.³⁰ Canada experienced a high of four LTT incidents in 2008, solely comprised of melee attacks. However, recent years show a resurfacing of various LTT tactics beginning in 2013. In 2015, two of the three incidents were carried out by unknown actors targeting Muslims.³¹ The other incident that occurred in 2015 was an incendiary attack carried out by the ALF.³² The ALF was also active in 2013, when members of the group threw an incendiary device at a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) vehicle in Vancouver, British Columbia. They stated that the victim was targeted for owning a fur store.³³

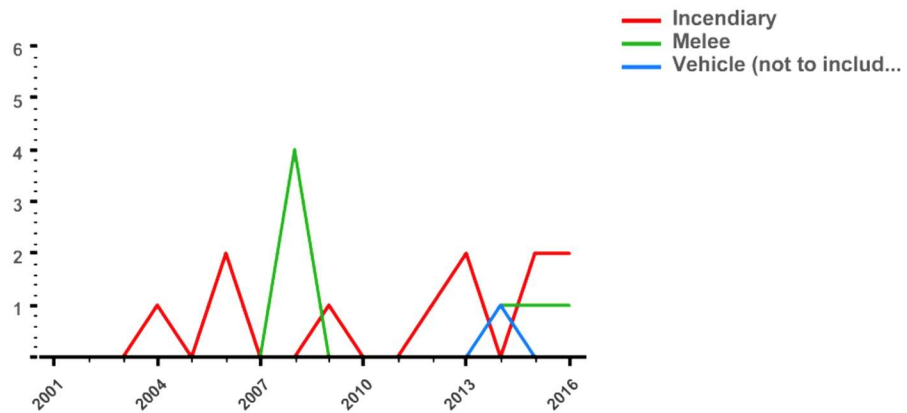


Figure 8 - LTT by Weapon Type, Canada (2001-2016)³⁴

Because 2017 data is not available on the GTD, LTT incidents within the year of 2017 will now be analyzed qualitatively.

Recent Cases: 2017

The table below represents the number of attributable LTT incidents that have occurred within the selected countries (Germany, France, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States) within 2017, at the time of writing.

³⁰ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2016). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2016). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

³⁴ Ibid.

Attack Type	Number of Incidents
Vehicle-Ramming	5
Stabbings	5
Incendiary	0
Vehicle-Ramming + Stabbing Combination	3
Total	13

Table 1 - LTT Incidents by Attack Type, 2017

As demonstrated in the Westminster and London Bridge attacks of 2017, as well as the attack in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, terrorists will seek to use vehicles and bladed weapons in two-phase attacks in order to maximize the number of casualties they produce. The three cases where terrorists used both vehicles and melee weapons to conduct their attacks in 2017 are reported below.

1. Westminster, United Kingdom:

On 22 March, 2017, 52-year old Khalid Masood carried out a vehicle ramming and melee attack in Westminster, which resulted in the deaths of five people and injured 50 others. Masood drove at a high speed onto Westminster Bridge and deliberately swerved his SUV into pedestrians. After crashing into the railings in front of Parliament Yard, Masood fatally stabbed an unarmed police officer in the New Palace Yard. Moments later, Masood was shot and killed by a protection officer close by. Parliament then entered lockdown, and Prime Minister May evacuated the scene.³⁵

Masood was born Adrian Russell Elms, but changed his name after converting to Islam in 2005.³⁶ Like previous cases in Nice, Berlin and Ohio, IS claimed responsibility for the Westminster attack. However Metropolitan Police found no evidence of a direct association to IS or Al-Qaeda. It is likely that Masood was inspired, rather than directed, by IS.³⁷

³⁵ Allen, E., & Henderson, B. (2017, March 22). Westminster attack: Everything we know so far about the events in London. Retrieved March 31, 2017, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/22/westminster-terror-attack-everything-know-far/>

³⁶ 'No evidence' Khalid Masood had links to IS or al-Qaeda. (2017, March 27). Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-39408786>

³⁷ Ibid.

2. London Bridge, United Kingdom

On 3 June, 2017, Khuram Shazad Butt, Rachid Redouane, and Youssef Zagihba deliberately struck pedestrians with a van on the London Bridge. The assailants subsequently exited the vehicle and began stabbing people within the Borough Market. The two-phase attack resulted in a total of eight deaths and 48 injuries, including four unarmed police officers. The three terrorists wore fake explosives, likely to increase panic and deter bystanders from attempting to stop them. They were eventually shot by police.

Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, stated confidently that the individuals were indeed “radical Islamic terrorists”, likely inspired by IS. Butt was previously part of the UK’s *Prevent* program, an initiative that aims to prevent individuals from carrying out terrorist activities. Redouane was not known to police prior to the incident, but was a failed asylum seeker who, according to his wife, was likely radicalized in Morocco.³⁸

3. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

On 30 September, 2017, 30-year old Abdulahi Hasan Sharif deliberately drove a Chevrolet Malibu sedan through a barricade outside of Edmonton’s Commonwealth Stadium, and directly into Mike Chernykr, an on-duty police officer. Before fleeing the scene, Sharif exited the sedan and stabbed Chernykr multiple times while attempting to steal his firearm. An investigation was initiated, and a Daesh flag was reportedly found in the front seat of the sedan. Hours later, around midnight, Sharif was identified at a police checkpoint, now driving a rented U-Haul truck. Sharif sped off, deliberately swerving the U-Haul into pedestrians. The pursuit ended after a tactical police maneuver overturned the U-Haul truck, and Sharif was arrested.³⁹ A total of five people were injured in the two-phase attack, including four pedestrians and one police officer. At the time of writing, no terrorist group has claimed responsibility for the attack. This is perhaps due to fact Sharif’s operation was ineffective, insofar as it did not produce fatalities and he was arrested.⁴⁰

Sharif illegally entered the United States from Mexico on July 12, 2011, and was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The flow of migrants from Africa to South

³⁸ Dearden, Lizzie. “London attack: Rachid Redouane’s wife says she is ‘numbed’ by his actions amid reports of domestic abuse.” *Independent*, 7 June 2017, [ws/uk/home-news/london-attack-rachid-redouane-wife-domestic-abuse-numbed-response-bridge-borough-market-isis-a7778041.html](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/london-attack-rachid-redouane-wife-domestic-abuse-numbed-response-bridge-borough-market-isis-a7778041.html).

³⁹ Caley Ramsay and Emily. “Edmonton terror attacks: Abdulahi Sharif charged with attempted murder.” *Global News*, 2 Oct. 2017, globalnews.ca/news/3780227/edmonton-terror-attacks-abdulahi-sharif-charged-with-attempted-murder/.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

America, and then to North America, is not uncommon.⁴¹ On September 22, 2011, an immigration judge from ICE ordered Sharif to be deported back to his native country, Somalia, but Sharif was released from custody due to the unlikelihood of a speedy removal. It is unclear whether Sharif made an asylum claim in the U.S. during this time.⁴² Sharif then entered Canada in 2012, and was granted refugee status after making a successful asylum claim. Although Sharif had been detained by the ICE in the United States, he was not detained for criminal activity, allowing him to make an asylum claim in Canada successfully without raising any red flags.⁴³

Findings:

This study shows that while LTT is not exclusive to one terrorist group or ideology, different groups appear to have a predilection for specific rudimentary weapons: far-right actors often employ incendiary devices and target symbolic properties; far-left actors often employ incendiary devices and target private property; and attacks attributed to jihadist-inspired individuals tend to target private citizens with vehicles, or bladed weapons. The recent surge in LTT, specifically from jihadist-inspired individuals, may be the result of continuous extremist propaganda calling for Al-Qaeda and IS sympathizers to commit simpler acts of terrorism.⁴⁴ Beginning in 2010, Al-Qaeda encouraged its followers to weaponize vehicles. Its online extremist magazine, *Inspire*, recommended employing pick-ups trucks as “mowing machines” to “mow down the enemies of Allah”.⁴⁵ In 2014, IS spokesman, Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, urged Muslims worldwide to carry out attacks against infidels using “any manner” they could find; he too suggested that would-be attackers could “... run [targets] over with [a] car”.⁴⁶ Another contributing factor to the recent spike in LTT may be the copy-cat effect, whereby successful terrorist attacks that receive praise from terrorist groups abroad are mimicked by other aspiring attackers.

Moving Forward:

⁴¹ News, CBC. “Man charged in Edmonton attacks crossed into U.S. from Mexico, records show.” *CBCnews*, CBC/Radio Canada, 4 Oct. 2017, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-attacks-abdulahi-sharif-hasan-attempted-murder-border-crossing-united-states-1.4330527.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Crabtree, J. (2017, March 24). Low-tech terror attacks like vehicle-ramming look set to rise: Analyst. Retrieved April 1, 2017, from <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/23/low-tech-terror-attacks-like-vehicle-ramming-look-set-to-rise-analyst.html>

⁴⁵ Crabtree, J. (2017, March 24). Low-tech terror attacks like vehicle-ramming look set to rise: Analyst. Retrieved April 1, 2017, from <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/23/low-tech-terror-attacks-like-vehicle-ramming-look-set-to-rise-analyst.html>

⁴⁶ Farmer, B. (2016, July 15). Nice terror attack: Islamic State called on followers to 'run over filthy French' Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/15/nice-terror-attack-islamic-state-called-on-followers-to-run-over/>

Moving forward, it is important to first acknowledge that there is no way to guarantee that every terrorist attack will be prevented, as scholars and professionals have already expressed.⁴⁷ In other words, a “zero-fail environment” is impossible, as it would require Canadians to forfeit some of their most basic civil liberties, such as the right to privacy and free movement.⁴⁸ Furthermore, LTT rarely produces mass casualties. While LTT attacks are likely to continue, one may argue that counterterrorism and anti-terrorism measures have been rather successful in preventing highly sophisticated, mass casualty (above 100 deaths) attacks from occurring. Ultimately, there are limitless potential targets within Canadian society that do not warrant limitless security measures. This raises a difficult, and discomfoting, question: how much terrorism are we, as a society, willing to accept?

It is also important to note that Canada currently has a robust set of agencies who prioritize countering terrorism. These include CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service), the RCMP, the CBSA (Canada Border Services Agency), CSE (Communications Security Establishment), FINTRAC (Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada), INSET (Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams), and local police forces.⁴⁹ The intelligence community within Canada extends beyond the core agencies, and understands the societal impact an act of terrorism would have on Canadian society. These agencies and their counterparts from other countries will continue to work together in preventing terrorist attacks from occurring on Canadian soil.

Third, since many commentators often cry “intelligence failure” any time a terrorist incident occurs, I would argue that it is important for Canadians to instead recognize “intelligence successes” in Canada, of which there are many to choose from. These include the 2006 Toronto 18 plot that was thwarted by security services and law enforcement; the 2013 VIA Rail plot; and the fact that Canada was able to celebrate its 150th birthday safely.

⁴⁷ Gillis, M. (2017, March 26). U.K. attack triggers heightened security on Hill, a 'potentially attractive target' in 2017. Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/u-k-attack-triggers-heightened-security-on-hill-a-potentially-attractive-target-in-2017>

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Mayer, A. (2014, October 27). How Canada keeps track of homegrown radicals. Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/michael-zehaf-bibeau-and-martin-couture-rouleau-how-canada-tracks-homegrown-radicals-1.2807390>

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Berlin lorry attack: What we know. (2016, December 24). Retrieved April 1, 2017, from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38377428>

Bjørge, Tore. 2016. 'Counter-terrorism as crime prevention: a holistic approach' *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 8:1 pp.25-44

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