

TSAS Canadian Incident Database (CIDB) Initial Analysis of Downtown Ottawa and Canadian Military Attacks

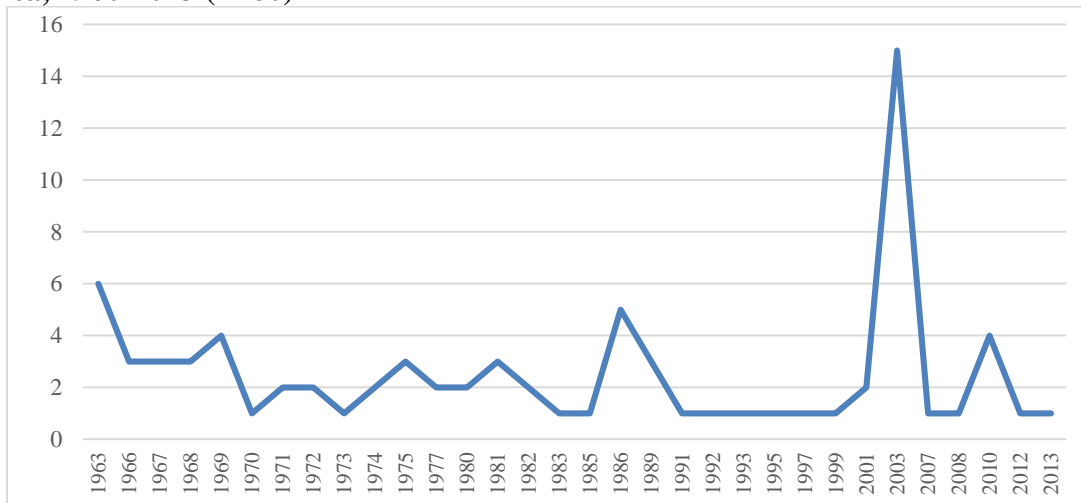
DOWNTOWN OTTAWA

The Canadian Incident Database (CIDB) consists of 80 terrorist and extremist attacks that occurred in Downtown Ottawa from 1963-2013. Of these, the majority of events can be classified as terrorism (89%; n=71), and only a fraction as extremism (11%; n=9). Incidents were primarily against government (41% n=33) and diplomatic (35% n=28) targets, and the majority involved bombings/explosions (29%; n=23), or CBRN attacks (23%; n=18) (The high number of the CBRN incidents may be explained by a series of letters that were sent to Parliament that contained white powder in 2003, and also explains the peak in incidents during this year). Only 3 fatalities resulted across the 80 attacks perpetrated in downtown Ottawa, which includes a bomb that was detonated at the Defence Departments communication centre in 1970 by a separatist group, and the assassination of a Turkish military attaché claimed by the Justice Commandos for the Armenian Genocide in 1982.

One incident of note (may be most closely related to today's October 22nd, 2014 incident in terms of target and approach) occurred on May 20th, 1980 and involved the stabbing of a Canadian Armed Forces Colonel near National Defence Headquarters by a Quebec man. The attack occurred on the day of the Quebec sovereignty-association referendum, and the attacker claimed that he wanted publicity for his view that the Quebec language law making French the province's official language was discriminatory. He said he wanted to attack Prime Minister Trudeau, but was unable to do so; failing this, he "decided to become a terrorist and attack the military leadership that morally represents the policies of the federal Government."

Of the attacks where the ideological motivation was disclosed (n=31), the majority were separatist (n=9), followed by leftist (n=8), rightist (n=7), religious (n=3), environmentalist (n=2) and supremacist (n=2).

Figure 1: Frequency of Terrorist and Extremist Attacks in the Downtown Ottawa Area, 1960-2013 (n=80)



PARLIAMENT ATTACKS

Of the 80 attacks in downtown Ottawa, 21 (26%) targeted the Parliament buildings. The majority of these cases (n=15) involved a series of letters that were sent to Parliament over the course of 2003 that contained white powder. The other six are described below, and involved 3 bombings, or attempted bombings/hoaxes (n=2), the assault of the Soviet Premier, a man who drove up to the Parliament buildings, and a demonstration turned violent between right-wing extremists and anti-racism protestors:

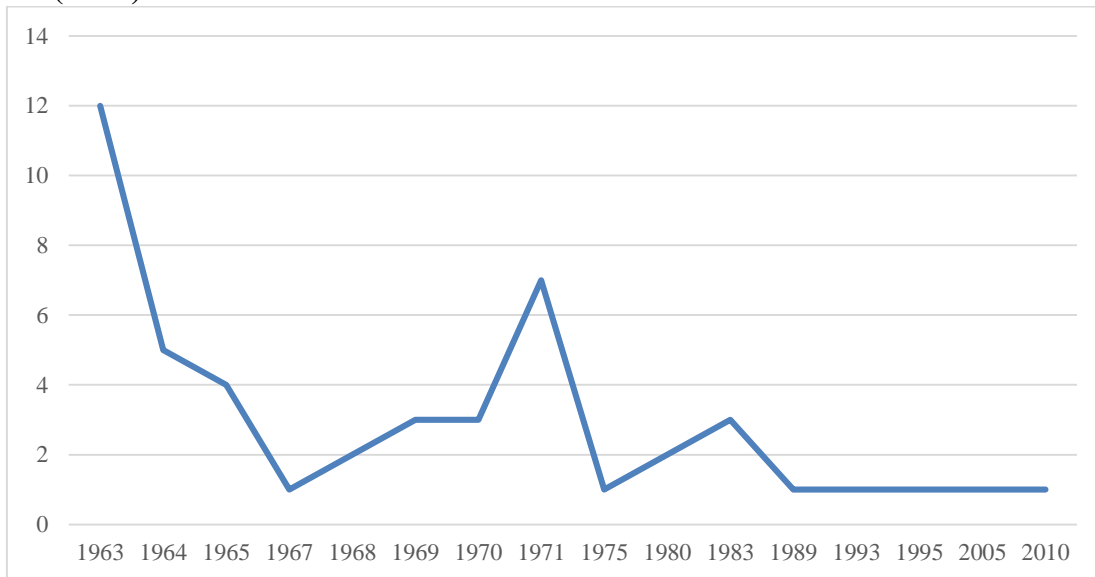
Table 1: Attacks Targeting the Parliament Building (excluding the 15 letters mailed to Parliament)

YY-MM-DD	Incident Description
1966-02-24	A radio station was told by an anonymous caller that a bomb was timed to go off at 8:15 a.m., in the Senate area of the Parliament Buildings. The area was closed for a police search but no bomb was found.
1966-05-18	The premature explosion of a bomb in a House of Commons washroom at about 2:55 p.m. killed the would-be bomber. The victim, a resident of Toronto, wanted to make a speech before the Commons demanding that Members of Parliament pay less attention to partisan interests and more to those of ordinary working people, and was refused permission, as a result of which he apparently planned to throw the bomb from the gallery into the chamber. A search of his Toronto room produced six more dynamite sticks, two crude bombs, and several notebooks accusing parliamentarians of being rich and greedy. He had apparently calculated that he had two and a half minutes between lighting the fuse and the bomb's detonation during which to escape.
1971-10-18	Gaza Matrai, a member of the Canadian Hungarian Freedom Fighters association assaulted Soviet Premier Aleksy Kosygin in Ottawa on Parliament Hill. Kosygin was ruffled up but not hurt. Matrai was arrested. He was found guilty of common assault. Apparently 30 Burkers had attended the demonstration.
1981-06-11	A man was arrested in Ottawa after police received a tip-off. He was carrying bomb components and was planning to detonate them in the House of Commons to express his anger at the Prime Minister and to save the country (the Constitution debate was underway). He had earlier reconnoitered the House and returned to Toronto to assemble the bomb. He was subsequently ordered to be held indefinitely in a psychiatric institution.
1993-05-29	During a violent clash between right-wing extremists and anti-racism protestors at Parliament Hill in Ottawa, at least one of the right-wing extremists used a chain while assaulting a protestor. The right-wing extremists had been attending a function organized by the Heritage Front, including a planned concert by the white supremacist band Rahowa. Several of the right-wing extremists were convicted of assault, including George Burdi, leader of Rahowa.
1997-02-07	A deranged man screaming "devil worshipers" drove a vehicle up several flights of stairs to the front door of the Parliament building, just missing a maintenance worker. He ran into the lobby of Parliament, then battled with 30 officers for several minutes before being overpowered.

CANADIAN MILITARY TARGETS

From 1960-2013, there have been 48 terrorist incidents that have targeted military facilities within Canada. All of these have been terrorism-related and six of which were hoaxes. The majority of Canadian military incidents have been bombing/explosions (38%; n=18) and facility/infrastructure attacks (33%; n=16). Only 4 fatalities have resulted from all these attacks, and have primarily been perpetrated by separatist groups (71%; n=34). Reflecting this, the majority of incidents occurred in Quebec (81%; n=39), followed by Ontario (17%; n=8) and one incident in Alberta. Attacks peaked in 1963 (n=12) and 1971 (n=7). Explaining the 1971 peak were a series of attacks that occurred in Montreal against armouries, an army recruiting center and Royal Canadian Air Force 11th Technical Services Unit. These attacks primarily involved explosives/bombs/dynamite (n=7) or incendiaries (n=5). In 1971, the peak in attacks primarily involved incendiaries (n=3), or explosives/bombings/dynamite (n=3), with six of the seven incidents occurring in Montreal.

Figure 1: Frequency of Terrorist Attacks against Military Targets in Canada, 1960-2013 (n=48)



For more information about the Canadian Incident Database or TSAS, please visit www.tsas.ca or contact James Ellis (james.ellis@ubc.ca) or Vicky Baker (vicky.baker@ubc.ca).