The Case of State Terrorism, Part II, Terror Threats & Trends – Policy Responses to Changes in Terror Tactics

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Recall: Terrorism is a Political Act

- A weapon of psychological warfare
  for political purposes

- Recall the USG definition (helpful, but not definitive for our purposes)

- "...premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience."

  » Title 22 of USC, Sec. 2656f(d)

Terrorism as Politics

- Designed to create extreme fear & anxiety in a target group larger than the immediate victims
  - With the purpose of coercing the large target group into meeting some political demand
  - Use "extra-normal" violence in a symbolic act
  - Specifc victims has no particular significance to terrorist

Research in the Field: Terrorism is _Not_ Irrational

- Research in the field argues, _in general_, that terrorism is not irrational.

- Terrorism has its own logic that links:
  - —Goals
  - —Objectives
  - —Strategy

  - —Can be state-centered or focused; and
  - —Can be sub-national; and
  - —"Quasi-national (-istic)

Political Goals of Terrorism

- Political Goals:
  - To create a sense of vulnerability in larger target population
  - To publicize terrorists' plight; gain recognition
  - To embolden their allies and supporters; gain support
    - Provoke adversary into an inappropriate violent reaction
    - Demonstrate the vulnerability & weakness of their adversary
  - To push adversary into self-constraining acts
    - Martial law
    - Intentional, & unintentional attacks
  - To force policy change by adversary via public pressure
   - Turn public wrath against authorities (why are we vulnerable?)

"Traditional" Terrorism

- Terrorists' concern for legitimacy
  - ➔moderated strategy of violence
- Violence calibrated in relation to political objectives
  - Leaves future possibility for negotiation & political settlement
    - PLO & Israel (until 2001)
  - Excessive violence reduces legitimacy & claims for support
- Terrorists *always* claim credit for their acts
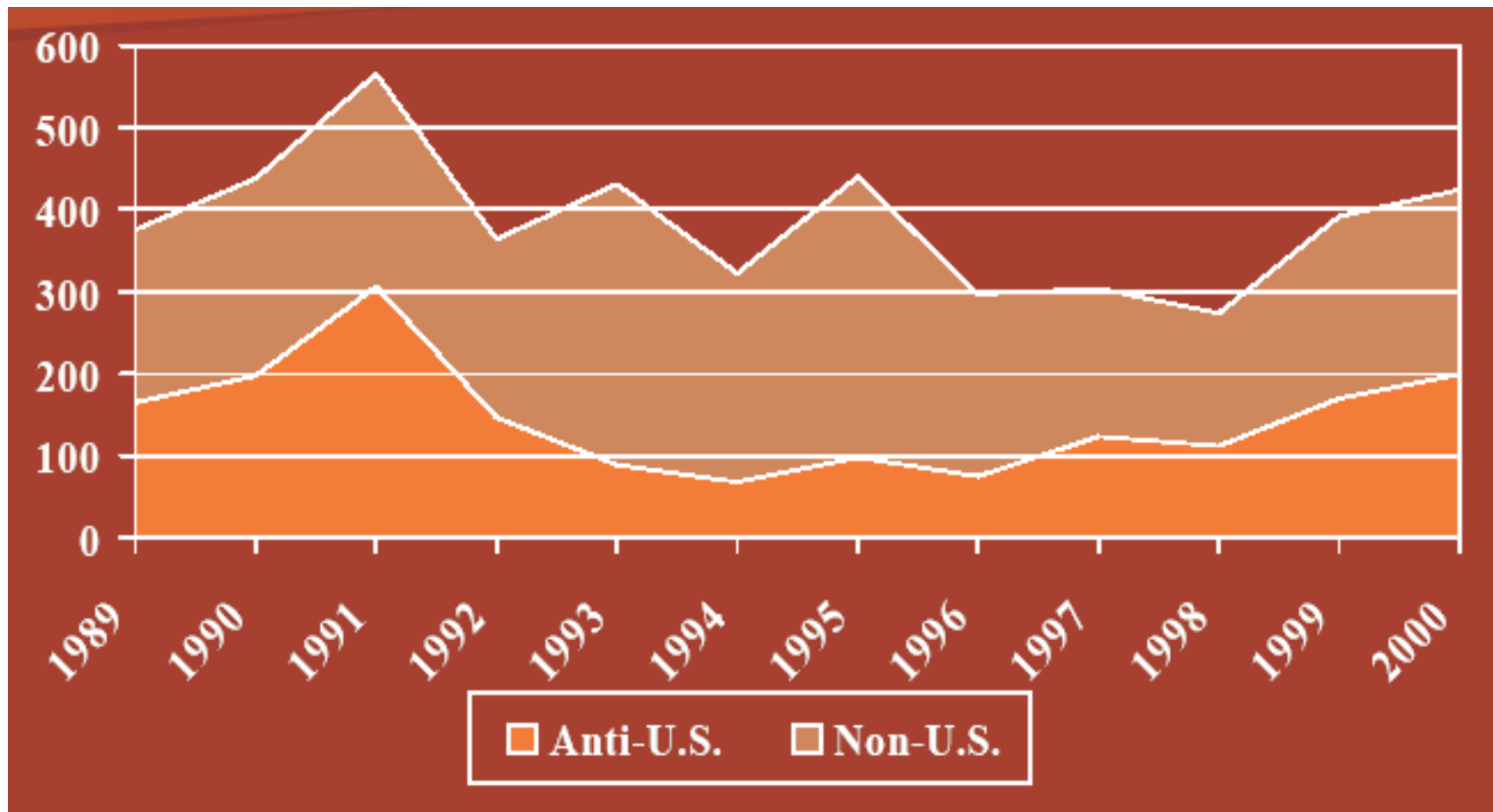
"Traditional" Terrorism

- General findings from terrorism "data" and "databases:"
- <10% Terrorists Caught or killed
  - <50% Caught went to jail
    - ∴ low personal risk
- Origins & Actions are usually nation-based

- Let's look at "Terrorism By The Numbers"

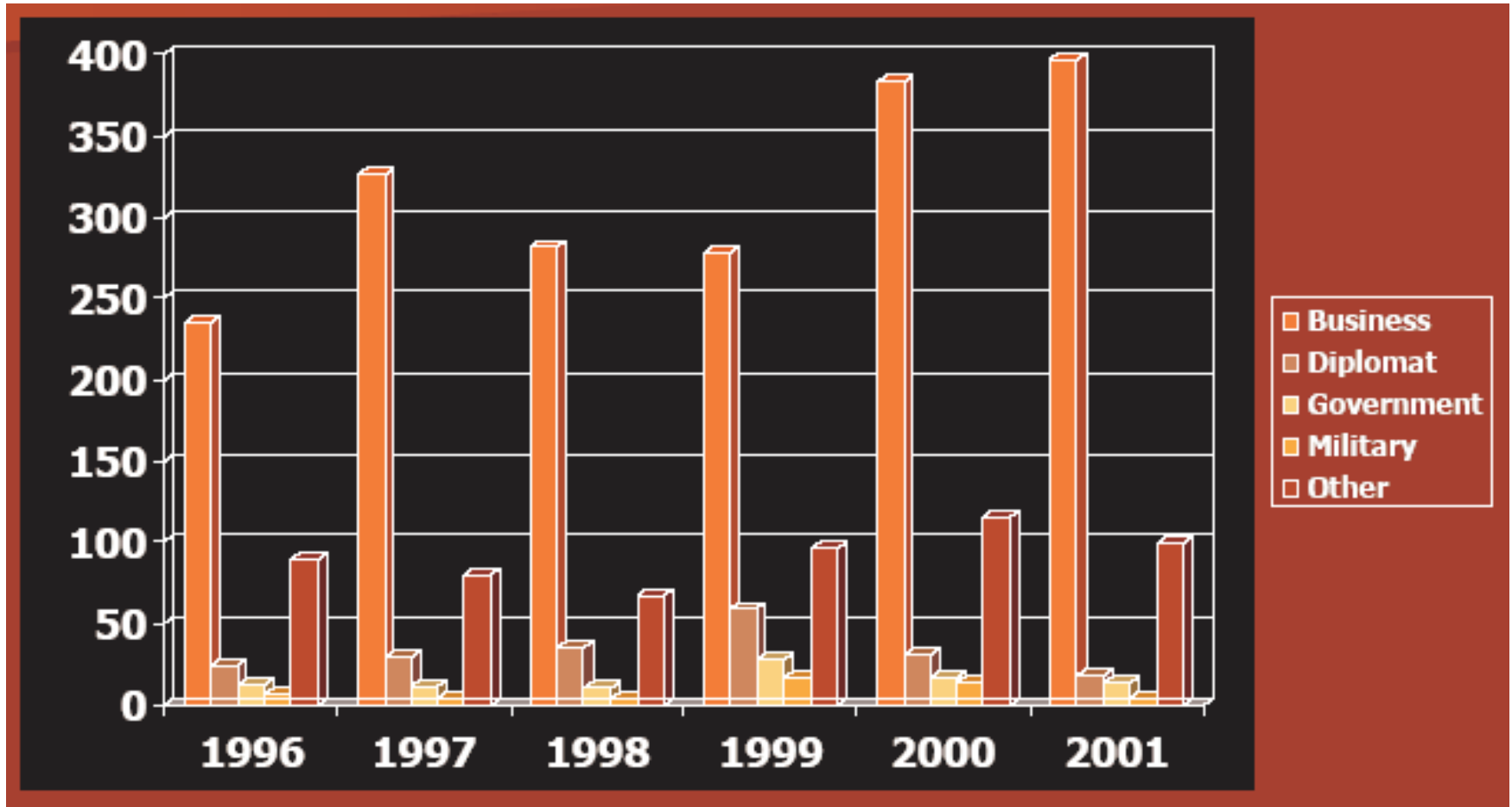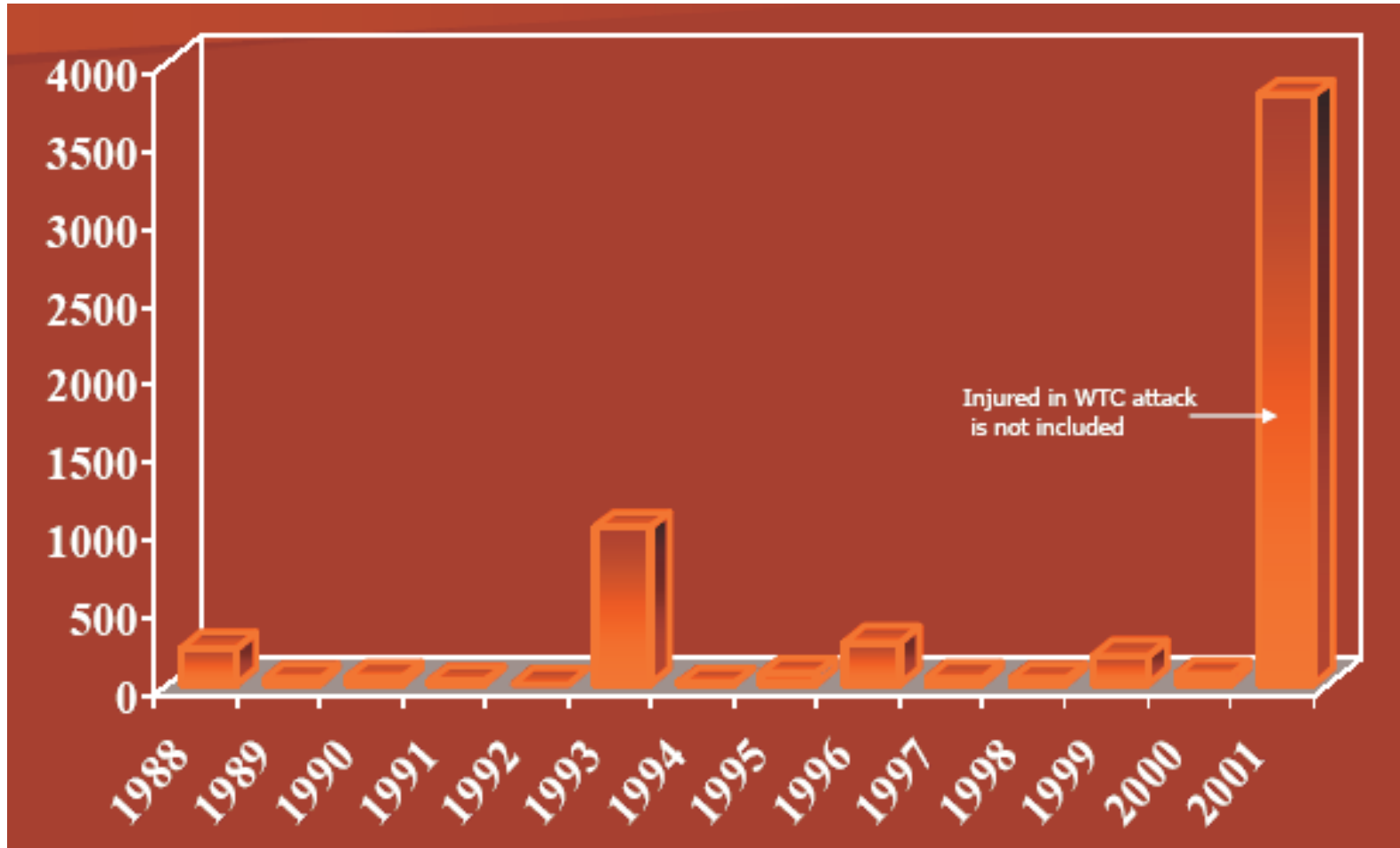# International Terrorism; USG DoS Data of Incidents & Casualties
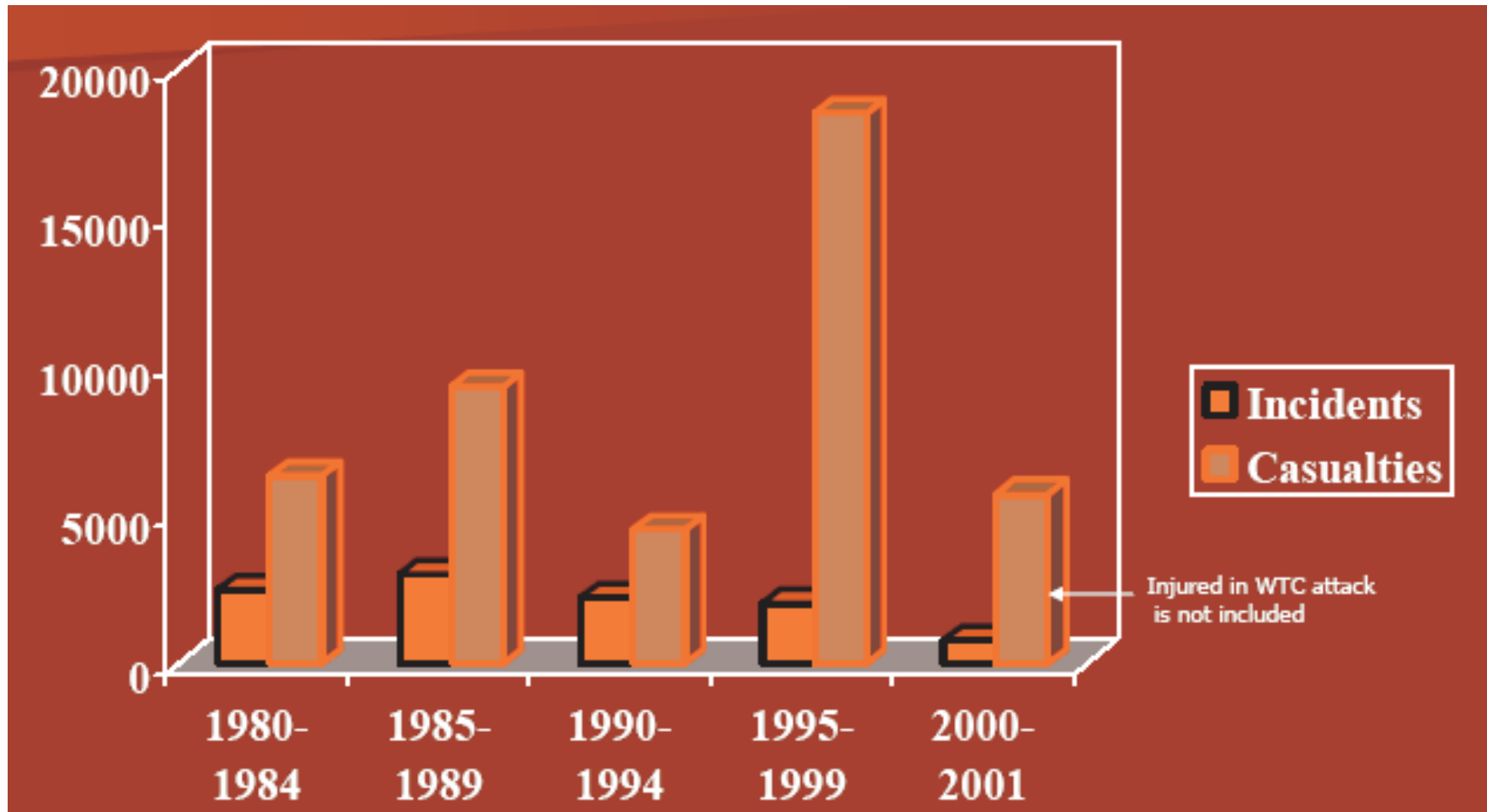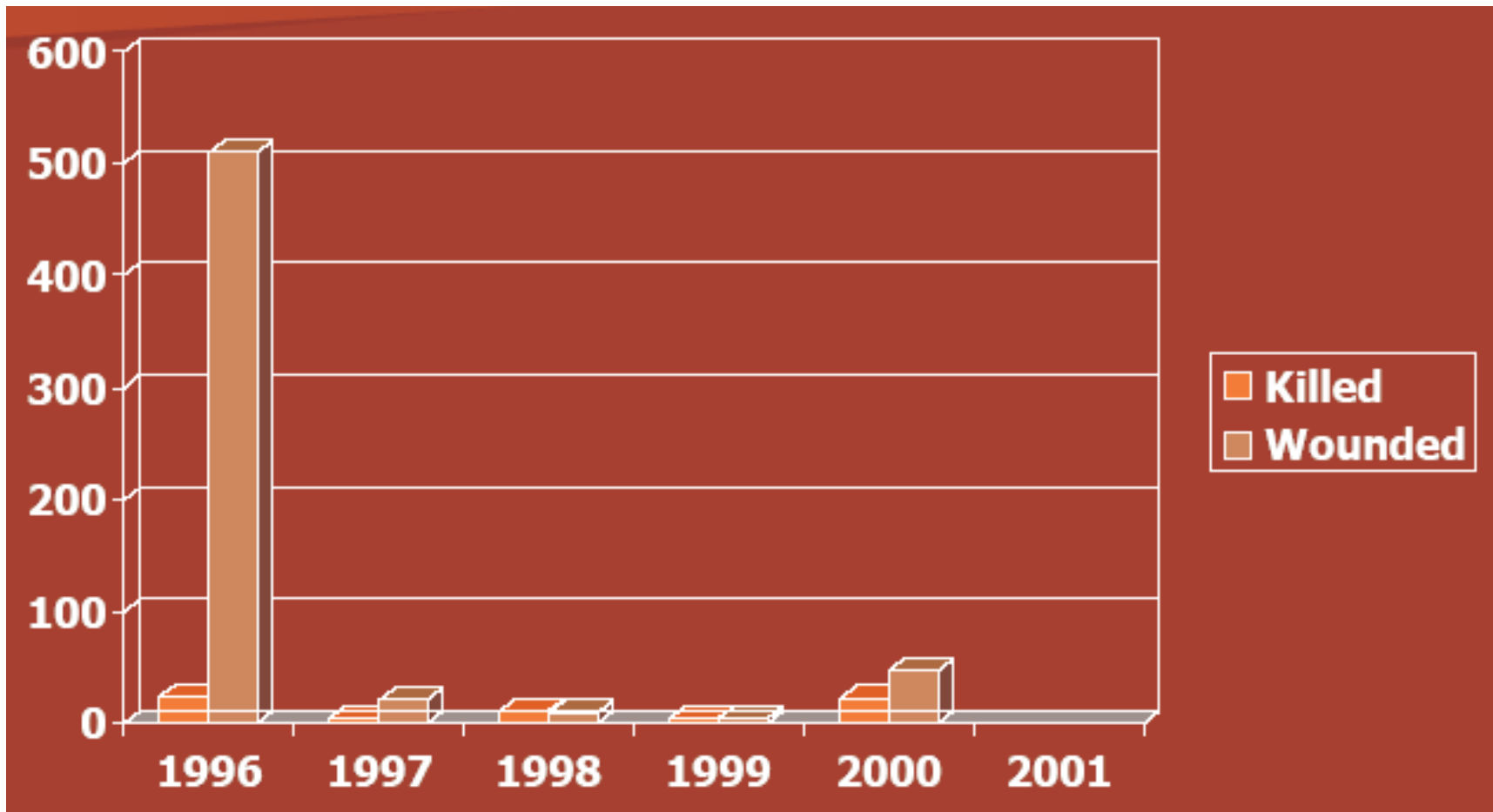
Terrorist Incidents, cont'd

Type of Facilities Attacked in International Terrorist Incidents

Casualties in Anti-U.S. Attacks

U.S. Citizen Casualties in International Terrorist Attacks

Major Anti-U.S. Terrorist Incidents
U.S. Casualties

	Year	Killed	Wounded
U.S. Embassy & Marine Barracks	1983	305	110
Pan Am 103	1988	189	-
World Trade Center	1993	6	1000
Khobar	1996	19	500 (U.S. & others)
Nairobi & Dar es Salaam	1998	12	11; 5000 (non-US)
USS Cole	2000	17	39
WTC & Pentagon	2001	3350	?

Anti-U.S. Terrorism, Types of Attacks, USG DoS Data
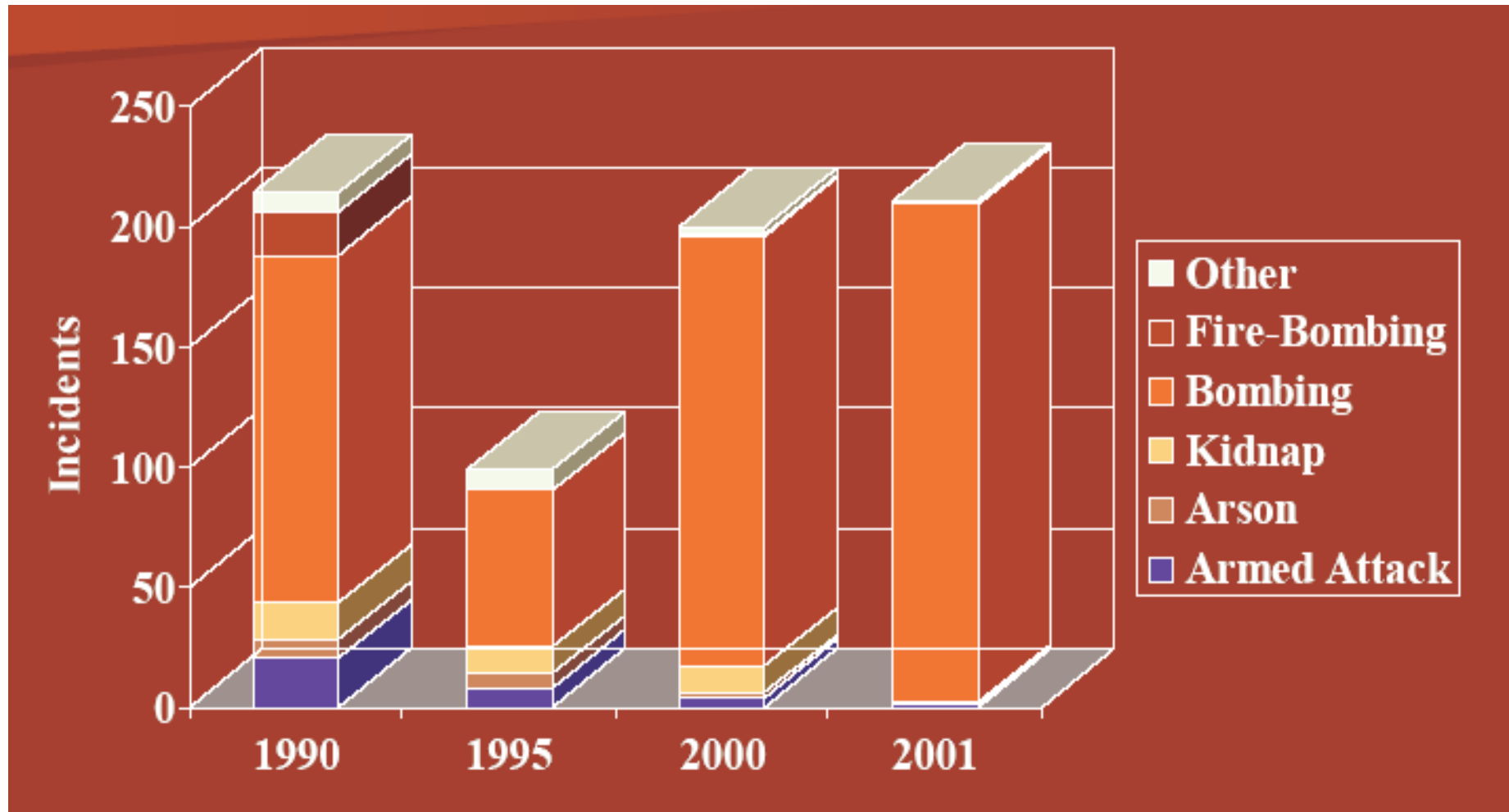
Anti-U.S. Terrorism
Regional Patterns
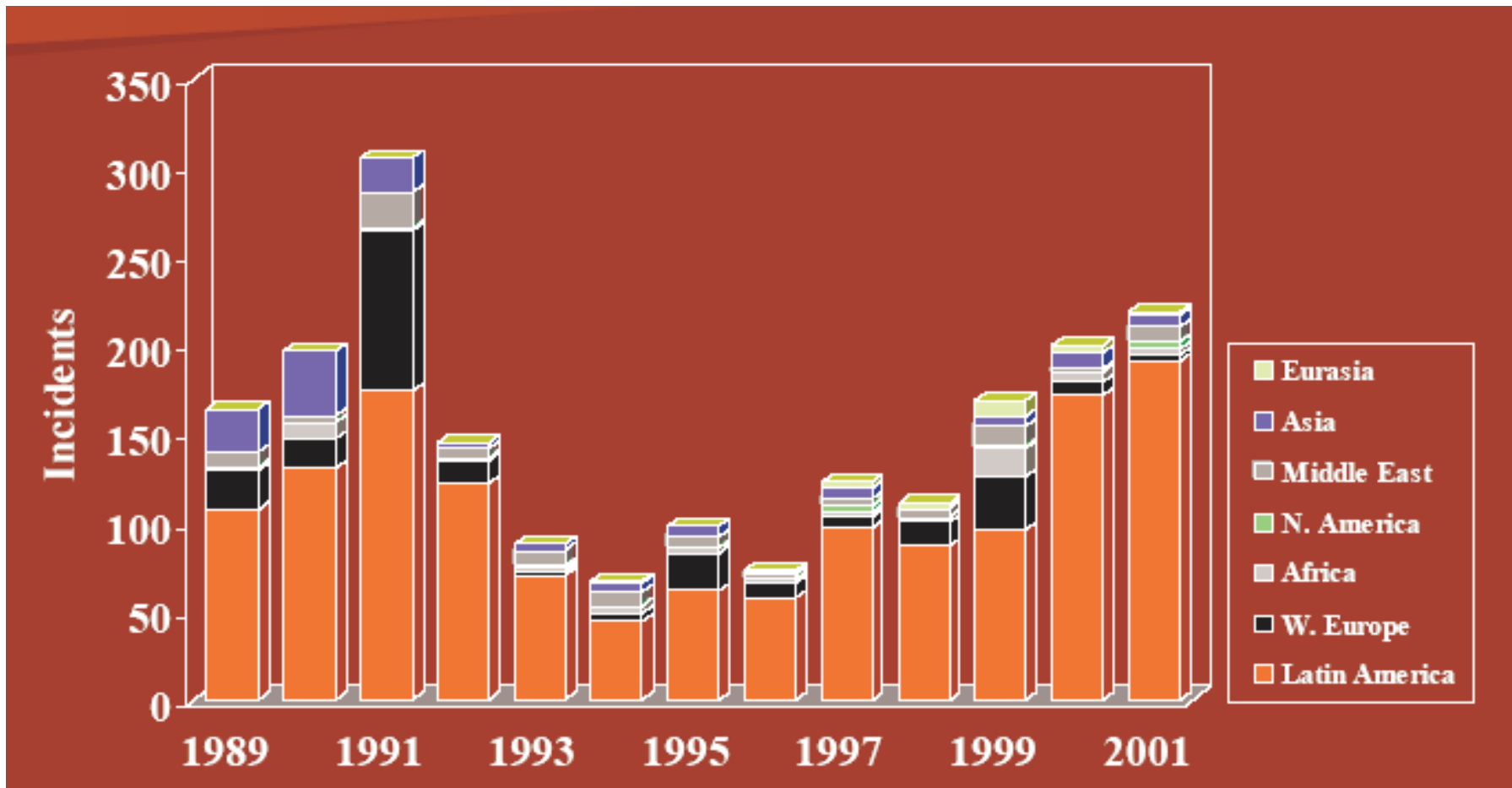
States Sponsoring Terrorism <2001

- Iran
- Iraq
- Syria
- Sudan
- Libya
- North Korea
- Cuba

A Question Re-Appears Based on This Data: Are We in a "New" Era of Terrorism?

- Religion-based
  - Self legitimacy ➔ no need for restraint
  - Sense of superiority ➔ no need for restraint
  - Personal risk unimportant; sacred mission

- Greater Violence ➔ Greater "Good"
  - death of victims reduces number of non-believers
  - 1995: 25% of terrorist attacks religion-based
    - Accounting for 60% of all fatalities [Simon & Benjamin (2000)]

- Claiming credit for specific acts less important
  - political message is vulnerability & destruction of adversary

"New" Terrorism: Sub-State Δ & Impacts?

- Transnational
- Better technology & means for terror effects
  - communications
  - financial
  - weaponry & explosives
    - WMDs?

- Greater vulnerability of Modern Urban Technological societies
  - Fragile, yet complex systems
  - Communications ↑
  - Energy (electricity)
  - Transport (food, commodities, people)
  - Financial flows

Modern Terrorism, State & Sub-State Impacts: "The Four Waves" Thesis

- Put forward by Rapoport (*Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy*, 2004) who argues that:
  - Key catalyzing events signal a shift, uptick in terror behavior & orientations;
  - Terror activity, thus, has had historic ebbs and flows, as part of a broader "ocean" of movements signaling a struggle among independence movements, calls for colonial ties to end, etc.;
  - The level of activity for insurgent & guerrilla efforts mark this rise and fall of activity;
  - International in scope in terms of trend activities.

Modern Terrorism: "The Fifth Wave, New Tribalism" Thesis

- Argument here is that:
  - Many movements do not fit Rapoport's "wave" thesis;
  - There is, recently, a "new tribalism" movement where common calls and bonds, across insurgent actors, delineates how groups have allied & partner against a common enemy.
  - Recognizes a disillusionment with prevailing int'l orgs. & support networks, including NGOs.
  - Radicalization is the norm, & this norm is local, intense, and seeks in one generation, broad change in the nature of relations among nation-states & NSAs.
  - See Jeffrey Kaplan (2007), "The Fifth Wave: The New Tribalism" in *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19:545-570, 2007.