POLS 429: International Terrorism
Lecture 22 (03.06.2020):
The Political effects of Terrorism Vol. 2

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Overview

Review

WHAT WE COVERED LAST MEETING?

- Puzzles: does terrorism increase around elections? how does it impact voting behavior?
- The link between elections and increase in terror attacks.
- Terrorism and voter preferences (Israel) – shift electorate to right.
- Evidence of valence theory: Turkey, Israel.
- Spain and retrospective voting.

Questions??

Terrorism: Political effects

- The relationships between terrorism and political outcomes, for example elections.

- Puzzle 1: The **threat** of terrorism attacks and electoral behavior (voter preferences).

- Puzzle 2: Terrorism and voter turnout.

- Puzzle 3: Duration and survival of governments/leaders.

Elections and Terrorism

- The effects of **direct harm** of terrorism on the voting preferences of public.
- Substantial differences between those that were directly attacked and those who did not.

Getmansky and Zeitzoff (2014)

- Contributions:
  1. Terrorism and political preferences: the effects of **being threatened** by terrorism, not just directly casualty.
  2. Another method of terrorism: rocket launching, a more random method with respect to targeting.

Elections and Terrorism

Getmansky and Zeitzoff (2014)

- Why use rocket launching?

- Concerns of strategic targeting of specific population:
    1. A function of missile technology (range).
    2. Perpetrators are constrained to their location (Gaza strip).

- Terror group and **selection effects**: random casualties.

Quick review · · · · · · · · · · · Introduction · · · · · · · · · · · Political Effects · · · · · · · · · · · Extra Material

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Elections and Terrorism

THE THREAT OF ROCKET LAUNCHING

- First use: 2001; Intensified in 2005: ▸ MissileTotal
    1. Israel disengagement from the Gaza strip.
    2. Develop new and improved rockets.
    3. Total (2001-2019): over 12,000 rockets, 6500 mortars.

- Indirect costs: Psychological
    1. 2012: PTSD in 43% of 7th and 8th graders.
    2. Higher propensity of violence (children).
    3. Higher degrees of anxiety and depression (adults).

- Indirect costs: Economic
    1. Fiscal pressures on local municipalities.
    2. Closer of business and schools when threat increases.

Elections and Terrorism

THE THREAT OF ROCKET LAUNCHING

- Early warning system: activates a siren in all targeted localities. ▸ AlarmZones (Alarm in Sderot)

- "Iron Dome" missile defense system:
  - Intercepts rockets in varying ranges.
  - Stationed in all areas at risk and can be moved contingent on threat. (The Iron Dome)

- 2012: first time rockets target Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

- Casualties (2001-2019): 72 dead, 1971 injured.

- Using range emphasizes the effects of threat of being a target and not directly harmed by terrorism. ▸ RangeThreat

Elections and Terrorism

Getmansky and Zeitzoff (2014)

- How proximity to the threat impact voting (support for right wing parties).
- The study: distance between localities and the Gaza strip (rockets range).
- Results: voters under threat (in the range of missiles), are more likely to support right wing parties (especially nationalist parties).
- The effect (0.2-0.6%) translates to 2-7 seats in the Israeli parliament.

Elections and Terrorism

Getmansky and Zeitzoff (2014)

- Incumbent:
    1. Right-wing: no significant change.
    2. Left-wing: increase support for right-wing parties.
- Right-wing incumbent not punished for failure to address the threat and its expansion.

IMPLICATIONS

1. Why conflicts endure? Terrorism → support for parties that are less likely to bargain and make concessions.

2. The inefficacy of terrorism: failure to mobilize public to pressure government to grant concessions.

Terrorism and Electoral Behavior

Voter Turnout (Robbins et al. 2013)

- Public fear $\rightarrow$ terrorism is salient.

- Increased propensity to vote. Why?

- Emotions: fear and anxiety, interest in politics and invest in process (amplified by media).

- "Ensure" the "right" and most competent candidate is elected to address the national security threat.

- Negative emotions: scrutiny of the political environment and processes.

Terrorism and Electoral Behavior

Voter Turnout (Robbins et al. 2013)

- Using multiple terror databases (greater geographic and conceptual coverage).

- Voter turnout: the percentage of eligible voters who actually voted in legislative elections between 1975-2007.

- Terror incidents 1 year before elections.

- Results: increase turnout by about 0.2%.

- The effect is enhanced when terror attacks are more lethal.

Terrorism and Democratic Government

Duration and Survival of Governments

- How terrorism affects government survival?
- Rising security threats $\rightarrow$ punish incumbent government (retrospective voting).
- Survival and duration: do terror attacks and casualties "shorten" the duration of government staying in power?

Terrorism and Democratic Government

Duration and Survival of Governments (Williams et al. 2013)

- The likelihood of terrorism leading to premature termination of government control.
- Government survival $\rightarrow$ coalition dynamics.
- Underlying factor: coalition members, public pressure and alternative options.
- Left-wing government: more susceptible to failure since the alternative (right-wing government) is viewed as more competent.
- Right-wing government: survival is more likely since the alternative is not seen an competent enough to negate this security threat.

Terrorism and Democratic Government

Duration and Survival of Governments (Williams et al. 2013)

- Do not address losses in scheduled elections.
- Results: terrorism "shortens" the duration of governments in power.
- However, incumbent partisanship matter:
  - Right-wing $\rightarrow$ more likely to survive.
  - Left-wing $\rightarrow$ more likely to fail.

Terrorism and Democratic Government

Terrorism and survival
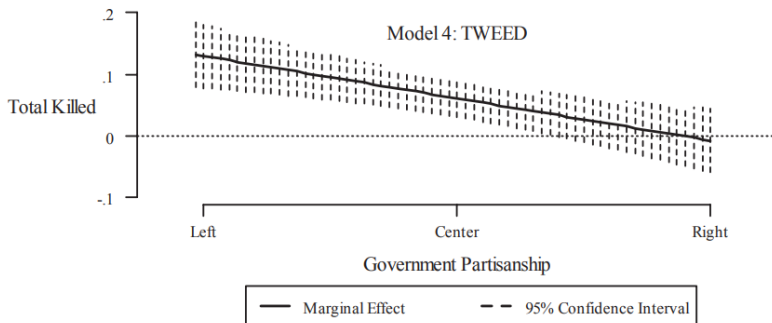
Terrorism and Democratic Government

TERRORISM AND SURVIVAL
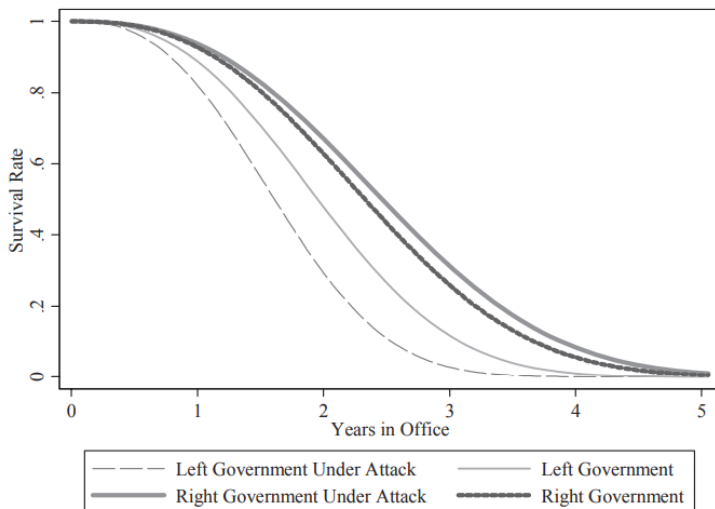
Political Effects of Terrorism

1. Attacks $\rightarrow$ salient threat (public care more about why is this threat exists).

2. Main empirical findings: terrorism (and the threat of) increases turnout and shifts public support for parties that are perceived as security "experts".

3. Attacks close to elections: dynamic is amplified and affect outcomes (Israel 1996).

4. Governments may be willing to use force facing terror knowing the risk of losing office is very low.

5. Effect on political behavior $\rightarrow$ direct targets of terrorism.

Recommended readings

More studies on the political effects of terrorism:

1. Aksoy, Deniz, David B. Carter, and Joseph Wright. "Terrorism and the Fate of Dictators." *World Politics* Vol. 67, no. 3 (2015): 423-468.

2. Park, Johann, and Valentina Bali. "International terrorism and the political survival of leaders." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 61, no. 7 (2017): 1343-1370.
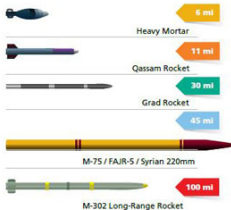
Palestinian Terrorism

TOTAL ROCKET LAUNCHES
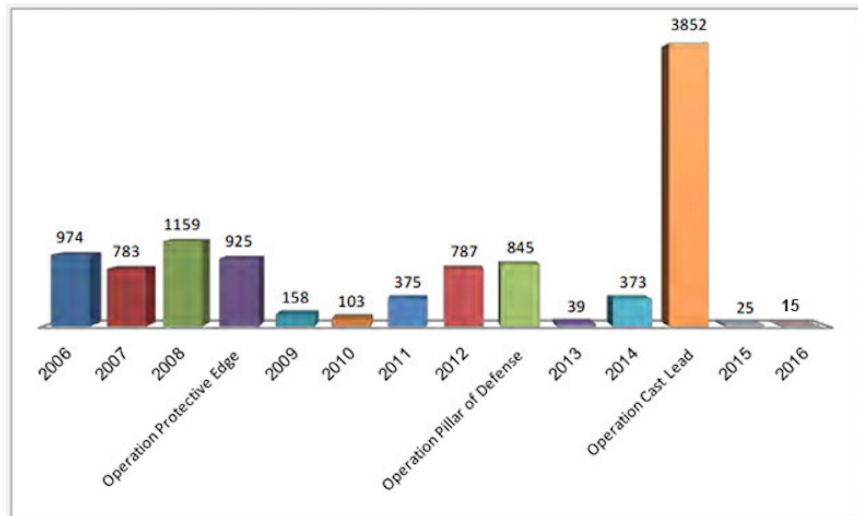
Palestinian Terrorism
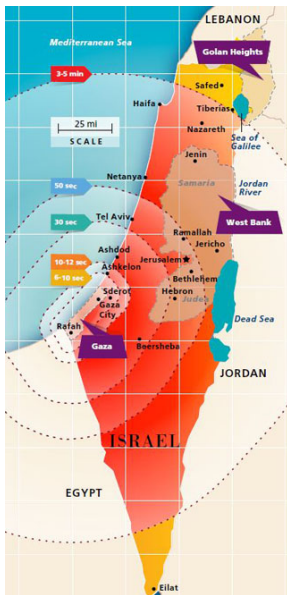
Range of missiles launched from Gaza Strip