Deterring Terrorism: Lessons Learned in Social Science Research

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Conclusions

Terrorists differ from other lawbreakers

- They have a larger mission that goes beyond immediate need.
- They innovate.
- They rely heavily on their constituency, which may be an important intervention point.

Deterrence: Rooted in Rational Choice Theory

$\mathsf{E}(u_{\text{terror}}) = p \ \mathsf{U}(y - F) + (1 - p) \ \mathsf{U}(y)$

where p = perceived probability of punishment

- y = anticipated benefits of perpetration; and
- F = perceived penalty of the act

Lesson: Raise the costs of perpetration through increased certainty and severity so that the utility of perpetration falls below the benefit of the act. In other words: DETERRENCE

Testing a Rational Choice Model of Airline Hijacking

Dugan, Laura, Gary LaFree, and Alex Piquero, *Criminology* 2005

Policies Suggesting Certainty and Severity

<u>Certainty</u>

- January 1972: FAA orders tighter screening (affects US cases)
- February 1973: Metal detectors and law enforcement (affects US cases)

Severity **October 1970**: Hijacking is a crime in Cuba (affects Cuba events) **February 1973**: Cuba-US agreement (affects Cuba events)



Figure 2. US and Non-US Successful Hijackings, 1946 to 1985

Series Hazard Models (estimating hazard of hijacking attempt)



Hazard Ratio of Hijacking Attempt for each Policy by Type



Conclusions on Deterrence

- A new hijacking attempt is less likely when the certainty of apprehension is increased.
- Compared to those who hijack for other reasons, hijacking attempts by terrorists will be less affected by counter terrorism measures that raise the severity or certainty of punishment.

The Impact of British Counterterrorism Strategies on Political Violence in Northern Ireland:

> Comparing Deterrence and Backlash Models

LaFree, Gary, Laura Dugan and Raven Korte, *Criminology* 2009

British Government Actions in Northern Ireland

Terrorist Attacks by Republicans



Results of Series Hazard Model



Conclusion on Deterrence

- Backlash more common than deterrence.
- Operation Motorman (massive military deployment) seemed to have a deterrent effect.
- Governments should be cognizant of efforts that could sabotage perceived legitimacy.

Moving Beyond Deterrence: The Effectiveness of Raising the Expected Utility of Abstaining from Terrorism in Israel (ASR, 2012)

> Dugan, Laura and Erica Chenoweth, American Sociological Review 2012

An Underutilized Component of Rational Choice: Raising the Benefits of Abstaining from Terrorism

 $\mathsf{E}(u_{\text{nonterror}}) = q \, \mathsf{U}(x+G) + (1-q) \, \mathsf{U}(x)$

where q = perceived probability of rewards from abstention

- x = value of current situation; and
- G = anticipated rewards of abstention

Dimensions of Countering Terrorism



Targets of Punishment and Rewards in Israel

	<u>Punishment</u> Repressive Actions	<u>Rewards</u> Conciliatory Actions
Specific	Discriminate repression directed toward the guilty (direct deterrence)	Discriminate conciliation directed toward the guilty (direct benefits of abstention)
General	Indiscriminate repression directed toward the Palestinians in general (indirect deterrence)	Indiscriminate conciliation directed toward the Palestinians in general (indirect benefits of abstention)

Tactical Regimes of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

- The First Intifada (1987-1993)
 - Started as nonviolent
 - Dominated by secular nationalists
 - Hamas became active near the end
- The Oslo Lull (1993-2000)
 - Negotiators established Palestinian Authority
 - Palestinians recognized 1967 borders
 - Neither side held to agreement
- The Second Intifada (2000-2004)
 - Violent from the beginning
 - Dominated by religious groups
 - Known for deadly suicide attacks



Figure 1. Quarterly Repressive and Conciliatory Actions by Israel and Palestinian Terrorist Attacks

Quarter, Beginning in Third Quarter 1987 and Ending in the Fourth Quarter 2004

Examining the Relationship **Between Actions and Terrorism**

Lots of Variations of Actions (Last Month)

Attacks Against Israelis (Current Month)

Lagged

Attacks,

going back as far as

needed

We first test the relationship parametrically (Negative Binomial) and then examine it non-parametrically (GAM). Together and separately for each of the tactical regimes

Results for All Actions for Entire Period



Conciliatory and Repressive Actions—Entire Period





Results by Tactical Regime

Conciliatory Actions

a. All Months



a. All Months Repressive Actions



Conciliatory-Discriminate

a. All Months





Repressive-Discriminate



Repressive-Indiscriminate

a. All Months



Conclusions on Deterrence

Repression can be harmful

Tactical regime matters

- Overall findings are driven by the Second Intifada
- Repression only seems to matter during the Oslo Lull (i.e., time of peace)
- Discriminate-Conciliation during the First Intifada seems to lead to more attacks
- Indiscriminate actions matter more
 - Especially during the Second Intifada
- Conciliation should be a serious policy alternative
 - Especially when directed toward terrorists' constituency
 - Conciliation should be sustained (0/- quadratics)

Relevance of These Findings to the Efforts of ADSA

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