

Question 12: Does terrorism work?

There is no consensus on whether terrorism works. Many believe that terrorism leads to governments making concessions. Others argue that terrorists rarely win and that terrorist acts may even be counterproductive for the perpetrators. This lecture analyses what terrorists want and assesses the different layers of what may constitute 'success' for terrorist groups.

Discussion questions

1. What does success mean in regards to terrorism? Discuss.
2. Is suicide terrorism more effective than other terrorist methods? Discuss.
3. If terrorism does not work, while are there so many terrorists and terrorist groups?

Essential readings

- Abrahms, Max. 2006. "Why Terrorism Does Not Work." *International Security* 31 (2): 42–78.
- Pape, Robert A. 2003. "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism." *The American Political Science Review* 97 (3): 343–61.

Further readings

- Abrahms, Max. 2011. "Does Terrorism Really Work? Evolution in the Conventional Wisdom since 9/11." *Defence and Peace Economics* 22 (6): 583–94.
- Abrahms, Max. 2012. "The Political Effectiveness of Terrorism Revisited." *Comparative Political Studies* 45 (3): 366–93.
- Acosta, Benjamin. 2014. "Live to Win Another Day: Why Many Militant Organizations Survive Yet Few Succeed." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37 (2): 135–61.
- Bloom, Mia M. 2004. "Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding." *Political Science Quarterly* 119 (1): 61–88.
- Fortna, Virginia Page. 2015. "Do Terrorists Win? Rebels' Use of Terrorism and Civil War Outcomes." *International Organization* 69 (3): 519–56.
- Gould, Eric D., and Esteban F. Klor. 2010. "Does Terrorism Work?" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 125 (4): 1459–1510.
- Hoffman, Bruce. 2011. "The Rationality of Terrorism and Other Forms of Political Violence: Lessons from the Jewish Campaign in Palestine, 1939–1947." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22 (2): 258–72.
- Indridason, Indridi H. 2008. "Does Terrorism Influence Domestic Politics? Coalition Formation and Terrorist Incidents." *Journal of Peace Research* 45 (2): 241–59.
- Krause, Peter. 2013. "The Political Effectiveness of Non-State Violence: A Two-Level Framework to Transform a Deceptive Debate." *Security Studies* 22 (2): 259–94.
- Marsden, Sarah V. 2012. "Successful Terrorism: Framework and Review." *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 4 (2): 134–150.

Non-peer reviewed resources

- Balch, Elliott, and Robert Pape. 2015. "Myth Busting: Robert Pape on ISIS, Suicide Terrorism, and U.S. Foreign Policy." *Chicago Monthly Review*, May 5, 2015. <http://chicagopolicyreview.org/2015/05/05/myth-busting-robert-pape-on-isis-suicide-terrorism-and-u-s-foreign-policy/>.
- Calabresi, Massimo. 2015. "Why Terrorism Works: Jihadi John and the Fear Premium." *Time*, February 27, 2015. <http://time.com/3725924/jihadi-john-counterterrorism-spending/>.
- Dershowitz, Alan. 2002. "Why Terrorism Works." *The New York Times*, September 15, 2002. <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/15/books/chapters/why-terrorism-works.html>.
- Tures, John. 2017. "Evidence Shows That Terrorism Actually Doesn't Work." *Huffington Post*, June 27, 2017. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/evidence-shows-that-terrorism-actually-doesnt-work_us_594a7f41e4b0d799132a165d.
- "Understanding Terrorism: Does Terrorism Succeed?" *Stanford CISAC - Security Matters*, 6 March 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vI20dfaNWMs>