- [ThinkProgress](#)
- [Wonk Room](#)
- [Yglesias](#)
- [Progress Report](#)

Matt Yglesias

Oct 9th, 2008 at 4:42 pm

The Terror Effect »

John Sides [directs our attention](#) to a new paper from Claude Berrebi and Esteban F. Klor called ["Are Voters Sensitive to Terrorism? Direct Evidence from the Israeli Electorate"](#). Key findings:

> This article relies on the variation of terror attacks across time and space as an instrument to identify the causal effects of terrorism on the preferences of the Israeli electorate. We find that the occurrence of a terror attack in a given locality within three months of the elections causes an increase of 1.35 percentage points on that locality's support for the right bloc of political parties out of the two blocs vote. This effect is of a significant political magnitude because of the high level of terrorism in Israel and the fact that its electorate is closely split between the right and left blocs. Moreover, a terror fatality has important electoral effects beyond the locality where the attack is perpetrated, and its electoral impact is stronger the closer to the elections it occurs. Interestingly, in left-leaning localities, local terror fatalities cause an increase in the support for the right bloc, whereas terror fatalities outside the locality increase the support for the left bloc of parties. Given that a relatively small number of localities suffer terror attacks, we demonstrate that terrorism does cause the ideological polarization of the electorate. Overall, our analysis provides strong empirical support for the hypothesis that the electorate shows a highly sensitive reaction to terrorism.

They conclude that the "terror effect" was enough to put Likud over the top in 1988 and in 1996.

To state what's obvious to me, but apparently not to a majority of voters, what you're see here is the dysfunctional codependence of competing nationalisms. Terrorist attacks lead to right-wing political policies that lead to repressive policies that lead to more terrorist attacks. This is good for violence-friendly leaders on both sides of the green line but makes both the Israeli and the Palestinian populations worse off than they would have been had the Palestinians eschewed violence and the Israelis elected dovish politicians. It's particularly maddening to see how this played out in 1996 which was a real turning-point election.

[Share](#)
[Permalink](#)
[Print](#)

Filed under: [Israel](#), [National Security](#), [terrorism](#)