

Enemies within: Interactions between Terrorists and Democracies

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Abstract

I examine how the chief executive's political party affects domestic terrorism within democracies. In particular, I contribute to the literature on terrorism within democracies by arguing that domestic terrorist groups prefer attacking when right-wing parties hold office. I find evidence for this claim as well as results indicating that left-wing executives are more likely to cut deals with domestic terrorist groups. These trends suggest that domestic terrorist groups attack during right-wing governance to build their reputation and reduce violence during left-wing governance to appear moderate and get a deal. These results contribute to literatures on differences between left and right parties, how political institutions affect terrorism, and differences between domestic and transnational terrorism.

Keywords

terrorism, domestic politics, conflict resolution, asymmetric conflict

From 1969 to 1998, the “Troubles” raged across the British territory of Northern Ireland, but during this time, Irish Republican Army (IRA) violence fluctuated. Changes in British policies resulted in noticeable changes in terrorism. The IRA struck with a vengeance when Conservative Party Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher

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was in office, but violence abruptly halted when Labor Prime Minister Tony Blair assumed office. One reason for this change is that Blair dropped the Conservative Party's long-held policy of demanding IRA disarmament before peace negotiations. Likewise, his government was seen as more willing to make a deal with IRA leadership. The decline in IRA violence was not unique to the Blair years. Rather, the IRA appeared to prefer attacking during Conservative Party governance (Dekmejian 2007).

In this example, the IRA adjusts its tactics in response to the party that heads the government. The group actively engages hard-liners with violence and appears peaceful when soft-line leaders take over. These adjustments enable the IRA to build a reputation as a serious group when hard-liners are in power, then use this reputation to negotiate when labor takes office. This example suggests that terrorist groups care about the party in power. I examine this dynamic by asking: do domestic terrorist groups adjust their tactics depending on the party leading the government?

Answering this question contributes to an active literature on how democratic political institutions affect terrorist attacks (Aksoy and Carter 2014; Eubank and Weinberg 1994; Eyerman 1998; Koch and Cranmer 2007; Li 2005; Walsh and Piazza 2010; Wade and Reiter 2007). Historically, this literature either ignores domestic terrorism altogether or pools domestic and transnational attacks. Recent work, however, considers domestic groups separately from transnational groups (Aksoy and Carter 2014; Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca 2012; Daxecker and Hess 2013; Enders, Sandler, and Gaibulloev 2011; Foster, Braithwaite, and Sobek 2013). My findings suggest that the push to differentiate transnational and domestic terrorism, along with the associated growth of data specific to domestic terrorism (e.g., Dugan and Chenoweth 2012; Enders, Sandler, and Gaibulloev 2011), benefits our understanding of terrorism.

It is reasonable to expect that political parties are important to domestic groups. This is not to say that transnational groups do not care about their target's domestic politics, but domestic groups are acting to achieve goals that only the government can address (such as territorial separation or regime change/reform). In contrast, transnational groups, such as Al-Qaeda, have goals that typically span beyond the abilities of any single government.

Domestic groups are also constrained by state actions in ways that transnational groups avoid through relocation to weak or sympathetic states. Retaliation against transnational groups involves either an interstate dispute or cooperation among states; both of these actions are far costlier than using police/military force against domestic groups (Salehyan 2007). For example, to retaliate against Al-Qaeda, the United States invaded Afghanistan and greatly increased foreign aid to Pakistan. Compare this to retaliations against the IRA, Shining Path, or Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which required smaller troop deployments and no sovereignty violations. Because of these differences, domestic groups need to be more aware of the likely reactions from political parties than their transnational counterparts and plan their attacks accordingly.

In this article, I test the hypothesis that domestic terrorist groups attack more during periods of right-wing rule. I argue that within democratic states, attacks will be more common when right-wing parties hold power. The first reason for this trend is that groups seek to cause dissatisfaction with hard-line (right wing) governance among moderates¹ through provoking harsh responses, curbs to civil liberties, and the sense that the government cannot stop them without imposing unacceptably high civilian costs (Daxecker and Hess 2013; Kydd and Walter 2006). Second, neither left nor right parties may want to negotiate with terrorist groups, but left-wing voters are less willing to back long-term, harsh counterterrorism policies and are more supportive of negotiation. The differences between left- and right-wing leaders suggest that a well known and capable group is more likely to get an agreement during left-wing rule.² A domestic terrorist group attacks when right-wing leaders, who are less likely to negotiate, control the government; this tactic signals the group's strength to future left-wing leaders.

I find that domestic terrorist groups attack more when right-wing parties are in power. These results are robust to additional control variables as well as alternative specifications, levels of analysis, and case selection. Furthermore, the result holds after controlling for group-specific characteristics, such as the terrorist group's political ideology, ideological overlap between the group and the chief executive, group capability, and conflict duration. Notably, I find that both leftist and nonleftist terrorists attack more when right-wing parties hold office. The following section reviews past work on terrorism in democracies and details why groups prefer attacking during right-wing rule. Then, I describe the data and test the hypothesis. After testing the hypothesis, I consider and dismiss some competing explanations, including the possibility that the results reflect a trend of more attacks leading to right-wing rule. I follow this with a discussion of the argument's assumptions and test some of these assumptions. Finally, I conclude.

Terrorism and Politics

Bullets or Ballots: Why Terrorists Care about Political Institutions

A major theory of terrorism argues that democracies experience less terrorism than nondemocracies because more venues for nonviolent political expression exist within democracies. These legitimate political outlets make terrorism less attractive, as groups prefer using traditional politics when possible. Put simply, institutional openness is associated with less terrorism (Eyerman 1998; Li 2005; Wade and Reiter 2007).

In the same vein, Walsh and Piazza (2010) argue that states with greater protections on human rights and civil liberties are attacked less than states that limit civil liberties with harsh counterterrorism measures. They argue that violent counterterrorism often strengthens the terrorist group's standing among moderate citizens, who are threatened and alienated by the government response (Walsh and Piazza

2010, 56). This argument fits neatly into a broader literature regarding institutional openness and terrorism/political violence (e.g., Aksoy and Carter 2014; Foster, Braithwaite, and Sobek 2013; Li 2005; Powell 1982), which has found that democracies with proportional representation (PR) have fewer terrorist groups, fewer terrorist attacks, and a lower likelihood of terrorist group formation. These findings suggest that groups prefer legitimate politics to violence when the former is available. These empirical findings are consistent with de Mesquita (2008) who uses a theoretical model to show that institutional openness results in reduced terrorist mobilization.

Additionally, Walsh and Piazza (2010), along with Abrahms (2007), find that democracies are advantaged (relative to autocracies) against terrorism because of their liberal policies. This commitment to democratic norms includes avoiding harsh, repressive policies and providing legitimate political outlets. According to this work, terrorism is an alternative to legitimate politics when would-be terrorists are either shut out of or too weak to impact the system. Terrorists care about the relative openness of political institutions because they have actual policy goals. Returning to the IRA example, violence erupts in 1969 after decades of political and economic discrimination against Catholics. Being shut out of the political process forced many Catholics to turn to the IRA as their only political outlet and protector. Similar stories can be told for the Tamils in Sri Lanka (LTTE) and others. In the case of the IRA, peace came only after safeguards were implemented to secure a Catholic presence within the legitimate political institutions (Dekmejian 2007, 43-44, 50-51).

Voting with Violence: Why Parties Matter to Groups

The above literature focuses on relatively static political institutions that do not vary within countries or individual terrorist campaigns. This focus overlooks within-conflict variation caused by changing leaders. Differences between hard- and soft-line parties have been shown to matter in foreign policy choices and outcomes (Berrebi and Klor 2006; Downs and Rocke 1994; Koch and Cranmer 2007; Palmer, London, and Regan 2004), and these differences surely matter to terrorist groups as well. On the issue of terrorism, Koch and Cranmer (2007) and Berrebi and Klor (2006) argue that right-wing parties' promilitary stances translate into an expectation that right-wing leaders employ harsher counterterrorism policies and more retaliatory violence than their left-wing counterparts. Additionally, Danzell (2011) finds that right-wing leaders are more likely to employ state terrorism against political opponents. This increased willingness to engage in domestic violence is likely known to groups.

Note that when the above authors discuss left and right parties, they are referring to a consensus that accepts the mapping identified by Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge (1994), who find that left-wing parties (economic interventionists) are almost entirely "for peace," while right-wing parties (economic noninterventionists) are

almost always “promilitary” (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994, 40).³ The promilitary stance is part of what makes a party “hard-line.” The other part is its unwillingness to negotiate with terrorists; this unwillingness has the same impact as closed political institutions, discussed above. Terrorist groups view hard-liners as noninclusive, making violence the only remaining expressive outlet.

The remaining question is whether or not these stereotypes match reality. I briefly address this question with some basic data analysis later in this article. In summary, I find that left-wing leaders are more likely than right-wing leaders to sign peace treaties in intrastate conflicts.⁴ I also find evidence from Israel that Likud (right-wing) governments are associated with more repression, while labor (left-wing) governments are associated with conciliatory actions. This basic analysis provides confidence that predictable differences exist in how parties respond to domestic terrorism.

Despite this evidence, it could be argued that soft-line (left) parties will try and counter their reputation by not negotiating. The result of this logic suggests that only right-wing leaders (hawks) risk negotiation. However, as Schultz (2005) points out, these “only Nixon” arguments don’t actually imply that soft-liners cannot or will not negotiate (Schultz 2005, 19). His model finds that dovish leaders initiate negotiations when the mutual benefits of peace are high, while hawkish leaders initiate when the mutual benefits of defection are low. Schultz’s theory is about interstate conflict, which raises concerns about the applicability of his model to domestic terrorism. Additionally, he also considers a larger set of types than just hawks and doves, but his points about defection and peace benefits are easily applied to domestic conflicts. The defection benefits are certainly high in domestic conflicts. These benefits create the fundamental commitment problems that scholars overwhelmingly believe drive internal conflicts (Walter 1997; Fearon 2013). This attribute of domestic conflict suggests that hawkish governments are fundamentally unwilling to engage in negotiations with domestic terrorist groups. At the same time, the internally destructive nature of terrorism raises the mutual benefits of peace, suggesting that dovish leaders may be willing to risk negotiations.

Poking the Bear: Why Groups Prefer to Attack Hard-liners

The hard-line reputation of right-wing parties does not necessarily deter terrorism. Kydd and Walter (2006) argue that terrorist groups often use a “strategy of provocation” and deliberately attack during hard-line rule. Under this strategy, groups attack during hard-line rule to induce harsh, violent responses. Right-wing executives, responding to either their own preferences or their core constituents, use harsh policies that may raise the costs of future terrorist action or destroy the group (Foster 2015; Koch and Cranmer 2007; Danzell 2011). However, these policies may also raise support and sympathy toward the group, benefiting the organization (a similar mechanism is proposed by Daxecker and Hess 2013).⁵ The existence of this strategy is contested by policy makers and some scholars, but there is abundant

empirical support for provocation's benefits. Within democracies, repressive counterterrorism undermines the ruling party's legitimacy because these policies violate democratic norms. Democratic citizens expect their government to abide by a certain set of liberal values, and research has demonstrated that violating these norms in the name of counterterrorism can be long-run counterproductive.⁶ Crackdowns that violate democratic norms may radicalize potential recruits, undermine government legitimacy, and raise sympathy for the group (Daxecker and Hess 2013; Rosendorff and Sandler 2004; Walsh and Piazza 2010).

The IRA case provides some good examples of harsh policies benefiting terrorists. Internment (imprisonment without trial) and direct troop deployment were used in British responses to the troubles. These hard-line policies not only failed to end the conflict, but they were also viewed so negatively by moderate republicans in Northern Ireland that IRA support and membership greatly increased (O'Brien 1999, 54-55; Richardson 2006; LaFree, Dugan, and Korte 2009). IRA members noted that internment, introduced during Conservative rule (Prime Minister Edward Heath) in 1971 and repealed by labor (Harold Wilson) in 1975, was one of their most effective recruiting tools (Bew, Frampton, and Gurruchaga 2009, 29, 33). Eventually, the British concluded the same. An official report on house-to-house searches notes, "the search . . . convinced most moderate Catholics that the Army was proloyalist. The majority of the Catholic population became effectively nationalist, if they were not so already. The IRA gained significant support" (quoted in Bew, Frampton, and Gurruchaga 2009, 33). Harsh policies, associated with right-wing political parties, can benefit the terrorist group. As a result, groups have a motive to escalate during these periods.

None of the above suggests that right-wing leaders are irrational for trying to crush or deter terrorism using harsh policies. There are two good reasons for right-wingers to employ harsh policies. First, right-wing voters want these policies, and hawkish governments can use them to build support among their core constituents. As Foster (2015) points out, the threat of domestic terrorism mobilizes two groups within the voting population: security oriented and liberty oriented. The former group will demand and appreciate harsh counterterrorism, and so right-wing leaders may benefit from appeasing these voters during periods of violence. This fits with Berrebi and Klor (2006) and Getmansky and Zeitzoff (2014) who find that terrorism mobilizes right-wing voters in Israel. While repression has been known to alienate moderate citizens and raise sympathy for the terrorist group, it can also improve, at least temporarily, the electoral standing of right-wing parties among security-minded voters. Indeed, it seems likely that attacks during right-wing rule may be short-run beneficial to the government's reelection, as it provides the government with an opportunity to enhance its standing among its core supporters. However, an important distinction, noted by Berrebi and Klor (2008), is that while terrorism increases right-wing vote share in the affected areas of Israel, it also increase left-wing vote share in other parts of the country. Foster (2015) acknowledges the short-term nature of this support, noting that support for harsh or illiberal counterterrorism

among security-minded voters will likely diminish as they become burdensome to their day-to-day lives.

Second, it could be the case that harsh policies actually work and lead to the collapse of a terrorist movement. For example, the Shining Path was defeated in Peru after a series of controversial and repressive policies, many of which clearly violated democratic norms (democracy was even suspended in a so-called self-coup). The extent to which these policies directly led to the capture of Shining Path leader Abrimael Guzmán can be debated, but the enhanced domestic intelligence apparatus did eventually capture Guzmán, ending the conflict (Dekmejian 2007, 166-167). The effectiveness of these policies is contested, with Foster (2015) suggesting that they almost never work, while others like Testas (2004) and Piazza (2006) arguing that they can work. However, surviving these policies surely signals a group's strength. Indeed, learning about a group's capabilities through its ability to survive retaliatory violence matches many theoretical approaches to conflict (Fearon 2004, 2013).

This ability to signal capacity is another motive for terrorist groups to attack more during periods of right-wing rule. Attacking hard-liners and risking harsh reprisals benefit a group's reputation more than attacking soft-liners. Inviting hard-line retaliation/violence is a clear signal of strength. While sending this signal is important to establishing a group's reputation, it is just as important to ask whether this strategy applies to all terrorist groups. In particular, weak groups may prefer attacking during left-wing rule as leftist retaliation may pose a lower risk to the group's survival. However, this logic also allows governments to infer that groups primarily attacking during left-wing governance are weak groups and may not merit concessions. Consider this interaction within the framework of the canonical beer-quiche signaling game. Just like an actor ordering quiche in this game, a terrorist group that predominately attacks during left-wing governance is easily identified as weak. Continuing the beer-quiche analogy, the only equilibrium⁷ is for strong and weak terrorist groups to pool on attacking hard-line governments. However, there is no reason to rely on only a theoretical point, and I return to this question during the empirical tests.

Many domestic terrorist groups have clear policy goals (e.g., territorial separation, ethnic autonomy, and income redistribution) and abandon terrorism once an agreement guarantees them political access.⁸ Indeed, many of the terrorist groups considered here have what Richardson (2006) calls "temporal" goals: goals where compromise and negotiation are possible. I show below that while negotiations are very rare, they are, on average, more likely during periods of left-wing rule. This provides a good reason for groups to attack less when the left holds power: having a left-leaning leader increases the likelihood of negotiations.⁹ Groups looking to take advantage of this chance for policy concessions will want to appear moderate (attack less) during this time.

To summarize, I provide two reasons why groups will attack more during right-wing rule. First, harsh counterterrorism measures associated with right-wing leadership can backfire by improving the group's status among moderates and increasing

their ability to recruit. Second, surviving right-wing retaliation demonstrates a group's strength and resolve. These reasons provide groups with motives for provoking hard-line responses. Right-wing parties are known to be more prone to repressive counterterrorism, so provocative groups attack more during right-wing rule to reap these benefits. Finally, if left-wing parties are more willing to provide concessions, demonstrated below, appearing moderate (attacking less) during these periods enhances the likelihood of policy concessions.

Data

Dependent Variable

To test the hypothesis, I use terrorism data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD; National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism 2012b). The data include attacks and threats made by nonstate actors. The GTD inclusion requirements are consistent with standard definitions. For an event to be included, there must be an intentional use or threat of violence by a nonstate actor, and two of the following conditions must be met:

- The act is designed to help attain a “political, economic, religious, or social goal.”
- The act is designed to intimidate or coerce a larger audience than the immediate victims.
- The act occurs outside the boundaries of “legitimate warfare,” such as deliberately targeting civilians and noncombatants (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism 2012a, 6).

Controversially, this definition does not require that attacks be against civilians. However, this feature is a strength; an attack against a military target signals ability. Such targets attract groups who want to demonstrate their capacity.

The unit of analysis is the country-terrorist group year. I choose this dyadic approach over a standard country-year analysis because my argument considers an interaction between the state and an individual terrorist group. The dyadic level not only provides a better connection to the theory, but it also allows for conflict-level control variables. One important conflict-level variable is how a group's political ideology, and particularly the interaction between group and government ideology, affects attack decisions. Considering this interaction is important, as there are good reasons to suspect that when groups and parties are politically aligned, groups attack less due to ideological sympathies. The overlap, it turns out, is only partially relevant. Additionally, this level of analysis also allows me to control for the conflict's life cycle and each group's capability. I hand match Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) group names to GTD terrorist group names and aggregate all attacks within each country-terrorist group year. The drawback of the dyadic approach is that there are no dyads for countries have not experienced a domestic

conflict, and so these countries are dropped from the dyadic analysis. This potentially introduces selection bias into the results. However, comparing the effects to some country-year models, which include countries without terrorism, reveals no substantive differences.

Independent Variables

The primary independent variable is the chief executive's political party. To code this, I use the World Bank's Database of Political Institutions (DPI). The DPI classifies the executive's political party for each country from 1975 to 2010. The data classify leaders into four categories based on the party's macroeconomic policy: right, center, left, and independent. As mentioned above, macroeconomic policy is a good indicator of whether a party is hawkish or dovish (Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994). I code dummies for the first three categories and include left and center in the analysis.¹⁰

There are no clear expectations about center parties. They are not discussed above, because how groups respond to centrist parties likely depend on whether the particular party leans more left or right, how obvious these leanings are to terrorist groups, and the exact makeup of their opposition. Regarding the last point, center leaders will likely make different policy choices depending on whether their opposition is primarily hawkish or dovish. Data on all three of these factors are unavailable, and so there is no meaningful way to think about center parties other than as an additional, but highly relevant, control variable.¹¹ Furthermore, the interesting effect is on left versus right leaders, and estimating this effect requires the inclusion of centrist leaders as a control variable. From these cases, I only consider democracies.¹²

I use gross domestic product (GDP) per capita from the Penn World Table to proxy for state power. This proxy is standard in the terrorism, insurgency, and civil war literatures (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Kalyvas and Balcells 2010). Data on military personnel per capita and population are taken from the Correlates of War's National Material Capabilities data version 4.0; both are logged (Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey 1972). Terrorist group capability is measured using the UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia (UCDP 2016) and data from Jones and Libicki (2008). Jones and Libicki record a group's peak size into four categories: tens, hundreds, thousands, and ten thousands. I use these two sources to construct an indicator where any group with a peak size greater than 1,000 is a strong group.

I use the Institutions and Election Project data to control for states with PR systems (Regan, Frank, and Clark 2009). PR systems are considered more open, and Powell (1982) argues that this openness results in less political violence. I control for government fractionalization using a measure, from the DPI, of the probability that two people drawn from the government (cabinet) are from different parties, this controls for cases (such as coalition governments) where determining the true ruling party is difficult.¹³ Freedom of the press data comes from Li (2005)

with Freedom House (Karlekar and Dunham 2012) used to fill missing values. To account for additional economic factors, I include a variable for GDP growth from the World Bank's (2014) Development Indicators. Other standard controls include variables for ethnic and religious fractionalization from Fearon and Laitin (2003) and polity2 scores (Marshall and Jaggers 2013). Lagged attacks are also included, which is standard in terrorism studies (e.g., Li 2005; Dugan and Chenoweth 2012). Additionally, I control for the cold war using a dummy for all years before 1990.

I also control for other conflict-level factors, such as whether the conflict is territorial or ideological, conflict duration (to capture the group's life cycle), and a dummy that indicates if another terrorist group is active within the state. These variables are all from the UCDP. These data provide an easy way to get at important dyadic variables like those mentioned above. The obvious problem is that it limits the analysis to just those groups that have ever managed to kill more than twenty-five people in any given year.¹⁴ This threshold is not high and only very weak groups, lone-wolves, and one-shot gangs are lost in the transition. Groups like Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA), IRA, Hamas, Shining Path, and other well-known terrorist groups remain.

There is a valid concern about mixing civil war data (UCDP) with terrorist campaigns. However, as Findley and Young (2012) and Thomas (2014) point out, the long-standing distinctions between terrorism and civil war may not be very important. Findley and Young quite convincingly demonstrate that the overlap between civil war and terrorism is extensive and that scholars should not be too concerned about mixing these phenomena. Their analysis suggests that using UCDP for dyadic variables does not harm the analysis.

In later models, I introduce controls for terrorist group ideology. These controls test whether the observed trends in terrorist attacks are driven by groups attacking parties that are ideologically dissimilar to themselves. To collect these data, I use the terrorist organization profiles (TOPs) hosted by National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) 2014. I supplement this information using data from Jones and Libicki (2008). Using these sources, I separate terrorist groups into three categories: territorial (from UCDP), left wing, and right wing. To assess the role of ideological similarity, I interact the left-wing terrorist group indicator with the indicator for a left-wing chief executive.

Results

As is usual with terrorist attack data, I use negative binomial regression. The dependent variable is the number of terrorist attacks in a given country-terrorist group year. I use panel-corrected standard errors (clustering on years) to correct for the finding that terrorist attacks tend to correlate across countries within years. Clustering on time allows for this cross-sectional correlation to be picked up in the standard errors (Beck and Katz 1995).¹⁵

Table 1 contains the first set of dyadic models. Model 1 reports a baseline specification that uses only country-level variables.¹⁶ Model 2 adds the first set of dyadic

Table 1. Negative Binomial Results Showing the Effect of Executive's Party on Terrorism.

	Terrorist attacks		
	Baseline Model 1	Dyadic variables Model 2	Right-wing indicator Model 3
Left	-0.48** (0.16)	-0.48** (0.18)	
Center	-0.34 (0.21)	-0.96** (0.24)	
Right			0.62** (0.16)
Population	0.08 (0.07)	-0.18 (0.15)	-0.07 (0.12)
Military personnel per capita	-2.79** (0.96)	-5.66** (1.88)	-4.41* (1.80)
GDP per capita	-0.03 [†] (0.01)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
Polity2	-0.06 (0.09)	0.10 (0.11)	0.05 (0.09)
Proportional representation	-1.36** (0.27)	-1.66** (0.47)	-1.76** (0.47)
Government fractionalization	-0.28 (0.26)	-0.73* (0.30)	-0.76** (0.29)
Lagged attacks	0.03** (0.00)	0.02** (0.00)	0.03** (0.00)
Free press	0.41* (0.17)	0.14 (0.22)	0.18 (0.23)
GDP growth	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)
Ethnic fractionalization	-3.95** (0.46)	-4.15** (0.92)	-4.18** (0.96)
Religious fractionalization	-0.67 (0.53)	0.98 (0.93)	0.98 (0.97)
Cold war	-0.24 (0.16)	-0.11 (0.21)	-0.14 (0.22)
Strong group		1.09** (0.17)	1.02** (0.15)
Incomp		0.10 (0.26)	0.06 (0.26)
Second terror group		0.62* (0.31)	0.54 [†] (0.32)
Duration		0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Duration ²		-0.00 [†] (0.00)	-0.00 [†] (0.00)
Intercept	-2.04 (2.28)	-8.22* (3.72)	-6.83 [†] (3.74)
Alpha	2.87	2.58	2.60
Log L	-2,198.75	-2,157.16	-2,172.50
N	802	793	793

Note: Panel-corrected standard errors are given in parentheses. GDP = gross domestic product.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

[†] $p < .1$.

variables to the analysis.¹⁷ The first thing to note is that in both models, fewer attacks occur during left-wing rule vis-à-vis right-wing rule, and the difference is statistically significant. As mentioned above, center parties do not merit our attention, the results are too sensitive to model specification to say anything meaningful, and unlike the coefficient on left-wing leadership, the sign and magnitude change dramatically depending on the level of analysis (see Online Appendix for details). To see the effect that parties have on domestic terrorism, I plot both the predicted number of attacks for each party and the marginal effects of changing leadership in Figure 1. The final model in Table 1 replaces the two separate party indicators with just one for right-wing leadership. This change is done to show that more attacks occur under right-wing leadership than when any other party controls the government.

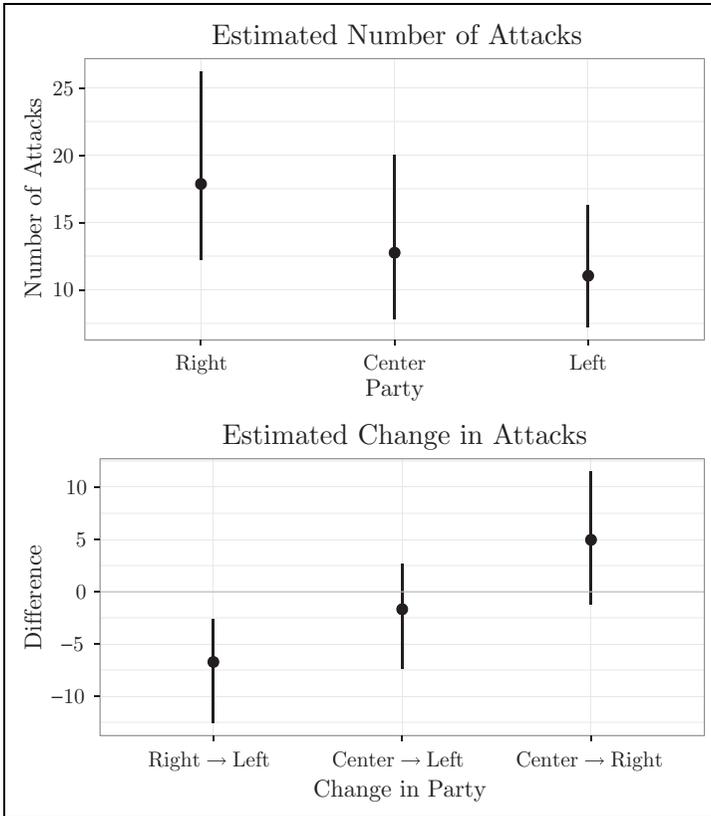


Figure 1. Predicted effects and 95 percent confidence interval from model 1. The notation $X \rightarrow Y$ denotes the expected effect of switching from party X to party Y holding the other variables constant.

In the top panel of Figure 1, we see that left-wing leaders experience the fewest attacks with an estimated eleven attacks per year (holding all other variables at an average value). During periods of right wing, this number climbs to about eighteen attacks per year. This increase of about seven attacks per year is statistically significant, as can be seen in the bottom panel of the figure. Overall, Figure 1 shows us that during left-wing rule we would expect to see about three-fifths, as many terrorist attacks compared to periods of right-wing rule. However, this analysis almost certainly contains some selection bias as it only considers cases where a terrorist conflict exists. In order to address this concern, I include three country-year-level models in the Online Appendix that include democracies without terrorist groups, these models all roughly match the finding that left-wing leaders experience about 40 percent less terrorism than right-wing leaders.

Table 2. Considering Mitigating Factors.

	Terrorist attacks		
	Nonleftist groups Model 4	Group ideology Model 5	Group size Model 6
Left	-0.38* (0.16)	-0.38* (0.16)	-0.69** (0.23)
Left group		-0.25 (0.78)	
Left Group × Left Party		-0.58 (0.35)	
Strong group	1.17** (0.19)	1.13** (0.15)	0.91** (0.21)
Strong Group × Left Party			0.39 (0.34)
α	2.61	2.72	2.74
Log L	-1,293.20	-2,162.02	-2,164.50
N	563	793	793

Note: Panel-corrected standard errors are given in parentheses. All models use the same control variables as model 2, point estimates and standard errors for the control variables can be found in the Online Appendix.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

[†] $p < .1$.

Another major concern is that specific types of groups may prefer to target one party or the other. In particular, it could be the case that all the results presented thus far are driven by leftist terrorist groups attacking more during right-wing governments due to ideological differences. In this case, the observed patterns emerge because an abundance of leftist groups attack when right-wing parties are in office. If this effect exists and is strong enough, it could lead to spurious results. I code the left/right ideology for each nonterritorial group using Jones and Libicki (2008) and TOPs.¹⁸ With this new data, I conduct two additional tests. First, I subset the data to just nonleftist groups. Second, I use the full data set and interact a dummy for leftist groups with the indicator for left-wing governance. Another possible concern is that weak groups might attack left-wing governments more because they do not believe that they will survive right-wing retaliation. As mentioned above, standard signaling arguments ease this concern, but it is something that we can empirically consider by interacting the group strength indicator with the left-wing leadership dummy. These three models are reported in Table 2.

Note that all the models in Table 2 include all the control variables from model 2. The estimates and standard errors for the controls were moved to the Online Appendix to conserve space. In model 4, I subset the data to just terrorist groups without a leftist ideology, which means that this model only includes territorial and right-wing terrorists. The coefficient that compares left and right leadership is still negative, statistically significant, and has a comparable magnitude to the past models. This suggests that right-wing and territorial groups still attack more when right-wing politicians run the government.

In model 5, I interact a dummy variable that indicates a leftist terrorist group with the dummy for left party rule. The first thing to notice is the coefficient that compares whether a left or right party controls the government is still negative and statistically significant. Second, there is also a negative coefficient on the interaction term for left-wing government and left-wing terrorist group; however, the term is not significant. While we see a slight mitigating effect where left-wing groups attack less when a left-wing party runs the government, the difference is not meaningful.

Finally, model 6 considers an interaction between executive's political party and group size. What we see here is that, as before, there is still a significant and negative coefficient on left-wing indicator, while the interaction effect is insignificant. This suggests that there is no major difference between strong and weak groups, both sets of groups will, on average, attack more during right-wing rule, although there is more variance among strong groups. Overall, while both types of groups attack more during right-wing rule (roughly six to eight more attacks in both cases), strong groups are perhaps less concerned with demonstrating their type.

Competing Explanations

A possible concern is that left-wing parties might be more likely to sign agreements because they are attacked less. This reasoning is consistent with the results presented so far as goal-oriented groups still attack more during right governance. By this logic, if groups attacked less during right-wing rule, right-wingers would negotiate. In turn, this means that left parties do not have any predispositions toward making deals. This contradicts the common belief that left parties are more dovish. A further problem with this concern comes from Schultz (2005), mentioned above. Schultz's model predicts that left-wing leaders start peace processes when the mutual benefits of peace are high and right-wing governments initiate when the mutual benefits of defection are low. As mentioned above, domestic conflicts have high benefits of peace, meaning leftist parties will be willing to risk negotiations. Also, the benefits of defection are large in intrastate conflicts (Walter 1997), suggesting that right-wing parties are unwilling to engage in the peace process.

Another competing explanation is that voters may choose to elect the dovish parties whenever they are ready for peace and that voters are ready for peace whenever the number of attacks goes down. The timing of this argument is that, first, attacks decrease, then left parties are elected, and then an agreement is signed. On the surface, this explanation appears to match how the IRA campaign ended, but there is a problem with this line of reasoning. The reverse side of this competing explanation is that right-wing parties are elected and kept as a result of increased terrorism. If this chain of events is correct, then lagged attacks will predict which parties hold power and which parties win elections.

I can easily test how well lagged attacks predict which party leads the government. To conduct this test, I run four multinomial logit models using the dyadic data, where the dependent variable is the chief executive's party: left, right, and

center. As before, right-wing leadership is the excluded category. In the first two models, I regress the previous year's attacks against the current party, while the last two models include attacks one and two years prior. Models 7 and 9 examine all dyad years; however, this is unsatisfying because voters do not get to choose a leader every year. As such, models 8 and 10 subset the data to just years where there was an election the previous year. Election years are taken from the National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA) data set (Hyde and Marinov 2012). In the election year models, the first lag translates into attacks that occurred during the election year, while the second lag refers to attacks in the year prior to the election.

The results in Table 3 show no real relationship between previous attacks and the likelihood that any particular party holds office. The regression coefficients are all effectively zero (odds ratios of approximately one), and in only one model is the coefficient on attacks significant at the 10 percent level. The one significant coefficient may be concerning, because it suggests that more attacks make it more likely that a right-wing party is in charge of the government, however, the effect is negligible. Changing lagged attacks from zero to fifty (roughly the ninetieth percentile) results in no meaningful change in the probability that any party is in power. Table 3 contains reasonable evidence that the reverse causality concerns about violence affecting party choice are not found in the data. Overall, this concern is not an issue because we do not observe the chain of event as described. Notably, we see neither an association between a lull in violence and a transition to left-wing parties nor a trend toward electing right-wing politicians when terrorism is high.

Additional robustness checks can be found in the Online Appendix. The checks were all conducted with the dyadic data, and they include some additional negative binomials models with dyad fixed effects, dyad fixed effect with year dummies, a zero-inflated component, an interaction between government fractionalization and left-wing leadership, and additional controls for the two countries with the most attacks (Israel and India). In every case, the signs of the point estimates match the above results and the results are significant at conventional levels. Details and results can be found in the Online Appendix.

Testing Assumptions on Left and Right Parties

Up to now, I have been operating under the assumption that left parties are typically dovish and more willing to negotiate with terrorists, while right parties are hawkish and more likely to employ repressive policies. These assumptions fit with party stereotypes, but they are also testable. In particular, I start with the claim that left-wing leaders are more likely to sign agreements. I use the dyadic data from the above section, while adding data on agreements from the UCDP terms of peace data set (Högbladh 2012). The dependent variable in this analysis is whether an agreement was signed in the dyad year, while the treatment is still the chief executive's party.

Table 3. Multinomial Logit Results: Terror Attacks and Party Choice.

	Party in power											
	All years			Election years			All years			Election years		
	Model 7			Model 8			Model 9			Model 10		
	Left	Center	Left	Center	Left	Center	Left	Center	Left	Center	Left	Center
Lagged attacks	-0.003 [†] (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)	-0.011 (0.009)	0.001 (0.003)	-0.011 (0.009)	0.001 (0.003)	-0.011 (0.009)	0.001 (0.003)
Second lag attacks	0.395** (0.073)	-1.163** (0.121)	0.761** (0.196)	-1.206** (0.278)	0.466** (0.080)	-0.005 (0.003)	0.000 (0.006)	-0.005 (0.003)	0.000 (0.006)	-0.005 (0.003)	0.000 (0.006)	-0.010 (0.015)
Population	-0.041 [†] (0.022)	-0.503** (0.046)	-0.053 (0.045)	-0.435** (0.098)	0.466** (0.080)	-1.222** (0.136)	1.497** (0.370)	-1.222** (0.136)	1.497** (0.370)	-1.222** (0.136)	1.497** (0.370)	-1.691** (0.440)
GDP per capita	-2.896** (0.421)	-1.358* (0.543)	1.489 (1.111)	0.278 (1.211)	-0.036 (0.023)	-0.529** (0.051)	0.018 (0.069)	-0.529** (0.051)	0.018 (0.069)	-0.529** (0.051)	0.018 (0.069)	-0.667** (0.149)
Government fractionalization												
Second terror group	-0.487 [†] (0.273)	1.161** (0.370)	-2.080** (0.741)	0.892 (0.824)	-0.510 [†] (0.295)	1.099** (0.398)	-2.524* (1.049)	1.099** (0.398)	-2.524* (1.049)	1.099** (0.398)	-2.524* (1.049)	0.188 (0.883)
Free press	1.383** (0.290)	0.089 (0.370)	3.035** (0.763)	-2.229* (1.055)	1.421** (0.308)	0.316 (0.395)	5.090** (1.224)	0.316 (0.395)	5.090** (1.224)	0.316 (0.395)	5.090** (1.224)	-0.882 (1.162)
GDP growth	0.090** (0.026)	0.099** (0.040)	0.151* (0.072)	0.156 [†] (0.092)	0.046 (0.033)	0.064 (0.045)	0.243** (0.091)	0.064 (0.045)	0.243** (0.091)	0.064 (0.045)	0.243** (0.091)	0.115 (0.118)
Cold war	-0.428 [†] (0.259)	0.516 (0.377)	0.738 (0.607)	2.781** (0.958)	-0.373 (0.280)	0.238 (0.415)	2.302* (1.008)	0.238 (0.415)	2.302* (1.008)	0.238 (0.415)	2.302* (1.008)	1.625 (1.148)
Duration	-0.040* (0.016)	0.054 (0.046)	-0.046 (0.036)	0.022 (0.083)	-0.041* (0.017)	0.054 (0.056)	-0.057 (0.042)	0.054 (0.056)	-0.057 (0.042)	0.054 (0.056)	-0.057 (0.042)	0.054 (0.134)
Duration ²	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.003)
Intercept	-2.998** (1.015)	12.970** (1.369)	-9.548** (2.844)	12.169** (3.009)	-3.884** (1.115)	13.880** (1.605)	-21.226** (5.724)	13.880** (1.605)	-21.226** (5.724)	13.880** (1.605)	-21.226** (5.724)	18.941** (5.171)
Log L	-595.31		-133.47			-529.99						-100.10
N	898		217			811						196

Note: Standard errors are given in parenthesis. GDP = gross domestic product.

*p < .05.

**p < .01.

[†]p < .1.

Table 4. Logit Estimates for Signing Official Deals with Terrorist Groups.

	Official agreement		
	Bias-reduced logit		Multilevel logit Model 13
	Model 11	Model 12	
Left	0.76 [†] (0.42)	0.80 [†] (0.47)	2.42 [†] (1.26)
Center	-0.81 [†] (0.46)	-0.97* (0.49)	-2.36 (1.63)
Cumulative attacks	0.04 (0.10)	0.01 (0.10)	1.26 (0.98)
Gross domestic product pc	-0.17* (0.06)	-0.15* (0.06)	-0.29 (0.30)
Proportional representation	0.50 (0.43)	-0.11 (0.36)	0.68 (2.94)
Population	-0.83** (0.25)	-0.84** (0.22)	-1.54 (1.35)
Second internal dyad	1.85* (0.93)	1.93* (0.97)	5.37 (3.67)
Military personnel per capita	-0.23 (3.08)	0.56 (2.94)	-0.70 (6.57)
Territorial	0.82 (0.61)	-0.13 (0.96)	-1.70 (2.18)
Government fractionalization	-2.74** (0.98)	-2.61** (0.92)	0.31 (0.80)
Polity2	0.27 (0.20)	0.27 (0.19)	2.74 (3.54)
Free press	0.01 (0.69)	0.02 (0.64)	-0.59 (1.32)
Strong group	1.67** (0.43)	1.68** (0.39)	3.02 (3.87)
Duration	0.85** (0.21)	0.78** (0.22)	0.88 (1.14)
Leftist group		-0.24 (1.64)	
Left gov't and leftist group		-0.86 (0.92)	
Intercept	-0.75 (5.98)	2.34 (5.71)	-11.76 (20.35)
Log L	-53.37	-53.97	-34.22
N	581	581	581

Note: Panel corrected (model 8 to 9) and ordinary (10). Standard errors are given in parenthesis.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

[†] $p < .1$.

Table 4 examines three logit models. The first is a baseline model, the second includes interactions between government and group ideology (as above), and the last is a multilevel logit designed to better incorporate the dyadic data's nested structure. The multilevel model generalizes the ordinary logits by allowing the constant term to vary across both countries and the dyads nested within those countries.¹⁹ I use Firth's bias reduced estimator for the first two models (Zorn 2005) and a Cauchy prior in the third (Gelman et al. 2008) due to separation concerns.

The coefficient on left-wing rule is statistically significant at conventional levels in all three models. An easy interpretation of logit coefficients is the odds ratio, which in this context tells us the proportionate increase in the odds that a terrorist group receives an agreement when the left holds power relative to when right-wing parties rule. Across the three models, the odds ratios range from about two to eleven. These values mean that groups appear to be much more likely to receive an agreement when left-wing parties run the government. Model 12 suggests that the effect

Table 5. Examining the Party Actions in Israel.

	Negative binomial	
	Conciliation Model 14	Repression Model 15
Left	0.24* (0.12)	-0.29** (0.10)
Lagged attacks	0.03** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)
Gross domestic product per capita	4.43** (0.94)	2.87** (0.80)
Cold war	-0.00 (0.23)	0.09 (0.19)
Government fractionalization	-2.09** (0.57)	-0.27 (0.52)
Intercept	-10.38** (2.70)	-5.82* (2.29)
α	0.29	0.27
Log L	-564.71	-716.52
N	198	198

Note: Standard errors are given in parenthesis.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

† $p < .1$.

size varies with group ideology, but it is not the case that left-wing executives are giving more deals to leftist terrorists. The interaction coefficient is negative, suggesting that, if anything, leftist executives are more reluctant to cut deals to left-wing terrorists relative to right-wing groups.

Overall, left-wing leaders are more likely to cut deals than their right-wing counterparts. It seems very plausible that groups are aware of this difference. In turn, it is reasonable to expect that terrorists use this information when forming strategies. This fits with the discussion above and provides a motive for terrorist groups to attack less during left-wing governance, relative to periods of right-wing rule.

This macrolevel analysis provides support for the assumptions on party stereotypes, but there is also fine-grained data on Israel that provides for a better test of whether these stereotypes hold in this particular case. The dependent variable comes from Dugan and Chenoweth (2012) who use newspaper articles to record monthly counts of repressive and conciliatory actions taken by the government toward Palestinian terrorists between June 1987 and December 2004. The treatment variable is still the chief executive's party, but it is now recoded to the monthly level. Lagged attacks are taken from the Dugan and Chenoweth's (2012) data and are also at the monthly level. The remaining variables are taken from the dyadic data used above and remain aggregated at the yearly level. Note that the dispersion parameter is less than one in these models, suggesting that the negative binomial may not be appropriate; however, a generalized Poisson model produces similar results.

The results in Table 5 provide convincing evidence that parties behave in predictable ways. Israel's labor leaders engage in significantly more conciliatory acts toward Palestinians, on average, while right-wing Likud leaders engage in significantly more

repression. While these differences are not surprising, it is important to look for them. These results provide evidence for the claim that political parties behave differently from each other, and these differences support the assumptions used in this article. Terrorist groups are undoubtedly aware of these differences and adjust their tactics accordingly. Another interesting result from Table 5 is that lagged attacks result in more of both types of actions. In the case of repression, this is evidence that groups have the ability to provoke harsh responses. In the case of conciliation, the result is evidence that leaders only want to grant concessions after groups demonstrate capability.

An interesting aspect of the Israeli case is that previous work on this particular conflict shows that terrorism (either threats or actions) can increase support for right-wing political parties (Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014; Berrebi and Klor 2006, 2008). This relatively robust trend might suggest that attacking is counterproductive to a terrorist group's policy goals. However, there are a few reasons why this trend should not concern us more broadly. First, the results in Table 3 show us that these trends do not appear in the broader cross-national data. Second, Israel is a very special case where voters are threatened by multiple domestic and transnational groups and the level of violence is significantly higher than in many other conflicts. These extenuating circumstances may suggest that Israeli voters are more security oriented than other voters. Indeed, several terrorism studies deliberately exclude Israel because of these differences (e.g., Neumayer and Plümper 2010). Third, while the right-wing vote share seems to rise in the areas directly affected by terror, there is some evidence that this may be balanced by a rise in left-wing vote share in other parts of the country in response to Palestinian terrorism (Berrebi and Klor 2008). For these reasons, it is important not to read too much into this particular case, I include it here only to offer support additional support to the idea that leaders act in ways that are consistent with their party's stereotype.

Conclusion

In this article, I ask the question: do domestic terrorist groups attack more when right-wing parties hold office? The answer is a resounding yes. I argue that domestic terrorist groups attack more during right-wing rule to provoke backlash and signal strength. Attacks show future left leaders that a group is capable. Once the left party takes power, groups reduce their attacks, making them appear ready for peace and enabling leftist leaders to open negotiations. The results are consistent with and contribute to a literature that Wade and Reiter (2007) call the "political access" school. The reasoning behind this approach is that groups have real policy goals, such as territorial separation or regime change, and they pursue terrorism (a very costly undertaking) when they believe that they cannot achieve their goals through legitimate politics.

Another contribution is that this result contrasts with similar work done on transnational terrorism, notably by Koch and Cranmer (2007). This difference suggests that there are real differences between domestic and transnational terrorist

groups that the literature has only begun to appreciate. My findings contribute to this development by showing a concrete example where different types of groups (transnational and domestic) respond differently to the same treatment (political party). Furthermore, this is one of the first papers to examine how parties affect domestic terrorist groups. Additional work is required to find other ways political parties impact domestic conflict. Future work will separate the effect of past government repression (revenge) from the effect of expected repression (provocation) on terrorism. That work will improve our understanding of how harsh policies actually enter into terrorist motivations and calculations.

Finally, I note that many terrorism studies and policies rely on deterrence arguments. However, my results, along with those from Dugan and Chenoweth (2012), suggest that deterrence is not enough to explain the actions of domestic terrorist groups. As better measures of government actions toward terrorists, preferably at the country-group level, become available for more conflicts, we will be able to construct a fuller picture of how soft- and hard-line policies affect domestic terrorism.

Author's Note

Any remaining mistakes are my own.

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Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. The term "moderates" refers to people who may be sympathetic to a terrorist group's goals but may not approve of its methods.
2. The critical reader may be thinking about "only Nixon can go to China" arguments at this point. I address this concern below. I also provide evidence that supports these party stereotypes.

3. As a result, I will use dovish and soft-line in reference to left-wing leaders and hawkish and hard-line in reference to right-wing leaders, throughout.
4. This, and all other, analysis in this article only examines democracies.
5. Note that a strategy of provocation does not necessarily imply that the group attacks first. It could be the case that the government engages in some repressive act and then the group attacks. However, this attack is undertaken with the understanding that it will lead to a harsh government response.
6. Some sectors of the population may support harsh policies. These voters are likely the core supporters of the right-wing party and provide a motivation for leaders to use harsh counterterrorism. I return to this point below.
7. To be precise, the only equilibrium that survives standard refinements.
8. Domestic conflict is frequently thought to result from commitment problems; guarantees of political access help overcome these problems (Walter 1999).
9. However, it is important not to overlook the fact that when there are multiple groups within a country, one or more may want to spoil a nascent peace process. Spoiling has an important role in terrorism research and fits nicely into a view of policy-oriented groups. In particular, the primary motivation given for spoiling is exclusion from the peace process. Groups like Hamas spoil because negotiations threaten their power, interests, and ability to continue fighting for their own policy goals (Kydd and Walter 2002; Braithwaite, Foster, and Sobek 2010). Of course, this may suggest that spoiling groups increase violence during periods when negotiations are ongoing. This would be an interesting interaction (leader's party and ongoing negotiations) to consider, but given that we have very limited information on when negotiations are ongoing, it is currently infeasible to explore this relationship. Additionally, negotiations are incredibly rare events, meaning that these tactics won't appear too often. To account for this possibility though, I control for spoiling effects by including an indicator for the presence of additional groups within each country.
10. Independent chief executives are treated as missing data.
11. The effect is also unclear: sign, significance, and magnitude vary wildly across model specification and case selection.
12. I define democracies as having a polity2 score greater than or equal to 5 (using the Polity IV data). This slightly lower criteria reflects Vreeland's (2008) observation that the existence of internal violence can lower a country's polity score. To account for the lower cutoff, I include the actual polity2 score (5 to 10) as a control variable. All models were also run with a more traditional cutoff of greater than or equal to 6; nothing changes.
13. While chief executive's partisanship may matter less in coalition settings, it is an easy way for the public, and terrorists, to assess the government's partisanship. As such, it continues to make sense to focus on the chief executive as he or she is the public face of the government.
14. If a group enters the Uppsala Conflict Data Program at least once I include it for all years that the group is known to be active, with start and end dates being taken from Jones and Libicki (2008) and terrorist organization profiles data discussed below.
15. The results are mostly unaffected by the choice to cluster on time rather than the individual countries (or not to cluster at all).

16. An alternative specification considers number of deaths as the dependent variable. The magnitude and sign of the coefficient are approximately the same, although there is substantially more variance in that dependent variable, and the coefficient of interest is only significant at $p < .2$.
17. The reader may be worried about colinearity among some of these predictor variables, particularly polity, free press, and proportional representation (PR) system. To address this concern, I check the variance inflation factor (VIF) for each variable in model 2. The variables with a VIF greater than 10 (the typical warning sign) are population, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, ethnic fractionalization, duration, and squared duration. Dropping these variables one at a time or all together does not affect the main result. The largest correlations appear to be various pairwise relations between military personnel, population, PR, GDP per capita, and ethnic fractionalization as well as the pairwise correlation between duration and squared duration. Removing all combinations of these variables tends to only strengthen the main result.
18. Right in this context includes (mostly) religious terrorist groups.
19. I tried other versions of the multilevel model. In particular, I allowed the coefficients on left and center parties to have random slopes across countries; this did not change the results. This model is estimated using a Bayesian approach for numeric stability. The reported standard errors are the posterior standard deviations, and the reported log likelihood is calculated as the mean log posterior minus the log prior.

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