

Pessimism: Exploring a New Indicator for Forecasting Terrorism

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Abstract

This study analyzes the correlation between pessimistic political statements and terror acts as an indicator to forecast terrorism. Analysts and academics argue the importance of developing and verifying specific indicators of terrorism, but there is little explicit discussion of these factors. It examines pessimistic statements by Palestinians against Israel as indicators of an impending terrorist attack. The research draws on an established dataset covering terror events in Israel between 2000 and 2006 and introduces a unique dataset of pessimistic statements derived from the Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone (GDELT) while controlling for economic, demographic, and security variables. Pessimistic statements made by the PLO and mentioned in the first paragraph of a media report during any given 21-day period are positively correlated with terrorist attacks in general, and suicide attacks in particular, in the following 21-day period.