



## ODD NUMBERS

by Zubin Jelveh



[Who's the Deluded One?](#) [You Don't Suck \(at Picking Stocks\)](#)

Main

Aug 2 2007 11:01pm EDT

### More Evidence on Terrorism and Elections: The Case of Israel

Last week I [blogged](#) about a Spanish study which detailed how the 2004 Madrid bombings were a major factor in helping the socialists topple the ruling conservatives.

Picking up on that thread, a recent Rand study [examining attacks in Israel](#) shows more proof that timed terrorist attacks can influence electoral outcomes.

The researchers, [Claude Berrebi](#) of Rand and [Esteban Klor](#) of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, looked at the effect of attacks on Knesset elections in 1988, 1992, 1996, 1999 and 2003.

They found that one terrorism-related death translated into a 0.45 percentage point gain in that locality for the conservatives if the attack occurred within three months of an election; the further away from the elections the attacks occurred, the less influential they were. During the entire period, a typical terrorist attack resulted in three deaths, so one incident meant a 1.35 percent point gain in that locality for the conservatives.

Berrebi and Klor explain how this could turn an election:

Given that the electorate in Israel is closely split between the right and left blocs, the occurrence of a terror attack before an election (or the lack thereof) can clearly determine the electoral outcome. In particular, the average

### Recent Blog Posts

The Minimum Wage and Employment

Jun 21 2008 10:56pm EDT

Report: Coverage of Economy Heavily Skewed Towards Business

Jun 20 2008 3:27pm EDT

The Perfect Speed for a Fastball: 97 MPH

Jun 20 2008 12:20pm EDT

The Fast Food Diet

Jun 20 2008 2:52am EDT

How Many People Listen to Nirvana?

Jun 19 2008 5:47pm EDT

Words of Wisdom

Jun 19 2008 1:07pm EDT

Chart of the Day: Mail Delivery as Economic Bellwether

Jun 19 2008 11:56am EDT

Looking for Recession Signals Where There Are None

Jun 18 2008 1:02pm EDT

In Praise of the Wealth Effect

Jun 17 2008 3:49pm EDT

Are Minimum Wage Hikes More Effective Than Tax Rebates?

Jun 16 2008 5:38pm EDT

Could the Euro and Dollar Share Reserve Currency Status?

relative support for the right bloc on the elections considered in the time period at issue is in the order of 0.47 percent. Thus, an increase by two on the average number of attacks would be almost enough to decide the elections in favor of the right bloc of political parties in an average locality.

It also didn't matter which ideology was in power, it was the conservatives who always gained. The results were unchanged when the researchers controlled for attributes like the size of the locality or economic conditions in the area.

So, why did the conservatives gain in Israel while they lost out in Spain?

Not surprisingly, voters seem to favor the party they think will do the most to protect them from more incidents. In the case of Spain, the view was that the conservatives put the population in peril by fighting a war that drew the attention of terrorists.

In Israel, the conservatives were perceived to be able to reduce the Palestinian threat, primarily by isolating the Palestinian population away from the Israelis.

The results seem to support the 'policy voting hypothesis', or the idea that voters attach more importance to what political parties say their main concerns are as opposed to a party's performance in relation to those concerns...in other words, it was more important for voters to see that a party made terrorism its top concern.

This all might partially explain some of the dynamics we saw in play during the 2004 U.S. presidential elections. Taking a look at the [exit polls](#), the three most important issues for voters were: moral values (22%), economy/jobs (20%), and terrorism (19%).

Further, 54 percent of voters said that the al Qaeda tape featuring Osama bin Laden released just days before the election played an important part in their vote.

Factor in that the Republicans had the family values issue locked up and that voters trusted Bush to protect the country from terrorism more than Kerry (58% to 40%), it doesn't quite seem like Kerry ever had a chance.

**Related:**

- The Study: [Are Voters Sensitive to Terrorism? Direct Evidence from the Israeli Electorate](#)

Jun 13 2008 11:43am EDT

**Do Star Players Make Good Head Coaches?**

Jun 12 2008 9:49pm EDT

**It Finally Makes Economic Sense to Buy Hybrids**

Jun 12 2008 2:03pm EDT

**An Unusual Cycle**

Jun 11 2008 4:13pm EDT

**Libor Competitor Up and Running**

Jun 11 2008 11:49am EDT

**Related News**

NM governor meets with Israel prime minister: AP

Spain extradites suspected arms trafficker to NY: AP

Palestinian PM: \$1.4 billion in investments raised: AP

EU, Israel set to boost economic relations: AP

Israel OKs 1,300 east Jerusalem homes: AP

**Archive**

**Jun 2008**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Jul 2007

Aug 2007

Sep 2007

Oct 2007

Nov 2007

Dec 2007

Jan 2008

Feb 2008

Mar 2008

Apr 2008

May 2008

Jun 2008

**Categories**

advertising