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"The rockets voted"

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Jeffrey Goldberg is **blown away** by Israel's strange and inconclusive election results:

“The stunner, for me at least: The Labor Party is dead. More than that, the peace camp is dead, or comatose, at least. According to exit poll numbers I heard, Haifa and Tel Aviv went for Livni (who is no leftist, except in comparison to Netanyahu and Lieberman); the south went for the hard right. The rockets voted, in other words.

The RAND Corporation's Claude Berrebi, who I spoke with for **a piece on October surprises** before the U.S. presidential election, has quantitatively demonstrated this effect by showing that a terrorist attack within the past three months in a given area of Israel has historically resulted in an average 1.35 percentage point increase in the level of support for right-wing parties. As this election shows, 1.35 percent is nothing to sneeze at in an Israel election.



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Berrobi **also argues** that terrorists know exactly what effect this has on the electorate:

“Our past research has shown that the behavior of terrorists is highly rational, even more so sometimes than leaders in the West,” he says.

Rather than behaving irrationally, more likely they are either trying to perpetuate a cycle of tit-for-tat violence with an overly aggressive government that will end in Israel's destruction, or—the explanation Berrobi prefers—they hope terrorist attacks will cause the entire political spectrum, including the right, to move in the long run toward a more moderate stance. The more accommodating policies adopted in recent years by one-time hard-liners such as Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert may be evidence of this shift.

Tzipi Livni probably also belongs on that list. And as Nigel Ashton **argues**, Benjamin Netanyahu may yet surprise everyone by moving toward a more accommodating position. Somehow I don't think **Avigdor Lieberman** is moving anywhere, though.

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