

## *Increasing the capability of the government will lower VEO activity.*

---

151; 136; 152

### General Description of the Literature:

The literature here is largely from political science and shows that state capacity has an effect on a government's ability to counter VEO activity, through such means as military, law enforcement, and intelligence collection. First, for the purposes of this review, we can define state capacity as "the means of overcoming those problems addressed by a weak government, such as autonomy, effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness in economic, political and military dimensions" (DeRouen, Ferguson et al. 2010: 333). The literature covers examples of VEO activity in states with developed capacity as well as in states which lack capacity. A central feature of low capacity is that the state does not effectively control all of its territory, and this is mentioned in Collier and Hoeffler (2004), who discuss what creates opportunities for rebellion. DeRouen, Ferguson et al (2010) also deal with states with very low capacity and point to the difficulties in implementing peace agreements in such states. Much of the literature outlines conditions which put states at a higher risk for war or VEO activity, such as Fearon and Laitin (2003). Lyall and Wilson (2009) outline the reasons that make states today less likely to be able to quell insurgencies, and Crenshaw (1981) details motivations for terrorism and suggests that government reactions that are inconsistent are most likely to encourage terrorism. Pape (2003) suggests that states must improve their homeland security in order to deter terrorism (or at least certain types, like suicide terrorism), while Walsh and Piazza suggest that human rights abuses by a state against its people actually serve to promote terrorism. The DeRouen and Sobek article (2004) is perhaps the most conclusive in relevance to the hypothesis when it concludes that effective state bureaucracy undermines rebel activity.

---

### Detailed Analyses

**151:** *Increasing the capability of the government will lower VEO activity.*

**Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence:** DeRouen, Goldfinch et al. (2010) find that state capacity has a strong positive effect on political stability. Their study uses the World Bank's (2011) *Worldwide Governance Indicator's* (WGI) measure of Political Stability which is comprised of several indicators that measure the probability a state will be overthrown or destabilized by "possibly unconstitutional and/or violent means, including domestic violence and terrorism." However, the findings of Lyall and Wilson (2009) provide something of a caveat to this finding. They test models containing an index of state capacity (comprised of army size, military spending, iron production, energy consumption, and GDP per capita – all from the Correlates of War project) against insurgency outcome. They report that the modern military's focus on mechanization has made it harder for government armies to get intelligence from the people and therefore harder to put down insurgency. This suggests that a strong army focused on capital-intensive equipment and an over-reliance on strong force can be counter-productive. The Lyall and Wilson finding does not necessarily mean states with high capacity will always lose, rather it points to the conclusion that *how* this power is wielded is important; wielded inappropriately and/or exclusively, power can be detrimental to defeating VEOs. Similarly, DeRouen and Sobek (2004) conclude that a strong government army does not necessarily enhance the government's cause. Additionally, within the literature, there is a debate about the role that terrain plays in helping VEOs. Fearon and Laitin (2003) and DeRouen and Sobek (2004) observed that mountains help VEOs. The former argues that mountains help create insurgency opportunity. The latter show that mountains increase the probability of rebel victory.

A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BASED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Finally, DeRouen, Ferguson et al. (2010) conclude that state capacity is necessary but not sufficient for peace, and that a third party is very important when implementing and, more importantly, maintaining peace agreements

**Empirical Support Score: 2 = Multiple qualitative and/or quantitative studies with mixed results (i.e., some in favor, some against the hypothesis) but more negative than positive findings**

**Applicability to Influencing VEOs:** This is an important avenue for influencing VEOs. Several authors argue that state capacity impacts VEO activity

However, much of the literature deals with conditions that are conducive to terrorism and give suggestions for what states can do in order to try and prevent terrorism, but do not really contain much direct evidence that increasing capacity will decrease terrorism.

**Applicability Score:** Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

---

**136:** *Governments that maintain law and order will be more effective at reducing VEO activity.*

**Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence:** Law and order is an indicator of state capacity. Rule of law also protests against arbitrary and/or unjust treatment. As such, it is associated with physical integrity rights, of which Walsh and Piazza (2010) show that abuse promotes terrorism. A state with low state capacity cannot police its territory. As such, lack of order creates opportunity for insurgency. DeRouen, Goldfinch et al. (2010) report that at the level of law and order of OECD countries, the predicted level of political stability (measured as discussed in previous section) approaches the 95th percentile. Law and order means the state can police all of its borders and it also means it protects unjust acts against citizens carried out by the state or groups within the state, thus law and order can reduce opportunity and motivation for insurgency. This fits with Crenshaw's (1981) observation that state 'permissiveness'(e.g., in terms of weak law enforcement and/or military) is an important determinant of terrorism. States that are fragmented such as Indonesia and the Philippines are especially prone to insurgency if the state cannot control remote islands (Nacos 2012). In addition, Fearon and Laitin (2003) conclude that the most important element affecting a nascent insurgency are "the government's police and military capabilities and the reach of government institutions into rural areas" (80). They go on to suggest that, to be effective in their counterinsurgency efforts, governments must distinguish between terrorists and noncombatants, without destroying the lives of the noncombatants and thereby engaging in counterinsurgency practices which then help the rebels recruit more fighters. Similarly, Pape (2003) hints at the importance of law and order in combating VEO activity when he suggests that, since terrorists' political causes often see gains after resorting to suicide operations, so governments must implement policies that show VEOs that this is not the case, and this is done more through improving homeland security than by offensive military actions against the VEO or even by concessions given to the VEO.

**Empirical Support Score: 8 = Multiple quantitative analyses supporting the hypothesis**

**Applicability to Influencing VEOs:** Law and order is an important part of state capacity that can influence VEOs.

**Applicability Score:** Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

---

**152:** *Lack of strong institutions and control by government leads to more VEO activity.*

A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BASED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

**Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence:** DeRouen, Goldfinch, Rethemeyer and Asal (2010) report empirical evidence on the role of institutions on political stability (as defined above). Specifically, they demonstrate that control of corruption, government effectiveness (measures the quality and competence of government bureaucracy), an independent judiciary, basic administration (a measure of whether a state is able to carry out its minimal expected functions), democracy/income, and property rights each enhances stability. If these institutions are not stable, the probability of a state being overthrown increases. Increasing state capacity can decrease opportunity and motivation for VEOs.

**Empirical Support Score: 7 = Single, high-quality quantitative analysis supporting the hypothesis.**

**Applicability to Influencing VEOs:** Lack of strong state institutions provides opportunities for VEO activity.

**Applicability Score:** Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

---

### General Comments:

VEOs can both organize and carry out attacks in capable states. To the extent capacity has a deterrent effect it arguably causes VEOs to launch indirect attacks outside the target state. Australia was a target in the Bali bombing in 2002. Israel is often a target outside of the region – most spectacularly during the Munich Olympics but also in various hijackings and embassy attacks. US interests have been targeted in the Kenyan and Tanzania embassy bombings, the USS Cole attack in 2000, and of course in Iraq and Afghanistan. In this sense, state capability is probably influencing the nature of the attack. If the VEO had the means, it might well have struck directly at the capable state, but operationally it is easier to hit the state indirectly. At the other end of the spectrum of state capability are failed or failing states such as Somalia, Yemen, DRC, and Angola during various stages of their history. H33 discussed the role of deterrence by denial (DBD). To carry out DBD a state requires capacity. The relationship between VEO activity and state capacity might be thought of as curvilinear. VEOs can operate in failed states because the central government does not effectively control and administer all of the territory. VEOs can also operate in states with high capacity to the extent these states are often developed democracies. Of course, there are some states with relatively high capacity that are not democratic (e.g., Saudi Arabia).

---

### Bibliography:

Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. Greed and Grievance in Civil War. *Oxford Economic Papers* 56(4): 563-595.

Crenshaw, Martha. 1981. The Causes of Terrorism. *Comparative Politics* 13(4): 379-399.

DeRouen, Karl, and David Sobek. 2004. The Dynamics of Civil War Duration and Outcome. *Journal of Peace Research* 41(3): 303-320.

DeRouen, Karl, Mark Ferguson, Jenna Lea, Ashley Streat-Bartlett, Young Park and Sam Norton. 2010. Civil War Peace Agreement Implementation and State Capacity. *Journal of Peace Research* 47(3): 333-346.



A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BASED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

- DeRouen, Karl, Shaun Goldfinch, Karl Rethemeyer, and Victor Asal. 2010. Empirical Indicators of Government Stability. Report to NSI, Inc. as part of PAKAF RCU2 Afghanistan Project.
- Englehart, Neil. 2009. State Capacity, State Failure, and Human Rights. *Journal of Peace Research* 46(2): 163–180.
- Fearon, James and D. Laitin. 2003. Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War. *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75-90.
- Kaufmann, Daniel, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi. 2010. The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues. Policy Research Working Paper 5430. September.
- Lyall, Jason and Isiah Wilson. 2009. Rage against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars. *International Organization* 63: 67-106.
- Nacos, Brigitte. 2012. *Terrorism and Counterterrorism*. New York: Longman.
- Pape, Robert. 2003. The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 343-362.
- Walsh, James, and James A. Piazza. 2010. Why Respecting Physical Integrity Rights Reduces Terrorism. *Comparative Political Studies* 43(5) 551–577.
- World Bank. 2011. *Worldwide Governance Indicators*. Available at <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp>