

## *Continually crushing VEOs deters future VEO formation and activities.*

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### General Description of the Literature:

Several scholars in the political science and policy literatures have suggested that crushing VEOs can deter future VEO activity. Davis and Jenkins (2002) propose that states might be able to “deter next time by crushing now.” Almog (2004) argues that Israel’s policy of “cumulative deterrence,” defined as persistent Israeli military action against terrorist groups combined with structured inducements, can “gradually wear down the enemy.” On the other hand, others, e.g., Vlahos (2002) have suggested that crushing VEOs can generate sympathies for the terrorist organization in supportive communities and thereby increase overall VEO formation and activity. There are only a few existing empirical studies that examine these dynamics directly. Lyall (2009) and Bar (2007, 2008) lend support to the idea that strong action by the counterterrorist can reduce future terror activity. Pape (2010) suggests that if crushing VEOs means the military occupation of another country by a democratic state, then that action will increase, not decrease, terrorist activity against the occupying state.

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### Detailed Analyses

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**Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence:** Using quantitative analysis and a quasi-experimental research design, Lyall (2009) finds that Russian indiscriminate attacks against restive Chechen villages led to a reduction in insurgent attacks from those villages relative to similar villages that were not subject to shelling in the 2000 to 2005 time period. Bar (2007) argues that the 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, while poorly executed, deterred Hizballah from conducting subsequent attacks against Israel for fear of provoking a similar Israeli response. While this is a plausible interpretation of the relative calm experienced by Israel since 2006, Bar does not provide the type of evidence, such as statements from Hizballah’s leadership, which would be necessary to fully support his claims. In a case study of Israel’s response to Palestinian terrorism from 2000 to 2008, Bar (2008) shows that Israeli targeted killings of Palestinian terror leaders resulted in increased operational prudence within the terrorist organization and a temporary reduction in attacks. However, performing statistical analysis of a comprehensive dataset of suicide bombings, Pape (2010) concludes that a military occupation by a democratic state is a near-necessary condition for suicide bombing. His findings suggest that if “crushing” a VEO results in military occupation, it will result in an increase, not a decrease, in suicide attacks against the counterterrorist.

**Empirical Support Score: 3**

**Applicability to Influencing VEOs:** The above studies were conducted on VEOs and there is, therefore, strong reason to believe that the findings are applicable to other VEOs. It bears noting, however, that some of the VEOs considered in the studies, Hizballah and Chechen rebels, control physical territory and are, therefore, more vulnerable to kinetic punishment than other VEOs. The findings from the studies on these groups may be less applicable to other, more diffuse, and less territorially-based types of VEOs.



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

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