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Battling Abroad: Why Some Organizations are Likely Targets of Foreign Counterterrorism

VICTOR ASAL AND JOSEPH K. YOUNG

Why are some terrorist organizations more likely to be targets of transnational counterterrorist operations? Previous work has identified characteristics of the environment or country involved to explain variation in targeting. We focus on characteristics of the violent organization to explain this variation. Using cross-national data on terrorist organizations and state targeting of these organizations, we identify several factors that help explain the variation in why some organizations are likely to be targeted while others are not.

INTRODUCTION

Following the August 1998 US embassy bombings in Africa perpetrated by Al-Qaeda, the USA responded with Tomahawk missile strikes on training camps in Afghanistan and an alleged chemical weapons facility in Sudan. In 1986, the USA similarly considered a military reaction to the Berlin nightclub bombing. The Reagan administration acknowledged alleged Libyan involvement in the act, and the USA responded over a week later with attacks on terrorist training facilities as well as the Libyan leader's residential compound. Both the strike on Libya and the military actions against Al-Qaeda illustrate that states attack terrorist groups within other states to target organizations that threaten their security.¹ In contrast, consider the reaction of India to the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks by the Pakistani organization Lashkar-e-Taiba. With over 250 people killed and hundreds more injured, these attacks were some of the most deadly ever experienced by the world's largest democracy. Given the brutality of these attacks, India did not target Lashkar-e-Taiba for retribution. The front page comment in *The Times of India* scathingly addressed this lack of a response: 'But today, as heaps of bodies lie in morgues. . . it is time to ask our politicians, are you going back to playing politics with our lives? Or are you going to do something worthwhile with yours?'²

The events in India, East Africa, and Europe suggest that sometimes states respond internationally to terrorist attacks and sometimes they do not. Why? As some observers in the USA suggest, such as Michael Chertoff, the former Secretary of Homeland Security, terrorism is a 'significant existential' threat.³ If this is the case, why would a state fail to respond to international groups that pose this kind of threat? Other observers, such as Mueller and Stewart, argue that the threat terrorism

poses, especially for democracies, is overblown.⁴ If the critics are right, this still cannot explain the different counterterrorist responses by the USA versus India.⁵

In the article that follows, we address this puzzle regarding why some organizations are more likely to be targets of transnational counterterrorist operations while others are not. We use cross-national data on terrorist organizations and counterterrorist responses to these organizations to test hypotheses related to answering this puzzle. First, we discuss international actions by states against their adversaries while focusing on engagements that are related to terrorism. Second, we identify a series of hypotheses amenable to empirical evaluation. Third, we discuss the cross-national data on terrorist organizations and counterterrorist targeting of those organizations. We then estimate models predicting the likelihood that an organization will be targeted by transnational counterterrorism. After discussing the results of these models, we turn to the policy implications of the study. In the conclusion, we discuss extending this work and some of the limitations of this approach.

COUNTERTERRORISM RESEARCH

As LaFree and Ackerman and Lum *et al.* show, our understanding of what constitutes effective counterterrorism activities is quite limited.⁶ Most of the studies have serious methodological problems that inhibit inferences or are confined to limited temporal or spatial domains.⁷ Recent research is working on expanding the information on state responses to terrorism across time and space.⁸ Research that specifies which organizations are most likely to be targets of foreign states is even more limited. Enders and Sandler investigated how US intervention against a state sponsor of terrorism (Libya) influenced future attacks against the USA.⁹ Similarly, LaFree and Ackerman found certain kinds of domestic interventions against organizations had competing effects on future attacks.¹⁰ While there is a burgeoning empirical literature on domestic counterterrorism, there is less emphasis on why states pursue some transnational terrorist organizations and not others. In law reviews, moral questions and legal issues concerning violating a state's sovereignty are raised, but cross-national evidence suggesting why some foreign terrorist organization are targeted is lacking.¹¹

Before outlining our argument, we should acknowledge important limitations in our analysis. Our focus in this article is on the organizational attributes that provoke a violent intervention by a foreign power. To answer this question, we use the Big Allied and Dangerous Version 1.0 (BAAD1) dataset in our analysis because it is currently the most comprehensive publically available dataset that captures attributes of terrorist organizations.¹² Unfortunately, the BAAD1 dataset is limited in some important ways. First, BAAD1 is a cross-sectional dataset: it only has one observation for each organization. Each observation is a set of average and/or aggregate characteristics and behaviors for the period 1998–2005. This limitation means that we are limited in our causal inferences: we do not know the temporal ordering of attacks and counterterrorism responses. This is a serious limitation.

Despite this, we believe that it – our analysis – sheds light on this important question as long as we – and the reader – are cognizant of the limitations of our analysis. We also focus on just the organizational factors that influence which groups are targeted. A complete picture of why groups are targeted would include factors associated with the targeting states or network of state agencies that are tasked with pursuing groups. Given this shortcoming, assuming these are complementary explanations to a complex problem our inferences should be similar. Future work could explore this possibility. In the conclusion, we discuss the effects of the data limitations as well as suggestions for gathering data to expand and extend this initial foray into studying the transnational targeting of terrorist organizations.

WHY DO STATES TARGET FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS?

Parsing the Organizations

States target domestic actors who use violence in contravention of the state's monopoly over this form of coercion.¹³ Domestic terrorists then are usually the subjects of counterterror efforts – but not always.¹⁴ For obvious reasons, Foreign Terrorist Organizations are more likely to be targeted for transnational counterterrorist efforts than domestic terrorists. In general, then, we would expect governments to focus on domestic threats, threats from foreign terrorists that have already threatened or executed an attack against the government, or against terrorists who have a proven record of attacking transnationally even if they have not targeted the particular government in question. Largely – but not completely – this expectation is borne out. From 1968 to 2007, the ITERATE database identifies over 1,400 organizations that have perpetrated a transnational terrorist attacks.¹⁵ During the same time period, the Global Terrorism Database identifies over 2,000 organizations that have perpetrated either a domestic or a transnational attack.¹⁶ The BAAD dataset, which has data on 395 terrorist organizations from 1998 to 2005, identifies 171 organizations – or 43 per cent of the total – as attacking international targets during this period. Of the 64 terrorist organizations that we have identified as having been targeted using military means by foreign powers, 49 organizations (76 per cent of those targeted by a foreign military power) have attacked internationally. Overwhelmingly, the organizations that attract attacks by governments *other than their home* government have engaged in transnational terrorism. More puzzling are the remaining organizations – the 15 organizations that were attacked by a foreign power that have not engaged in transnational terrorism.

Another way to consider this question is to look at terrorist 'watch-lists' for major countries. Notwithstanding the large number of terrorist organizations globally (previous research has identified at least 2,000 unique, named entities), the US Department of State via the Foreign Terrorist Organization designation only identifies about 50 organizations per year. Designation itself is important: being on this list suggests but clearly does not guarantee some form of counterterrorist actions by the USA have been authorized against the organization, such as freezing assets or

arresting people who provide material support. Even if these organizations completely changed from year to year – which they do not – there would still be organizations omitted from the list which are still potential threats that the USA is not targeting with counter terrorist efforts. Other countries have similar designations and similarly do not target all foreign terrorist organizations for counterterrorism.

Finally, there are known differentials in the degree to which some organizations are pursued by interested governments. For example, the Black September Organization was hunted by the Israelis across the globe.¹⁷ Other organizations do not receive the same level of effort or possibly any international effort at all. For instance, as far we know the Bodo Liberation Tigers – an organization that recently negotiated a deal with the Indian government – was never targeted by foreign governments.

Why, then, were these organizations singled out by one or more foreign powers? Why are some organizations that have never even ventured an attack outside their home country subject to violence visited upon them by a foreign power? Why are some organizations hunted by international powers while others are left to local authorities? Our working hypothesis is that organizational and environmental factors account for these remaining cases.

Seeking an Explanation

Recent research offers several explanations for why some organizations are targeted by foreign powers while others are not. We claim that organizations are targeted based on the *specific perceived threat* they represent to the foreign state, the *general threat* they may present because of their *capabilities* – even if they are not directly threatening the state, and finally the *constraints on action* that the home base of the organization may place on the opportunity to intervene. In the next section, we offer some testable hypotheses that emerge from *threat* and *opportunity*.

SPECIFIC PERCEIVED THREAT

Going Transnational

The most obvious reason why a foreign organization might be targeted for military violence by a state is that the organization explicitly targets that state: violence begets violence. Organizations that pose a transnational threat as opposed to ones with more local concerns may be more likely to receive the attention of foreign counterterrorism authority. Sixty-four per cent of the organizations in BAAD have no stated dominant international target (i.e., they do not specify a foreign entity as being an entity they see as an enemy). Drawing on our example from above, if the Bodo Liberation Army is killing Indians and only Indians why would another country's military intervene and risk its citizens and soldiers? Thus, we expect generally that:

H1: If an organization targets transnationally, it is more likely to be the target of foreign military operations.

Tugging on Superman's Cape

Of the 171 organizations that have attacked transnationally, only 49, or 29 per cent have been targeted for foreign military attack. However, these transnational attacks may be perpetrated against (1) countries that cannot adequately retaliate, (2) against elements in the targeted country that are not capable of retaliation, or (3) elements in a country that are in disfavor in their home country, and thus do not elicit a violent response by the element's government (for instance, think of a hypothetical attack by Al-Qaeda operatives on the PKK in Turkey).

Notwithstanding the opportunities for attacking the weak, the country that is listed as a primary foreign target most often is the USA. Forty organizations (10 per cent of the total in BAAD1) list the USA as the organization's primary international target. This number is even more impressive when we consider it only within the context of organizations that explicitly list an international target. Among those organizations that list an international target, the USA is listed as the primary target 36 per cent of the time.

The reasons for targeting the USA may be varied – from rhetorical solidarity with co-religionists to enhancing global reputation. Whatever the motivation, the USA by far is the most important target.¹⁸ It is also the country with the greatest capacity to strike back. Additionally, the USA has the greatest capacity to punish states that are found to be supporting terrorist organizations, which may motivate those states to adjust their policies. Libya, in the 1980s, is an often-cited example of a state changing its behavior inspired by US policy.¹⁹ The combination of being a popular target with the capacity to respond as well as the capacity to coerce other states to respond suggests that organizations that target the USA are more likely to be targeted by foreign military operations. We therefore expect the following:

H2: If an organization targets the USA, it is more likely to be the target of foreign military operations.

Ideology

Certain ideologies have been seen over time as key threats to powerful countries, and these threats have varied across time.²⁰ Currently, the key threat to the West has often been identified as Islamic fundamentalism.²¹ Indeed, the identification of a terrorist threat with Islamic ideology is so strong that one of the most popular books on terrorism – generically titled *Understanding Terrorist Networks* is solely about Islamist terrorists and terrorism despite the generality of the title.²² Having an Islamic orientation fits into a greater narrative about who the enemy is – especially since September 11. This is not a surprise given how explicitly Al-Qaeda and other organizations have identified the West as the enemy.²³ As Talhami argues, this targeting is based on 'a deeply ingrained perception of ... victimization by the Christian West' among Muslims in the Arab world.²⁴ This perception that grievance motivates attacks is not simply rhetorical. Fifty-eight per cent of Islamic

organizations have gone transnational in their attacks (63 groups). Given the reality of international threat and the perception that is tied to it, we believe that Islamic organizations are viewed as a greater threat than other organizations, and thus are more likely to be targeted by external military forces. We therefore expect that:

H3: If an organization is inspired by Islam, it is more likely to be the target of foreign military operations.

As stated in at the beginning of the section, threats and perceived threats by an organization may help explain which groups are targeted. Next, we consider how group capabilities might also influence this process.

Capabilities

Stated threat though is not the only thing that can lead a country to view an external organization as a potential threat. At the core of much realist thinking is the argument that growing power is a threat in its own right.²⁵ ‘... The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable.’²⁶ We tend to think of this maxim by Thucydides within the context of state-to-state relations, but there is no reason why this should not also apply to state–substate relations. Capable organizations that have the ability to kill many – and have stated that they intend to do so – are likely perceived as dangerous.

An important concern is how to best proxy for capability of an organization. There are obviously many types of resources that help to determine how threatening a terrorist organization is perceived to be, including financial assets, technical expertise, and access to restricted places, materials, and knowledge. However, we – like Boyns and Ballard – argue that ‘human capital’ is essential. It is the talent, expertise, and social connections of members that allow the organization to be successful.²⁷ We believe a useful proxy is the estimated size of the organization’s membership. The larger an organization becomes, the more likely that its membership includes individuals (1) skilled at killing, (2) capable of gathering resources, and (3) able to sustain a terrorist campaign. Such organizations are likely to be viewed as more threatening:

H4: The larger an organization, the more likely it will be the target of foreign military operations.

Another factor that the literature argues increases the capabilities of an organization is state sponsorship. There is a great deal of support in the literature for the notion that state sponsorship makes terrorist organizations more lethal.²⁸ As Wilkinson argues, ‘... states can provide levels of firepower, funding, training and intelligence far beyond the scope of substate organizations [as well as] safe havens and bases.’²⁹ States may also view sponsored terrorist organizations as direct proxies for their state sponsors. Thus, attacking the organization may be viewed as a safer way to attack the hostile country. Organizations, such as Hezbollah or Lashkar-e-Taiba, that are largely considered sponsored by a rival state and used as a proxy in a

larger state-based conflict are likely targets of foreign counterterrorism.³⁰ Israel's incursions into Lebanon to target Hezbollah are an example.

Additionally, outside support can make organizations stronger than they would be otherwise – especially if they lack a strong domestic base of support.³¹ Outside support could make an organization more dangerous and thus more of a priority for transnational counterterrorism. Thus, a state might be more prone to target a foreign terrorist organization because the friend of my enemy is my enemy. Given the discussion above, we argue that:

H5: If an organization has state sponsorship, it is more likely to be the target of foreign military operations.

Given that capabilities and threat posed by a terrorist organization are potential predictors of which groups are targeted for foreign counterterrorism, there are environmental factors that might also influence which groups are targeted.

CONSTRAINTS ON STATE ACTION

Both terrorist organizations and states operate in a world of constraints. We believe that two constraints should limit the likelihood that an organization will be targeted for foreign military operations. First, other states can constrain whether a state is able to act against a terrorist organization. The country where the organization resides, for example, may influence whether other states target it for counterterrorism. Specifically, the regime type of the country where the organization operates may affect whether other states target them. As Fearon argues, democracies are less attractive targets for war as they can generate audience costs and thus will be unlikely to back down from an international crisis.³² They also may be less attractive places to violate sovereignty in the pursuit of a transnational terrorist organization. Additionally, democracies may be better at counterterrorism.³³ While they may be more restrained than their authoritarian counterparts, they are also more likely to be effective.³⁴ Because democracies are sensitive to casualties, they are 'extraordinarily motivated to combat terrorism.'³⁵ Given that other states know this, they may be less likely to target a group in a democracy because they have more confidence that the state will effectively pursue the organization.

Second, states may be constrained by the power of the state where the group resides. This contextual issue might influence foreign action in two ways. If the 'homebase' country has a higher GDP – and thus more resources to invest in counterterrorism activities, military capabilities, and foreign aid (which may be put at risk if an intervention is pursued) – states are less likely to pursue action against groups in wealthy states regardless of the regime or other factors discussed above. Next, a wealthy or capable state may impose larger costs on the country pursuing a foreign group than a comparably poorer state for it will have to pay a higher cost to pursue a terrorist organization in a richer state. If this foreign involvement is unwelcomed, the costs for the counterterrorist should be lower from a weaker state. Recent American counterterrorist operations in Pakistan and Yemen, for example,

illustrate this point. While the Yemeni government has supported and encouraged US operations against Al-Qaeda within their borders, a relatively more powerful state, Saudi Arabia, has been much less supportive of relaxing its sovereignty to allow the US to pursue terrorist organizations.³⁶

Based upon this discussion, we expect the following:

- H6: The more democratic the state that an organization resides in, the less likely the organization will be the target of foreign counterterrorism.
- H7: The wealthier a state that an organization resides in, the less likely the organization will be the target of foreign counterterrorism.

In sum, we expect that the perception of threat, the capabilities of the group, and the environment will influence which groups will be targeted. In the next section, we discuss how to test these hypotheses using data from the BAAD dataset.

DATA AND RESEARCH DESIGN³⁷

Data for this study was derived from several datasets. Our primary source for organizational characteristics was the BAAD1 dataset, which as we noted above has one observation per organization. The data for each observation represents the average and/or aggregate characteristics for the organization for the period 1998–2005 unless otherwise noted.

As of 17 January 2006, the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) had identified 499 organizations that had committed at least one incident between 1998 and 2005. For each of these organizations, we have a summary of the number of incidents, injuries, and fatalities the organization caused during this period. The MIPT also includes a residual category of ‘unknown.’ It is important to note that ‘unknown’ accounts for 72.1 per cent of the incidents, 46.7 per cent of the injuries, and 47.5 per cent of the fatalities. Why these attacks are unclaimed is itself unknown. Many of these acts may be committed by entities (individuals, small groups, temporary splinter groups, etc.) that would not fit the generally accepted definitions of ‘organization’ and thus would not be part of this study. Juergensmeyer suggests that religious organizations may also tend to leave their acts unclaimed because they wish to avoid attention by the secular world as their audience is a higher power.³⁸

Of the 499 organizations that perpetrated an incident between 1998 and 2005, 400 of them had data pages that included group-level information as of 17 January 2006.³⁹ We undertook extensive efforts to independently confirm the existence of each group to remove ‘organizations’ that were aliases, covers, or temporary fronts for other members of the dataset. Eventually, five ‘alias/fronts’ were removed, for a total of 395 observations.

For each organization, we had coders to read the organization’s page and extract information on its size (in terms of number of members), date of founding, ideology, sources of state sponsorship (defined as financial transfers), country the organization

primarily targets, and the organization's primary and secondary international targets.⁴⁰ If information in the page was contradictory or if MIPT's data was contradicted by other sources, we sought independent confirmation from academic, Internet, and print media resources before assigning a final code or value for a variable.

While MIPT's data included a broad and flexible coding scheme for ideology, it did not identify each organization's ideology in detail. To test our hypotheses regarding the differential targeting of Islamically inspired organization (H3), we had coders and one of the authors to review the data available for each organization to determine if Islam played a role in its operations, rhetoric, or expressed goals. A total of 108 of the 395 groups were determined to have an Islamically inspired ideology.

In an effort to increase the number of organizations for whom a size estimate was available, we asked a panel of experts at the Monterey Terrorism Research and Education Program at the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS) to provide a best estimate of size based on a series of intervals. Our coders also sought additional information from Internet sources as we compiled the dataset. Just over half of the organizations were recoded through our and MIIS' efforts. After combining data from MIPT, MIIS, and our own coding, there were still 77 organizations for which we had 'low-confidence' size data. Those organizations were coded as having size '0.' Table 1 reports the frequency of sizes.

To test H6 and H7, our hypotheses related to how the environment influences targeting, we connected each organization to a couple of measures to characterize the nature of the country in which the organization is based (which in most cases is also the country that is most often attacked). We used the POLITY2 variable for regime type, which varies from -10 (strongly autocratic) to 10 (strongly democratic) to test H6.⁴¹ The GDP per capita measure was drawn from the International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook Database for the year 1997 and is expressed in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms.⁴² We use this measure to test H7.

Targeting information about the USA was drawn from the MIPT pages on each organization. Our data on transnational activity by each organization was compiled by reviewing MIPT's database of terrorist attacks. All these data were checked against other sources and in many cases modified. All other variables about organizations were coded in a binary fashion and given a one if the attribute was present or a zero otherwise.

TABLE 1
ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Code	Size Intervals
0	0–100 and low confidence
1	100–1,000
2	1,000–10,000
3	10,000 or more

Our data on foreign military intervention was collected from newspaper sources drawn primarily from publications indexed in LexisNexis and coded as a zero if there was no foreign military action against an organization and one otherwise.⁴³

Table 2 shows those organizations that were militarily targeted by foreign states as well as if the organization has operated transnationally, is Islamic, or has attacked US interests.

Table 3 includes a table of descriptive data for our variables. Given that our dependent variable is dichotomous, we estimated a logit model. To account for country-specific effects and the fact that multiple groups reside in a country, we clustered the standard errors on the 'homebase' country of each terrorist organization.⁴⁴

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4 presents the results of our logistic regression models. As can be seen from the analysis, all our hypotheses are supported either with a one- or two-tailed significance in the correct direction except for our hypothesis (H7) regarding the effects of GDP per capita. We should note though that it is hard to interpret the coefficients of a logit regression directly.

To make these numbers more clear, we converted these coefficients into predicted probabilities to gain a sense for how changes in the independent variable influence the probability of a terrorist group being targeted by a foreign state (a value of 1 on the dependent variable). The results of this analysis can be found in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that state sponsorship, Islam, and whether the group is transnational have relatively small impacts on the probability that a group is targeted. Groups that are state sponsored are, on average, a little over 7 per cent more likely to be targeted by foreign militaries than those that do not receive state support. Being Islamically inspired increases the probability of being targeted by about 10 per cent, on average, and holding other variables at their mean. Being transnational increases this probability by a little over 8 per cent. Organizational size, attacking the USA, and the host state being a democracy have a larger average marginal effect (32 per cent, 28 per cent, and -28 per cent, respectively).

Apparently, size, either in terms of your target or your own size, matters for being targeted for external intervention. Is there an interaction, though, between being large and being pursued by the USA? Also does it matter if an organization is Islamic? Much of the perception of threat from Islamic organizations resides in the USA. Is there a difference in how organizations are treated if they are Islamic or not and does this interact with the targeting of the USA by the organization? Table 6 shows how the probabilities change depending on the presence or absence of these three factors. An examination of this table provides some interesting insights. Attacking the USA and its interests increases the probability of being targeted across the size of the organization and whether a group is Islamically inspired or not. Targeting the USA when an organization is large and Islamic is particularly likely to encourage a counterterrorist response.

TABLE 2
ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN TARGETED BY FORIEGN MILITARIES

Organization	Transnational	Islam	Attack US Interests
Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)	1	1	0
Aden Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA)	1	1	1
al-Aarifeen	0	1	0
al-Fatah	1	0	0
al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (GAI)	1	1	0
al-Qaeda	1	1	1
al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)	1	1	1
al-Quds Brigades	1	1	0
Ansar al-Islam	1	1	1
Ansar al-Jihad	0	1	1
Ansar al-Sunnah Army	1	1	1
Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)	1	0	0
Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M)	1	0	0
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)	1	0	0
Divine WraBrigades	1	1	1
Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ)	1	1	0
Harakat ul-Mudjahidin (HuM)	1	1	0
Hezbollah	1	1	0
Hizbul Mujahideen (HM)	0	0	0
Islamic Army in Iraq	1	1	1
Islamic Jihad Brigades	0	1	1
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)	1	1	0
Islamic Resistance Brigades	1	1	0
Jaish-ul-Muslimin	0	1	1
Jemaah Islamiya (JI)	1	1	0
Jenin Martyrs' Brigade	1	1	0
Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)	1	0	0
Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)	1	1	1
Lashkar-I-Omar	1	1	1
Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)	1	0	0
Mahdi Army	1	1	1
Martyr Abu-Ali Mustafa Brigades	0	0	0
Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)	1	1	0
Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MeK)	1	0	0
Mujahideen Message	0	1	1
People's Liberation Army of Kurdistan (ARGK)	1	0	0
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)	1	0	0
Popular Self-Defense Forces (FAP)	1	0	0
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)	1	0	0
Revolutionary United Front (RUF)	1	0	0
Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC)	1	1	0
Salah al-Din Battalions	0	1	0
Saraya al-Shuhuada al-jihadiyah fi al-Iraq	1	1	1
Taliban	1	1	1
Tanzim	0	0	0
Tawhid and Jihad	1	1	1
UNITA	1	0	0
United Tajik Opposition (UTO)	0	1	0
Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors	1	0	0

TABLE 2 – *Continued*

Organization	Transnational	Islam	Attack US Interests
al-Qaeda Organization in the Land of the Two Rivers	1	1	1
Jaish al-Taifa al-Mansoura	1	1	1
Brigades of Imam al-Hassan al-Basri	0	1	1
Badr Forces	0	0	0
Brigades of Martyr Ahmed Yassin	0	0	1
Free People of Galillee	1	1	0
Iraqi Revenge Brigades	1	0	1
Karbala Brigades	1	1	1
Knights of the Tempest	0	0	0
Mujahideen Shura Council	1	1	1
Jund al-Sham	1	1	1
al-Ahwal Brigades	1	1	1
1920 Revolution Brigades	1	1	1
Abu al-Rish Brigades	0	0	0
Black Panthers (West Bank/Gaza)	1	0	0

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variable	Observation	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Targeted for attacks by foreign military	395	0.162	0.369	0	1
State sponsorship	395	0.081	0.273	0	1
Islam	395	0.273	0.446	0	1
Organizational size	395	0.514	0.813	0	3
Attack US interests	395	0.109	0.312	0	1
Democracy	395	5.192	6.679	-10	10
GDP per capita	395	10,459.05	8,801.98	478.708	29,884.99
Transnational	395	0.433	0.496	0	1

TABLE 4
FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TARGETING OF A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION BY A FOREIGN MILITARY FORCE

	Coefficients	SE	$p > z$
State sponsorship	0.738	0.439	0.093
Islam	1.042	0.489	0.033
Organizational size	0.767	0.221	0.001
Attack US interests	1.984	0.572	0.001
Democracy	-0.099	0.037	0.007
GDP per capita	0.000	0.000	0.413
Transnational	0.992	0.406	0.015
Constant	-3.790	0.518	0.000

Note: Number of observations = 395; Wald $\chi^2(7) = 99.17$; probability $> \chi^2 = 0.000$; pseudo $R^2 = 0.348$.

TABLE 5
PREDICTED PROBABILITIES THAT AN ORGANIZATION IS TARGETED BY FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES

Variable	Change in Probability
State sponsorship	0.073 (7.3 per cent)
Islam	0.099 (9.9 per cent)
Organizational size	0.323 (32 per cent)
Attack US interests	0.280 (28 per cent)
Democracy	-0.238 (-28 per cent)
Transnational	0.082 (8.2 per cent)

Note: Change in probability represents the total change when moving a variable from its minimum to its maximum (or from 0 to 1) while holding all other variables at their means.

TABLE 6
PREDICTED PROBABILITIES THAT AN ORGANIZATION IS TARGETED BY FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES VARYING SEVERAL FACTORS

Size 0/3 >	Not Islamic				Islamic			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
Does not attack US interests (per cent)	3.6	7.5	14.8	27.2	9.6	18.6	32.9	51
Attacks US interests (per cent)	21.4	36.9	55.7	73.1	43.5	62.4	78.1	88.5

Note: Attack probabilities while varying the organization size, whether a group is Islamically inspired, and whether the organization targets the USA. All other variables held at their means.

CONCLUSION

We have addressed why some groups receive violent counterterrorist responses by foreign governments while others do not. Using cross-national data on terrorist organizations and the locations in which they reside, we find that both threats posed by the organization and constraints on their ability to act influence which group gets targeted. Specifically, threats, such as being sponsored by a state, being Islamically influenced, having many members, targeting the USA, and targeting transnationally, increase the likelihood that a foreign government acts against the organization. Constraints on state action, such as democracy, reduce the likelihood of being targeted with a military response.

While these results hold cross-nationally for a sample of nearly 400 organizations, we plan to pursue the question temporally as well. The benefits of extending the data and question to a larger empirical domain are obvious: we would like our inferences to generalize to a large population. Given the limits of our current data, this has not been possible. We are currently coding these data at the group-year level to allow for a time-series cross-sectional research design. In addition to improving the sample of organizations and time, we should be able to deal with issues related to endogeneity. In other words, we will be able to disentangle whether

some of the factors that we find correlate with targeting are in fact happening before the foreign intervention.

An organizational approach has not been utilized to address this question previously, and thus we believe that our project can contribute to understanding these processes, we had to make some simplifying choices. We did not include factors associated with states that target the terrorist organizations. A complete picture would include organizations, the environment, and the states (who target and are targeted). We have included information and theorized regarding both the organization and environment, but have not extended this analysis to the states. We would need data on state actions and behaviors that are not yet available. If these state-based arguments are complementary, our results should hold. If not, our arguments could be invalidated. Since we can only speculate, we are not sure how these arguments are related (complements or substitutes). We see this as a fruitful approach for the future.

Our results are tentative and suggest much more work is to be done before the policies of states (either ones who host foreign terrorist organizations or ones that target them) are adjusted. With that said, this question like many in the terrorism research domain is inherently policy-relevant. While our results and other work in this area have actionable implications, this question has received a relative dearth of attention from scholars. We expect as more data become available over the next few years, this question along with many others related to the behavior of violent organizations can be further explored.

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NOTES

1. We define a terrorist group as a collective of individuals that use violence against civilians to influence an audience for political purposes; for a related discussion, see Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press 2007); we use the terms organization and group synonymously and sometimes modify these terms with terrorist. States and groups associated with government agencies can also be terrorist groups/organizations (the KKK during American Reconstruction, for example), but due to data constraints, our inquiry is limited to non-state terrorist groups.
2. Raju Gopalakrishnan, 'India Directs Anger at Politicians After Mumbai Attacks', *Reuters* 30 Nov. 2008.
3. Shane Harris and Stuart Taylor, Jr., 'Homeland Chief Looks Back, and Forward', Interview with Michael Chertoff, *National Journal* 17 Mar. 2008, online at <www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0308/031708nj2.htm>.
4. Erica Chenoweth and Joseph K. Young, *Resilient Republics: Terrorism's Negligible Effect on Democracy*, Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago,

- IL, 2010; John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, 'Hardly Existential: Thinking Rationally About Terrorism', *Foreign Affairs* Apr. 2010, online at <www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66186/john-mueller-and-mark-g-stewart/hardly-existential>.
5. It could be leveled that the USA can respond, in contrast to India, because they have global reach. The events in Lebanon in 1983 suggest that even the USA sometimes decides not to react to terrorist attacks.
 6. Gary LaFree and Gary Ackerman, 'The Empirical Study of Terrorism: Social and Legal Research', *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 5 (2009) pp.347–74; Cynthia Lum, Leslie Kennedy and Alison Sherley, 'Are Counter-Terrorism Strategies Effective? The Results of the Campbell Systematic Review on Counter-Terrorism Evaluation Research', *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 2/4 (2006) pp.489–516.
 7. Lum *et al.* (note 6) pp.489–516.
 8. Erica Chenoweth and Laura Dugan, 'Rethinking Counterterrorism: Evidence from Israel', *Working Paper* 17 Aug. 2010, available at SSRN, online at <<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1664282>>; Evan Perkoski and Erica Chenoweth, *The Effectiveness of Counterterrorism in Spain: A New Approach*, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, New Orleans, LA, 2010.
 9. Walter Enders and Todd Sandler, 'The Effectiveness of Antiterrorism Policies: A Vector-Autoregression-Intervention Analysis', *American Political Science Review* 87/4 (1993) pp.829–44.
 10. LaFree and Ackerman (note 6).
 11. Robert J. Beck and Anthony Clark Arend, 'Don't Tread on Us: International Law and Forcible State Responses to Terrorism', *Wisconsin International Law Journal* 12/2 (1993) pp.153–219; Davis Brown, 'Use of Force Against Terrorism After September 11th: State Responsibility, Self-Defense and Other Responses', *Cardozo Journal of International and Comparative Law* 11/1 (2003) pp.1–54.
 12. Victor Asal and R. Karl Rethemeyer, 'The Nature of the Beast: Organizational Structures and the Lethality of Terrorist Attacks', *Journal of Politics* 70/2 (2008) pp.437–49.
 13. Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2003).
 14. The voracity, scope, and brutality of these efforts, of course, vary. For a related discussion of domestic terrorism, see Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca and Luis de la Calle, 'Domestic Terrorism: The Hidden Side of Political Violence', *Annual Review of Political Science* 12/1 (2009) pp.31–49.
 15. Brock S. Blomberg, Rozlyn Engle and Reid Sawyer, 'On the Duration and Sustainability of Transnational Terrorist Organizations', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54/2 (2010) pp.303–30; The ITERATE database differentiates between transnational and international attacks. For this database, transnational attacks include multiple nationalities across the victim, perpetrator, or attack location. International attacks are state-directed. Contra to ITERATE, we use the terms transnational and international interchangeably to refer to attacks and groups who attack other nationalities or operate in foreign locations.
 16. Joseph K. Young and Laura Dugan, *Why do Terrorist Groups Endure?* Paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, 2010; The Global Terrorism Database is available online at <www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.
 17. There is debate concerning how much, if it all, Black September was autonomous from the PLO. For our purposes, this debate is not as important because Israel treated them as distinct and pursued Black September separate from the PLO.
 18. Wojciech Stankiewicz, 'International Terrorism at Sea as a Menace to the Civilization of the 21st Century', *American Behavioral Scientist* 48/6 (2005) pp.683–99.
 19. Bruce W. Jentleson and Christopher A. Whytock, 'Who "Won" Libya? The Force-Diplomacy Debate and Its Implications for Theory and Policy', *International Security* 30/3 (2006) pp.47–86; Yahia Zoubir, 'Libya in US Foreign Policy: From Rogue State to Good Fellow?' *Third World Quarterly* 23/1 (2002) pp.31–53.
 20. David C. Rapoport, 'The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism', *Current History* 100/650 (2001) pp.419–24.
 21. *Ibid.*
 22. Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2004).
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29. Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism Versus Democracy: The Liberal State Response* (London: Frank Cass 2000) p.64.
30. Conrad finds that rivalry is good monadic predictor of terrorism (see Justin Conrad, 'Interstate Rivalry and Terrorism', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55/4 (2011) pp.529–55); Findley, Piazza and Young also find this for dyadic interactions (see Michael G. Findley, James Piazza and Joseph K. Young, 'Games Rivals Play: Terrorism in International Rivalries', *Journal of Politics* 74/1 (2012) pp.235–48).
31. Daniel Byman, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau and David Brannan, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND 2001).
32. James Fearon, 'Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes', *American Political Science Review* 88/3 (1994) pp.577–92.
33. Max Abrahms, 'Why Democracies Make Superior Counterterrorists', *Security Studies* 16/2 (2007) pp.223–53.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid. p.242.
36. According to a World Bank estimate, the per capita GDP of Yemen in 2009 was approximately \$1,100 versus over \$14,000 for Saudi Arabia.
37. Victor Asal and R. Karl Rethemeyer, 'The Nature of the Beast: Organizational Structures and the Lethality of Terrorist Attacks', *Journal of Politics* 70/2 (2008) pp.437–49.
38. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2003).
39. Impressionistically, it appears that many of the missing groups are new organizations that have sprung up in Iraq since the US military action began.
40. This is not the same as the 'base of operations'; in some cases, organizations may operate from one country but target another; the targeting country information allows us to test H1 (groups that operate transnationally are more likely targeted) and H2 (groups that attack the USA are more likely to be targeted). Ideology allows us to test H3 (Islamically inspired groups are more likely targets), and size of the organization allows us to test H4 (larger groups are more likely targets).
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44. To more easily interpret the results, we used the *prchange* and *prtab* commands in Stata (see Scott Long and Jeremy Freese, *Regression Models for Categorical Dependent Variables Using Stata* (College Station, TX: Stata 2006)).