

SUICIDE BOMBINGS AND LETHALITY: A Statistical Analysis of Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

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OVERVIEW

An incident-driven analysis of the tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) of 1,621 suicide bombers (2002 – 2007) worldwide tracked changes in lethality and related those to target selection and other TTP.

METHODOLOGY

A variety of statistical techniques was used to describe the quantitative dimension of suicide bombings in four major conflict areas: Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel and Pakistan. Lowess smoothing revealed important patterns in temporal attack levels and non-parametric statistical tests were applied to the study's major hypotheses. Auto-regression failed to show significant serial correlations after accounting for trends.

FINDINGS

Iraq suicide bombings were shown to have a significant increase over time in lethality. Lethality was further shown to be related to delivery method (individual v. vehicle borne), target characteristics and theater (Iraq v. Afghanistan), but not the gender of the bomber. Auto-regression failed to show significant serial correlations after accounting for trends.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Other parts of the world need to be investigated; and, in particular, Afghanistan seems headed toward more and more violence from suicide bombings.



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