Can governments prevent terrorism while also respecting human rights?

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A new research symposium investigates the interrelationships between terrorism and governmental respect for human rights, regarding both how political authorities respond to terrorist violence and how human rights abuses can predict subsequent terrorist attacks. Responding to a lack of systematic evidence and granular data on the linkages between these two areas, the symposium addresses issues both domestic and international, ranging from public opinion on torture to the Guantanamo detention facility, sexual abuse in Israeli prisons, and the American profile abroad.

The research appears in the July issue of *PS:* Political Science *and Politics*, a journal of the American Political Science Association. The symposium was guest edited by James A. Piazza, an associate professor of political science at Pennsylvania State University, and James Igoe Walsh, an associate professor of political science at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The entire set of articles can be found online through the Cambridge University Press site.

Piazza and Walsh's groundbreaking preliminary study uses empirical analysis to investigate the effects of different types of human rights abuses on a state's susceptibility to terrorist attack. Categorizing abuse into torture, political imprisonment, disappearances, and extrajudicial killings, the authors conclude that the restriction of citizens' rights actually fuel terrorism. However, they also find that governmental repression in response to terrorism is limited, suggesting that human rights advocates might more effectively focus on other areas of threat.

The symposium includes six additional articles. Emilie Hafner-Burton (University of California-San Diego) and Jacob Shapiro (Princeton University) examine the validity of commonly held beliefs that terrorism creates strong pressures on governments—especially democracies—to restrict [human rights](link), and that these restrictions are both immoral and counterproductive to curbing terrorism. Will H. Moore (Florida State University) uses democratic theory to explore state responses of repression to terrorist activity. Adopting a similar theoretical approach, Michael Desch (University of Notre Dame) draws parallels between the Obama and Bush administrations' responses to counterterrorism policy, arguing that both presidents have pursued essentially the same course. Mia Bloom (Penn State University) uses the framework of a descriptive case study of Israeli-occupied lands to investigate how the abuse of women by occupying powers influences local support for insurgents and terrorists.

Several articles introduce crucial new datasets to the discourse that will be invaluable in later research and policy formulation. Jennifer Holmes and Linda Camp Keith (University of Texas at Dallas) use independent data to investigate the effects of the September 11 attacks on U.S. asylum policy, particularly as it pertains to applicants who speak Arabic or come from countries that house members of Al Qaeda. Paul Gronke and Darius Rejali (Reed College) offer a new set of data about public opinion on torture at the time of the 2008 election that shows that, despite the common assumption, the U.S. public did not favor the use of torture until six months into the Obama administration. Their article vigorously addresses the question of how opinion came to be so badly misrepresented in the media.

The scholarship offered by this symposium poses a significant contribution not only to academic circles, but also to the policymaking community. New data regarding public opinion and policy outcomes in the face of terrorist activity and theoretical investigations of the

underpinnings of national policy decisions allow more informed future discourse. Given the high stakes of counterterrorism decisions, such research is crucial for advancing broad understanding and the attainment of national goals.

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