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Abstract: National security crises often generate a ‘rally-around-the-flag’ effect, especially under nationalist administrations, but the salience of a security crisis varies within a country. Does exposure to a crisis intensify rallying by fomenting nationalism, inciting hawkishness, and distracting from quotidian economic concerns? Or does exposure deepen dissatisfaction with the incumbent, thereby reducing a rallying effect? We argue the latter using evidence from a difficult test in India. A major pre-election terrorist attack boosted the nationwide popularity of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the nationalist ruling party. Yet we find that proximity to the victims’ funeral processions, which served as patriotic rallies, substantially reduced BJP support where the party was incumbent. The size and breadth of our observed effects indicate that the social commemoration of the attack, rather than direct personal connections to its victims, fuelled anti-incumbent sentiment. Mobilizing collective anger after a crisis may dampen rather than augment a rally-around-the-flag effect.

Verification Materials: The data and materials required to verify the computational reproducibility of the results, procedures and analyses in this article are available on the American Journal of Political Science Dataverse within the Harvard Dataverse Network, at: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/OL16K3.

A large literature in political science suggests that national security crises often generate positive electoral returns for incumbent parties. Indeed, voters often ‘rally around the flag’ to support the incumbent in the face of an external threat (Baker and Oneal 2001; Edwards III and Swenson 1997; Lee 1977). Right-wing nationalist governments are especially well placed to exploit security crises to boost their standing, as they typically garner support by espousing toughness against a perceived security threat. Recent work on terrorism provides empirical support for the notion that voters flock to right-wing, nationalist parties after a terrorist attack (Berrebi and Klor 2008; Elster 2019; Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014).

Yet, extant literature offers less clarity about who within the electorate rallies behind incumbents. Some studies find heterogeneity by ideology, information, and international support (Baum 2002; Chapman and Reiter 2004; Edwards III and Swenson 1997; Sirin 2011). We consider a different source of variation: exposure to the crisis itself. We define ‘exposed’ voters as those for whom the losses from an attack are large and concrete. By this definition, exposure varies greatly within a country; an attack may be more salient in some regions than others, for instance. Our paper asks whether rallies are driven by those most exposed to a crisis or by those for whom the consequences of a crisis do not loom as large.

Existing scholarship could support either prediction. For instance, exposure to a crisis could amplify rallying behavior by diverting attention away from quotidian economic and governance concerns and toward an international adversary. We argue, however, that individuals who are most exposed to a crisis may be the most critical of the government and its response. Heightened exposure to the fallout of a crisis can therefore produce backlash even against nationalist incumbents. We focus...
on the exposure generated by social commemoration—through rallies, funerals or processions which highlight and make tangible the severity of an attack.

Unpacking the effects of crisis exposure adds to our understanding of voter behavior, the political incentives of incumbent parties, and the potential vulnerabilities of nationalist governments. To test our argument, we focus on a difficult case. Two months before India’s 2019 general elections, the terrorist organization Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) perpetrated an attack in Pulwama in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (hereafter, Kashmir) that killed 40 Indian paramilitary officers. The attack transformed the national political discussion and provoked hawkish sentiment toward Pakistan, the country alleged to harbour JeM. Two weeks later, the Indian government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the right-wing, nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) bombed an alleged JeM training camp in Balakot, Pakistan. In May, the BJP won re-election with a decisive second consecutive majority in the lower house of parliament.

The 2019 Indian election is an important case, as foreign policy arguably swayed the world’s largest democratic exercise to date. It is also a difficult case for our argument. The BJP maintains an issue advantage on national security and has long been associated with a hawkish stance on both terrorism and Pakistan. National approval for the BJP soared after Pulwama and the subsequent retaliatory strike at Balakot, and voters prioritized the issues that most advantaged the BJP. In the regions most exposed to casualties, hawkishness, and patriotism were on full display. The return of the Pulwama victims’ remains to their home villages mobilized tens of thousands from neighboring areas to pay their respects, wave Indian flags, and chant anti-Pakistan slogans.

This social mobilization forms the basis of our research design. To determine whether exposure intensifies or weakens pro-incumbent rallying, we estimate the local electoral impact of the Pulwama terrorist attack in the areas around the slain soldiers’ homes. Focusing on India’s largest state of Uttar Pradesh, and using proximity to the slain soldiers’ homes as a proxy for exposure to victims’ funeral processions, we compare BJP vote shares in villages close to the soldiers’ homes to the vote shares of villages further away. Our identification assumption is that, after controlling for observable characteristics and prior electoral outcomes, villages near the slain soldiers’ homes should otherwise exhibit similar voting behavior to villages slightly further out. The plausibility of our assumption is assessed through placebo tests and is aided by the granularity of our data. We implement an original polling booth-to-village matching procedure that allows us to study Indian national voting behavior at the village level, typically an infeasible task. The granularity of our data minimizes the confounders plaguing similar analyses of local casualty effects, which typically use the county, district or state as the unit of analysis (Althaus, Bramlett, and Gimpel 2012; Hayes and Myers 2009; Karol and Miguel 2007; Kriner and Shen 2014).

In our preferred specification, BJP vote share decreases with proximity to the funeral processions—but only in constituencies where the BJP is the incumbent, consistent with the anti-incumbency logic of our argument. In these constituencies, being 2 km from a soldier’s home village compared to 20 km results in a nearly 6 percentage point decline in the change in BJP vote share from 2014 to 2019. In other words, vote swings in favor of the BJP are systematically weaker near the epicenters of the Pulwama funeral processions than in villages mere kilometers away. The size and breadth of our observed effects indicate that the social commemoration of the attack, rather than direct personal connections to its victims, fuelled anti-incumbent sentiment. Additional qualitative and quantitative evidence regarding potential mechanisms suggests that our results are likely driven more by anti-incumbent blame for permitting the attack, rather than by dissatisfaction with the subsequent retaliation or with the politicization of the casualties. Placebo tests from previous elections and unrelated paramilitary casualties from Uttar Pradesh provide additional confidence in our findings. We conclude that heightened exposure to losses from a security crisis may depress rather than augment a rally-around-the-flag effect.

National Security, and Voting Behavior

A decades-old literature documents a ‘rally-around-the-flag’ effect in which political executives gain approval following national security crises (Lee 1977; Mueller 1973; Oneal and Bryan 1995). Security crises heighten nationalist sentiment, unite voters behind their leader, and often stifle opposition criticism (Schultz 2001). Attacks on a country’s homeland produce particularly powerful moments of national unity against a foreign perpetrator.

More recent research, however, documents heterogeneity in rallying effects. First, a body of research disputes whether rallying is driven by co-partisans or opponents of the executive (Baum 2002; Edwards III and Swenson 1997). Second, less politically informed voters appear to be more sensitive to security crises and military casualties (Baum 2002; Sirin 2011). Third, research on
the United States finds that voters are more likely to rally behind the president when the United Nations Security Council supports a particular use of force (Chapman and Reiter 2004). Much remains unanswered, however, about when and why voters rally after a security crisis, a lacuna exacerbated by the literature’s disproportionate focus on the American case and on the 9/11 attacks in particular.

National security crises affect not only voters’ evaluation of the incumbent but also their ideological preferences. Right-wing, nationalist governments are arguably best positioned to benefit from a security crisis. A large body of research finds that foreign terrorist attacks increase support for right-wing nationalist parties (Berrebi and Klor 2008; Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014; Kibris 2011; Peri, Rees, and Smith 2020). For instance, Getmansky and Zeitzoff (2014) find that rocket fire exposure increases Israeli voters’ support for right-wing parties by 2–6 percentage points. Right-wing nationalist parties benefit from their hawkish stances, valence on security issues and reputations as defenders of a country’s status or honor.

Terror attacks are not a certain boon to right-wing incumbents, especially if the government is perceived as losing a protracted anti-terror campaign (Kibris 2011; Montalvo 2011). Most studies of terrorism also evaluate electoral effects at the sites of attacks, which may differ from effects in regions not under threat. Nevertheless, a substantial body of evidence suggests that right-wing, nationalist incumbents are well-positioned to exploit national security crises. Exposed voters to the losses of a crisis amplifies or diminishes a rallying effect. We argue that crisis exposure damages rallies, focusing on the difficult case of security crises under right-wing, nationalist governments. We operationalize crisis exposure through the social commemoration of an attack, which magnifies and concretizes voters’ perceptions of the harm inflicted.

In addition to developing insights for the rallying literature, our paper contributes to research on Indian electoral politics. Conventional wisdom holds that issues confronting the Indian polity are divided into issues of ‘elite’ concern like national security, and bread-and-butter issues relevant to the ‘masses’ (Varshney 1998). Recently, work by Narang and Staniland (2018) questions this understanding, arguing that when there is clarity of responsibility over foreign policy and an issue of real salience emerges, security issues do matter for the average citizen. Our findings provide support for this latter conception of the Indian voter. In this way, this paper also contributes to a growing body of work on the factors propelling the rise of the BJP as a dominant political actor in India (Blakeslee 2018; Suryanarayan 2019; Thachil 2014).

**Theoretical Mechanisms**

There are a priori reasons to expect either a positive or negative effect of exposure on rallying behavior. Exposure could benefit incumbents through the same mechanisms by which the crisis itself produces rallying. First, highlighting the losses from an attack could intensify nationalist sentiment and anger at an international adversary, bolstering incumbents and nationalist parties alike. Second, voters for whom an attack is more salient might discount bread-and-butter issues on which a ruling nationalist party may have less valence.

We believe, however, that increasing voters’ exposure to a crisis ultimately reduces rather than augments a rallying effect. We identify three mechanisms for a dampening effect. The first is that exposed voters may assign greater blame to the government for the attack. Voters might punish a government out of blind retrospection (Achen and Bartels 2017) or they may rationally hold the incumbent accountable for its security failure.

This mechanism is in line with a literature on casualty sensitivity, which finds that the mounting costs of war reduce incumbent support. This literature varies in whether casualty effects are measured at the local or aggregate levels, but it primarily examines casualties from wars fought abroad rather than casualties from domestic terrorist attacks. For example, Kuijpers (2019) finds that, for 10 OECD countries engaged in five foreign-based conflicts, military casualties initially increase but then subsequently decrease aggregate incumbent popularity. Evidence from a range of American wars fought abroad, from Vietnam to Afghanistan and Iraq, suggests that voters penalize incumbents as local-level casualties grow (Gartner, Segura, and Wilkening 1997; Gartner and Segura 2008; Kriner and Shen 2020).

But casualties from domestic terrorist attacks often have the opposite aggregate effects on incumbent popularity as casualties in protracted wars abroad. We attribute this difference to both location and timing. By directly challenging national honor and security, attacks on homeland territory unite the nation behind an incumbent—and generate demands for revenge—in a way that attacks abroad may not. Additionally, unexpected one-off attacks may have little effect on most voters’ perceptions of incumbent performance, but mounting casualties over time may lead voters to view the incumbent as inept. The casualty sensitivity literature
One of the few studies to apply a local-level casualty sensitivity logic to terror events is Gartner (2008), who finds that Californians who knew a 9/11 victim were more likely to disapprove of President Bush. This finding is suggestive but limited. Connections to 9/11 victims are endogenous to factors like location of residence, occupational sector, and personal history, which also affect political support. This finding also does not reveal whether casualty exposure through social commemoration, rather than personal connections, can generate anti-incumbent effects.

Political psychology suggests micro-foundations for the argument that exposure generates anti-incumbent blame, even when casualties produce an aggregate rallying effect. Priming an emotional reaction of anger in response to 9/11 led citizens to express greater attributions of blame for the attacks, both toward the terrorists and the U.S. government (Small, Lerner, and Fischhoff 2006). Mobilizing collective anger after an attack could therefore backfire against a nationalist government. Notably, however, incumbent co-partisans are less likely to blame the government after crises (Malhotra and Kuo 2008).

According to a second mechanism, exposed voters may become more critical of the government’s response to an attack. Democracies often retaliate or initiate conflicts to satisfy public demand for revenge (Stein 2015), and research from psychology argues that victims seek revenge in order to restore equity (Stillwell, Baumeister, and Priore 2008). Satisfaction with revenge therefore typically requires that the retaliation feel proportionate to the loss incurred (Tripp, Bies, and Aquino 2002). Voters with greater perceptions of loss after an attack may therefore be more likely to question the adequacy of the government’s response.

A third mechanism pertains to voter backlash against the politicization of an attack. Incumbent parties may seek to exploit casualties for political gain. However, if local communities feel that the incumbent is making an untoward spectacle out of sacrifice, they might punish the ruling party for exploiting the victims’ deaths. This mechanism is related to the ‘blame’ mechanism in that voters punish the incumbent party for its handling of the crisis; here, however, voters are punishing the politicization of the attack rather than the security failure.

Together, these ‘blame’, ‘revenge’ and ‘backlash’ mechanisms suggest that greater exposure to an attack may undermine its political benefits to an incumbent. These mechanisms are not mutually exclusive, and they are difficult to disentangle empirically. Nevertheless, we assess support for our mechanisms through qualitative evidence on local reactions as well as quantitative tests unpacking which voters swung against the BJP and whom they supported instead. We also test whether opposition parties strategically fanned anti-incumbent anger in close races.

### Scope Conditions

We expect the adverse effects of crisis exposure for ruling parties to be driven by constituencies where they are the incumbent, for several reasons. First, in parliamentary democracies, a voter’s vote for their preferred party is mediated through their local representative. In opposition constituencies, disenchanted voters face a trade-off between ousting the local incumbent party and punishing the central government. Such a trade-off does not exist in incumbent-held constituencies, where voters can simultaneously punish both their elected representative and the national ruling party.

Second, disaffected voters in ruling party constituencies amass grievances against the ruling party for its actions both at the center and in their local constituency (Ravishankar 2009). Post-attack anger can easily tap into existing anti-incumbent sentiment among these aggrieved voters.

Third, in India, elected representatives are perceived less as lawmakers than as caretakers of their constituency (Bussell 2019; Chopra 1996; Jensenius 2017). Voters may punish their local incumbent for failing in their role as guardian if the attacks are perceived to be a result of government incompetence. This local anti-incumbent sentiment may powerfully combine with national anti-incumbent sentiment to disproportionately affect constituencies with ruling party incumbents.

We also seek to rule out a small number of alternative hypotheses from the literature on security and voting behavior. First, we show that our results are not driven by individual ties to the deceased but by the social commemoration of the attack. We argue that the size of the effects we observe are more consistent with the latter story. Second, we demonstrate that our observed effects are not fleeting, persisting at least until the end.

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1 Our case arguably straddles the divide between unexpected terror attack and protracted foreign war, as the conflict in disputed Kashmir has raged for decades. Because most Indians view Kashmir as homeland territory, and because the attack was deadlier than any in the region in 30 years, we see it more as the former, a point we revisit in the discussion.
of India's 6-week election. Third, because some studies argue that casualties primarily affect turnout rather than vote choice (Balcells and Torrats-Espinosa 2018; Robbins, Hunter, and Murray 2013), we show that changes in turnout do not drive our results.

Pulwama and the 2019 Indian Election

In this section, we review the details of the Pulwama attacks and India’s 2019 general election. On 14 February 2019, a vehicular borne explosive device in Pulwama, Kashmir, killed 40 soldiers belonging to India's Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). For over seven decades, the disputed territory of Kashmir has been a flashpoint between India and Pakistan. The February attack transpired on Indian-administered territory that has seen sporadic terrorist violence, largely perpetrated by groups based in Pakistan. This attack was no different; JeM immediately claimed responsibility for the attack and issued a pre-recorded video of the assailant. The attack was the deadliest for Indian security personnel in Kashmir in three decades and captured the attention of domestic and international headlines.

After the attack, tensions quickly escalated between India and Pakistan. Within 2 weeks of the attack, the government resorted to the use of force. On February 26, the Indian Air Force (IAF) bombed a reported JeM terrorist training camp in Balakot, Pakistan. This attack was a significant maneuver, representing the first time India struck sovereign (undisputed) Pakistani territory since the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. The following day, the IAF and Pakistani Air Force engaged in an aerial confrontation after which an IAF aircraft was shot down and its pilot (who ejected) was subsequently captured by Pakistan. On March 1, Pakistan released the IAF pilot, leading to a gradual de-escalation.

Electoral Salience

The conventional wisdom maintains that the BJP benefited electorally from the Pulwama-Balakot crisis. Here, we provide qualitative and quantitative evidence underpinning this wisdom and explain why this case constitutes a difficult test for our argument that crisis exposure dampens rallying effects.

Prior to the crisis, a severely slowing economy and three major state election defeats fostered doubts that the BJP could clinch a second consecutive single-party majority. In the end, however, the BJP won a rousing re-election victory, adding 21 seats to its 2014 parliamentary tally and securing the first consecutive, single-party parliamentary majorities since 1984.

Polling evidence suggests that the Pulwama-Balakot crisis was pivotal for the BJP. After remaining steady in the weeks prior to the attack, support for Modi and the BJP soared by 20 percentage points in the weeks following Pulwama and Balakot before partially reverting (Rukmini S. 2019), according to IANS-CVoter polling data (Figure 1). Further, another pre-election survey found that 46% of the roughly four-fifths of the population that had heard of the Balakot airstrike supported Modi’s reelection, compared to 32% of those that had not (Lokniti Team 2019).

Why was the crisis so beneficial to the BJP? First, the party enjoys unparalleled nationalist credentials in India. The BJP is traditionally associated with Hindu nationalism, or the general belief that Indian culture is broadly synonymous with Hindu culture. However, the BJP’s nationalist appeal has at least three additional components (Gupta and Shrimankar 2019). First, it mobilizes support by placing itself in direct opposition to an external enemy—such as Pakistan—that engages in hostile measures to undermine the country. Second, the BJP’s election manifestos, public statements and policy imperatives betray a more hawkish foreign policy than that of its principal national rival, the Congress Party. Third, the party places a premium on enhancing India’s global stature. One of the leitmotifs of Modi’s foreign policy is the desire to transform India from a balancing power into a ‘leading’ one (Tellis 2016).

The BJP upheld its hawkish reputation by carrying out a bombing raid on sovereign Pakistani soil. While some opposition parties accused the government of
politicizing the Pulwama attack in the absence of a long-term national security strategy, criticism of the BJP’s handling of the Pulwama-Balakot crisis was muted. As one opposition leader explained, ‘[T]his government has succeeded in creating this perception that anyone questioning their decisions is anti-national’ (Bisht 2019).

Further, the electoral salience of national security after the Pulwama attack helped displace quotidian concerns over the economy and employment, which were viewed as working against the ruling party (Vaishnav 2018).

Polling data confirms that the BJP enjoyed an incredible issue advantage over national security. An April 2019 IANS-CVoter survey found that support for Modi was higher among voters most concerned about terrorism than among voters for whom any other issue was the top priority (Figure 2). Voters most concerned about terror attacks preferred Modi to his rival Rahul Gandhi by a whopping 61 percentage points (India Abroad 2019). By contrast, those most concerned by rising prices or economic welfare preferred Gandhi. These results suggest that the Pulwama-Balakot crisis diverted attention to the issues that most advantaged the BJP.

In sum, Pulwama constitutes a tough case for the argument that crisis exposure reduces rallying effects for three reasons. First, the BJP enjoyed unrivaled credibility on national security issues. Second, opposition criticism of the BJP’s security failure was limited, making it less certain that exposed voters would blame the BJP for the incurred loss. Third, the BJP stood to benefit tremendously from increasing the salience of security issues relative to bread-and-butter concerns among exposed voters. Therefore, there are ample reasons to expect that highlighting the losses from Pulwama would have aided the BJP.

**Local Processions**

As the country largely rallied around the BJP, local funeral processions swept through soldiers’ home villages. After every CRPF death, the federal government sends a jawan’s (soldier’s) remains back to their hometown where a local procession accompanies the jawan’s last rites. These processions occurred for every jawan on 16 February 2019, eliminating concerns that processions arose selectively.

Coverage of the funerals indicates that tens of thousands of citizens turned out to console the victims’ families, honor the dead, and express their frustration with Pakistan’s alleged complicity. The processions were marked by their displays of intense nationalist sentiment and hawkishness toward Pakistan, factors which we might expect to have benefited the BJP at the ballot box 3 months later.

As one media account put it, ‘Tears. Anger. And Anti-Pakistan slogans. These are the three things that are uniting various villages across the country as the bodies of the killed CRPF jawans arrive home one by one’ (Hindustan Times 2019). In Unnao, Uttar Pradesh, an estimated 200,000 people lined the streets to pay their respects to the slain jawan Ajit Kumar, catching local officials off-guard (Indian Express 2019). At a funeral procession in Shamli, Uttar Pradesh, commemorating the lives of two slain soldiers, crowds chanted patriotic slogans such ‘Bharat Mata ki Jai’ (Victory for Mother India), ‘Jai Hind’ (Long live India) and ‘Vande Mataram’ (Mother India, I praise thee) (United News of India 2019).

But, as we later explain in our analysis of mechanisms, those most exposed to the casualties—the families of the deceased—often expressed anger with the BJP for failing to prevent the Pulwama attack and later questioned the government’s response at Balakot. Additionally, in one case, a BJP politician met criticism for treating the procession as a campaign rally. The processions may have fueled not only hawkishness and patriotism but also dissatisfaction with the BJP’s handling of the crisis.

**Political Dynamics in Uttar Pradesh**

We focus on India’s northern state of Uttar Pradesh for three reasons. First, Uttar Pradesh is India’s largest and most electorally consequential state, with a population roughly that of Brazil. The state is also home to a plurality
of 12 Pulwama victims, a number disproportionate even for the state’s massive population. Second, Uttar Pradesh is one of only a few states for which we can precisely match polling booth returns to villages, and it is a rare state that publishes booth-level data on voter turnout. Third, Uttar Pradesh is a theoretically interesting and difficult test case. The shadow of the Partition of the subcontinent looms very large in the state, which Varshney (2003) describes as uniquely ‘prone’ to Hindu-Muslim riots.

For the past few decades, political competition has largely centered around two regional parties, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Samajwadi Party (SP). The BSP is dedicated to uplifting India’s historically disadvantaged communities, especially Scheduled Castes (SCs), a group that occupies the lowest rung of the Hindu caste hierarchy. The SP is a splinter group of the erstwhile Janata Dal and has traditionally represented the interest of mid-ranking Hindu castes known as Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Muslims. Both parties are primarily competitive in Uttar Pradesh, and both primarily mobilize support along caste lines.

In the 2014 general election, the Modi-led BJP trounced both the SP and the BSP, winning a stunning 71 of Uttar Pradesh’s 80 parliamentary seats (a BJP ally won another two seats). Three years later, the party followed up this national triumph with a devastating rout in the state assembly elections, claiming three-fourths of the state’s legislative seats.

In 2019, the BSP and SP banded together on an explicitly anti-BJP plank, partially unifying what had been a fragmented opposition (the Congress Party, a much smaller player in the state, did not join the opposition alliance). Despite the newfound opposition bonhomie, however, the BJP won 62 of 80 seats and captured nearly 50% of votes (an increase of 8% from 2014). The BSP-SP combine won 15 seats, and the Congress took only 1, while the BJP’s coalition ally, the Apna Dal-Sonelal, won 2.

Notably, the caste backgrounds of the slain jawans in Uttar Pradesh largely mirror the state’s demographics with a slight OBC bias: two are General, or forward caste, seven are OBC, and three are SC (Ashraf 2019). But none are Muslim, and Muslims are underrepresented overall in the CRPF (Press Trust of India 2014). To ensure that our results are not driven by caste or religious dynamics, we control for SC and Muslim population in our analyses, demonstrate that demographics do not substantially vary with procession distance, and show that our results hold for villages of different demographic compositions (Appendix Q, p. 27). Our results are somewhat stronger for villages with fewer SC and Muslim residents, though we cannot definitively conclude that this is due to weaker CRPF recruitment.²

**Empirical Strategy**

**Specification**

We aim to identify the effect of crisis exposure on BJP support. The Pulwama victims’ funeral processions exposed voters to the crisis, heightening its salience and consequences. An ideal but infeasible research design would randomize funeral procession attendance. Instead, we assess the effects of a quasi-exogenous encouragement to attend the processions—proximity to the soldiers’ home villages—on village-level voting behavior. This approach constitutes a kind of intention-to-treat (ITT) design.

Our identification assumption is that the slain jawans’ locations of origin are locally random conditional on a rich set of covariates. Nationally, the Pulwama fatalities are disproportionately concentrated in states like Uttar Pradesh which recruit heavily into the paramilitary forces. But the particular contingent of jawans who were killed in Pulwama is quasi-random. Therefore, we contend that villages near their exact locations of origin are comparable to villages slightly further away. We support this assumption through a number of placebo tests.

We restrict our sample to villages within 20 km of the jawans’ home villages (Figure 3). While villagers 5 km away could easily walk or bike to the jawans’ funeral processions, a 20-km round-trip journey in one day would have been prohibitive for most residents (as car ownership is relatively rare in Uttar Pradesh). In Appendix G, p. 14, we show that the effect of procession proximity dissipates after 15 km. Combined, these 20-km radii contain more residents than Israel, the subject of much electoral research on terrorism. To address heterogeneity within this large sample, we control for an individual’s state assembly constituency (AC). ACs are nested both within national parliamentary constituencies (PCs) and Indian administrative districts, allowing us to capture unobserved candidate-level and administrative unit effects on voter behavior. Parliamentary candidates also organize their campaigns along AC lines, and state representatives (Members of Legislative Assembly, or MLAs) play an important role in amassing votes for the national candidate. On average, ACs in Uttar Pradesh cover half a million people.

²We find no clear heterogeneous effects by SC composition where the jawan was himself SC, but this sample is quite limited (Appendix Q, pp. 27–28).
Our treatment variable is a village’s proximity to the nearest slain jawan’s home village. We operationalize proximity as the negative logged distance to the village, in kilometers. We log distance because we expect effects to diminish further out, and we negate the variable so that higher values indicate greater proximity. In Appendix G, p. 14, we show that this functional form reasonably fits the observed relationship, and in Appendix H, p. 15, we show robustness to several alternate measures of proximity.

Our main dependent variable of interest is the change in BJP vote share from 2014 to 2019. We include a rich set of village-level controls described in the following section. While these controls are time-invariant, they are still important, as certain types of villages (e.g. rural or poor villages) may have swung systematically towards or against the BJP from 2014 to 2019.

To summarize, we estimate the following empirical specification, where $i$ denotes the village and $j$ denotes the state assembly constituency:

$$\Delta \text{BJP Share}_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Proximity}_{ij} + \gamma X_{ij} + \alpha_j + \epsilon_{ij}$$

We estimate this equation separately for BJP and non-BJP constituencies, as well as for the whole sample. We cluster standard errors by PC to capture error correlation among villages with the same candidates on the ballot. Because there are only 23 PCs in our sample (17 held by the BJP, five held by the SP and one held by the Apna Dal-Sonelal), we calculate cluster (block) bootstrap non-parametric 95 percentile confidence intervals. We demonstrate robustness to several other methods of estimating uncertainty in Appendix I, pp. 16–17.

**Data**

We identify the slain jawans’ home villages from https://bharatkheer.gov.in/, the official government website memorializing martyred security personnel. We calculate the distance from each home village’s centroid to that of every other village in Uttar Pradesh using a village-level shapefile for the state. There are 5,150 inhabited villages and towns within 20 km of a jawan’s home village (map shown in Figure 3).

Electoral data for 2014 and 2019 comes from the Election Commission of India, which publishes polling booth returns (also known as ‘Form 20’ returns). We aggregate booth-level returns by village. However, no existing dataset maps polling booths to villages. While the Election Commission publishes geocoded polling booth locations for most booths, these data have glaring errors and routinely place booths well outside their constituency boundaries.

We match polling booths to the villages in which they reside using the Hindi village names on the voter rolls of each booth, which Susewind (2016) has made publicly accessible for the state of Uttar Pradesh. Full details regarding this time-intensive matching procedure are provided in Appendix A, pp. 3–4.

We match all polling booths to a village, but not all villages have a polling booth; voters in small villages often vote in larger, neighboring villages. Because polling stations must reside within 2 km of each voter’s residence by Indian law, our measurement error in estimating voters’ location is small. After matching 2014 polling booths to villages, we match 2014 booths to their 2019 counterparts, as this is less cumbersome than re-matching 2019 polling booths to villages. We describe this matching process in Appendix B, p. 5.

We exclude 31 villages (<1% of our sample) because of irregularities in the election returns, though

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3 We calculate Haversinian distances to account for a spherical earth and add 1 km to a village’s distance before logging to avoid estimation errors.

4 Our results are robust to expanding our definition of BJP vote share and incumbency to include the BJP’s coalition ally, Apna Dal-Sonelal (Appendix J, p. 18).
Table 1: Main Results

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Note: Cluster (block) bootstrap 95 percentile confidence intervals in parentheses.
Full list of controls provided in Appendix C, p. 6. "p < .05, ** p < .01.

Results

Table 1 presents our main results. Columns 1–3 restrict the sample to BJP-held constituencies, where we expect to observe the strongest anti-incumbent effect. In Column 1, we present the bivariate relationship between home village proximity and change in BJP vote share. We expect a negative coefficient, indicating that proximity to a home village reduced BJP vote share. The coefficient in Column 1 is negative, as predicted, but insignificant. However, a purely bivariate specification conflates regional differences with the effects of procession proximity.

Our village-level controls come from three primary sources: the 2011 Indian Census, Data on Religion and Politics in India (Susewind 2016), and the Socioeconomic High-resolution Rural-Urban Geographic Dataset on India (SHRUG) (Asher et al. 2021).

From the Census, we include controls for township status, logged village population, village sex composition, the proportion of Scheduled Caste residents, the proportion of residents who are literate, and the proportion working in any occupation, in cultivation, in agricultural labor, and in marginal labor.

From SHRUG, we use indicators for whether a village has a paved road and electricity, respectively. We also obtain a village’s distance to the nearest town of 10, 50, 100 and 500 thousand people, as urban proximity affects socioeconomic outcomes (Asher et al. 2021) and could be correlated with procession distance. In Appendix M, p. 21, we also control for SHRUG’s measure of nighttime luminosity, although this variable is missing for many villages.

Finally, we include a number of polling booth-level electoral controls from the Data on Religion and Politics in India, which we aggregate at the village level. Because vote swings may depend on initial vote shares, we control for the 2014 vote share of both the BJP and its principal opposition rival in each constituency. This rival party is either the BSP or the SP, or in two cases, the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), which joined the BSP-SP alliance in 2019. We also control for the estimated proportion of women and Muslims on the voter rolls in a village, using name-matching algorithms from Susewind (2016), and control for voter age.

We do not have village-level data on paramilitary recruitment, but we expect residual recruitment differences across mere kilometers to be minimal, especially after including village-level sectoral employment controls. In Table 3, we also provide suggestive evidence that high recruitment levels in proximate villages are insufficient to explain our results.

5These covariates induce a small amount of missingness in our data: we lack opposition 2014 vote share for 60 villages (<2% of the sample) where the BJP’s main 2019 opponent, the RLD, did not previously run. Another 41 villages (<2% of the sample) have other missing covariates.

6We have more ‘proximate’ villages in some regions than others because we exclude opposition-held constituencies and villages outside state/national lines. Resampling constituencies with replacement exacerbates these differences, and in Appendix N, p. 22, we
We prefer to control for a village’s assembly constituency (AC) to restrict comparisons to similar villages, as explained in the previous section. We observe a negative and significant effect of proximity after simply including AC fixed effects (Column 2, \( p < .001 \)). Our preferred specification, Column 3, adds the village-level controls, which do not notably alter the estimated effect.

The magnitude of the effect in Column 3 is substantial. All else equal, villages 2 km from a funeral procession see a 5.8 percentage point reduction in BJP vote share compared to villages 20 km away. This effect is large even compared to those found in other studies of wartime casualties or terrorism (Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014; Karol and Miguel 2007). And its size—on the order of magnitude of around 60,000 total votes (Appendix R, p. 29)—indicates that our results are not primarily driven by personal ties to the deceased.

The result in Column 3 withstands a variety of robustness checks, both to alternate measures of uncertainty (Appendix I, pp. 16–17) and alternate controls (Appendix M, p. 21). Our observed effects also persist to the end of the 6-week election (Appendix L, p. 20) and are strongest where villages were exposed to two nearby processions (see Appendix O, p. 23). We observe no aggregate effects of proximity on turnout (Appendix K, p. 19). Our effects are somewhat stronger in constituencies where the BJP declined to re-nominate the incumbent candidate (Appendix L, p. 20), a surprising finding given the anti-incumbent logic of our argument. However, party re-nomination decisions were made after the Pulwama attack, and the BJP may have strategically removed incumbents from constituencies facing the strongest post-Pulwama backlash. Further, our results are stronger in politically competitive constituencies, suggesting that opposition parties strategically exploited anti-BJP anger in close contests (Appendix Q, pp. 27–28).

In Column 4 of Table 1, we show that proximity has a positive but insignificant effect on BJP vote share in the opposition (SP) constituencies in our sample. The effect of proximity is also insignificant for SP vote share in these constituencies (Appendix J, p. 18), so we caution against interpreting our results as evidence of anti-incumbency against MPs of all parties.\(^8\) In Column 5, we pool all constituencies and find a negative effect of proximity on overall BJP vote share on the edge of statistical significance (\( p = .11 \)).

### Placebo Tests

Our results hinge on the plausibility of our identification assumption, which we test here. First, we assess whether electoral trends in proximate villages ran parallel to those in more distant villages prior to the attack. In Table 2, we estimate the models from Columns 1–3 of Table 1 with a placebo dependent variable, the change in BJP vote share from 2009 to 2014. Proximity is not associated with this

\(^7\)In Appendix F, pp. 12–13, we safeguard against model dependency in these results. First, we show that our results are significant (at least at the 10% level) to other minimalist specifications that include only district, PC or procession site fixed effects. Second, we construct simulated vote changes with random AC-level variation of the size in our data. Nearly half of the time, a bivariate effect differs as much as ours does from a 'true' effect of the size in Column 3.

\(^8\)There is a significant negative effect of proximity on overall incumbent party vote share (Appendix J, p. 18), but the BJP is incumbent in the vast majority of our sample as well as in the state and country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 2009 Placebo Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BJP Change 09–14</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((-0.044,0.064))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC dummies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Cluster (block) bootstrap 95 percentile confidence intervals in parentheses. Full list of controls provided in Appendix C, p. 6. \(^*\)p < .05, \(^{**}\)p < .01.
TABLE 3 Proximity to Non-Pulwama Jawan Deaths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in BJP Vote Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC Dummies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01. Unadjusted (non-robust) SEs in parentheses.
Full list of controls provided in Appendix C, p. 6.

prior change in vote share, supporting a parallel trends assumption. However, 2009 electoral returns are available for only two-thirds of our constituencies. To allay concerns that those constituencies are unrepresentative, we demonstrate that our main effect still holds for the placebo test sample in Column 4.

Next, we provide suggestive evidence that recruitment patterns and direct ties to the deceased do not explain our results. Three paramilitary soldiers died from villages in our sample between 2014 and 2019 in other domestic attacks. These serve as ‘placebo deaths:’ if villages proximate to victims’ hometowns turned against the BJP due to higher recruitment levels or direct personal loss, then these non-Pulwama deaths should produce similar effects. Yet, they do not (Table 3). While the sample of villages within 20 km of these soldiers’ homes is small, the estimated placebo effect is 100 times smaller than the true effect and is insignificant even with non-robust standard errors. This test suggests that the social mobilization around the Pulwama attack, and not direct ties to the dead or recruitment differences, explains the results we observe.

Another concern is that spatial correlation in BJP vote share produces a spurious effect of proximity. We address this concern in two ways. First, we randomly sample 1,000 villages from each 20-km radius as ‘placebo funeral procession sites’ and assess the effects of proximity to these villages. Only 21 of 1,000 sets of placebo sites generate an effect as large as ours (Figure 4, p = .021), suggesting that proximity to the specific funeral procession sites, rather than an unobserved spatial confounder, drives our results.

Second, we construct placebo vote changes by simulating 1,000 ‘spatial noise’ variables whose spatial correlation structure matches that of the true change in BJP vote share. We estimate this structure by fitting a Matérn covariance function with exponential decay to our dependent variable, in accordance with Kelly (2019; 2020). We then evaluate whether our proximity variable typically produces as large of an effect on spatial noise as on our true vote change variable. We find that it does not; as Figure 5 shows, proximity has a larger effect on only two of 1,000 placebo vote change variables than on actual BJP vote change (p = .002). This test is less stringent than the one in Figure 4 because the simulated effects on spatial noise have mean zero, while the effects of proximity to placebo villages are correlated with the

FIGURE 4 Placebo Procession Sites

Notes: Effects of proximity to sets of random villages on BJP vote share. Each placebo village set is constructed by randomly selecting one village from each 20-km radius. The vertical lines depict the true effect and its opposite.

FIGURE 5 Spatial Noise Placebo Effects

Notes: Effects of proximity to jawan home villages on simulated BJP vote swings. Each simulated variable is generated as a random field with the estimated spatial correlation structure of the true vote swings. The vertical lines depict the magnitude of the true effect. Coefficients differ from Figure 4 because we standardize both the actual and simulated dependent variables.

true effect.\footnote{This correlation arises because distance to a random point on a disk is positively correlated with distance to the disk’s center.} Appendices N, O, and P explain and conduct additional spatial robustness checks, demonstrating that the spatial correlation in our data alone cannot plausibly generate effects of the size we observe.

**Mechanisms**

We now assess qualitative and quantitative evidence for our three mechanisms. While there is some qualitative support for all three mechanisms, the preponderance of the available quantitative evidence points to anti-incumbent ‘blame’ as the principal mechanism at play. However, we cannot definitively rule out the ‘revenge’ and ‘backlash’ mechanisms.

Statements from procession attendees are scant, but we can glean insight into the effects of voter exposure by examining the reactions of those most exposed to the Pulwama casualties: the relatives and close contacts of the deceased. Utilizing public statements by members of every jawan’s family after Pulwama and Balakot, we find that members of five of the 12 families blamed the government for a security failure at Pulwama (Appendix D, p. 7).\footnote{In one case, we find and include reactions from a close family friend in the absence of unambiguous evidence from direct kin.} Four questioned the sufficiency or impact of the Balakot strike. Additionally, members of four of the families accused the government of politicizing their personal loss, suggesting voter backlash is a possibility. In all, quotes from nine of the 12 families offer evidence for all three mechanisms. While family reactions offer only limited insights into the effects of crisis exposure among those without direct ties to the deceased, these reactions nevertheless suggest that there is plausible qualitative support for each of our three mechanisms.

However, three pieces of quantitative evidence suggest that the ‘blame’ mechanism better explains our results than the other two. First, because incumbent co-partisans are typically reluctant to blame the executive after government failure, the ‘blame’ mechanism suggests weaker anti-BJP effects among BJP stalwarts (Malhotra and Kuo 2008). But the ‘revenge’ mechanism suggests that it is precisely those voters who initially supported the BJP for its hawkish policies who will withdraw support from the party after crisis exposure, as they come to perceive its retaliation as insufficient.

While we cannot observe individual votes, we can assess whether villages that initially supported the BJP exhibited weaker or stronger anti-incumbent swings. Columns 1 and 2 of Table 4 show that our effects are stronger in villages with below-median 2014 BJP vote share, a finding more consistent with the ‘blame’ than the ‘revenge’ mechanism. This result is not driven by differential changes in turnout, as Columns 3 and 4 show; pro-BJP villages actually exhibited an increase in turnout with procession proximity. We do not predict this increase, but we note that it is small (less than a 2 percentage point difference for villages that are 2 versus 20 km away) and could be driven by opposition voters in these villages. In Columns 5 and 6, we show that the effects of proximity on overall BJP vote count, which combines considerations of turnout and vote share, remain stronger for villages with weaker initial BJP support.\footnote{Our overall effect is also significant with this dependent variable; see Appendix K, p. 19.} We interpret these findings as support for the ‘blame’ mechanism over the ‘revenge’ mechanism.

Second, examining the opposition parties to which exposed voters flocked reveals additional information about mechanisms. The Congress Party ruled India for over 54 years between 1947 and 2014 and could tout the protection of India’s jawans under its tenure, as it had not allowed as deadly of an attack in Kashmir since 1989.\footnote{Indeed, the Congress’ 2019 election manifesto heavily emphasized protecting Indian security personnel: https://manifesto.inc.in/en/central armed police forces.html.} But the Congress’s policy of ‘strategic restraint’ against Pakistan gave it a distinct reputation for dovishness (Hall 2016). Voters seeking a party that can prevent attacks like Pulwama had reason to vote for the Congress, but it is less clear why voters dissatisfied with the BJP’s retaliation would flock to the party with the best-known track record for restraint. (As caste-based regional parties that have not led the central government, the BSP and SP have no clear foreign policy reputations.)

Consistent with the ‘blame’ mechanism, we find that exposed voters disproportionately flocked to the Congress. Table 5 shows the effects of proximity on each opposition party’s vote share. While the effect is slightly smaller for the Congress (INC) than the BSP or SP, it is statistically significant and enormous given the party’s tiny overall vote share. INC challengers in our sample reaped, on average, 6.9% of the vote in 2019, one-fifth the average vote share of BSP and SP challengers, yet the effect of proximity is similar for the INC as for the BSP and SP. Villages 2 km away from a soldiers’ home saw a 1.9 percentage point increase in Congress vote share...
compared to villages 20 km away, or 27% of baseline Congress support.

To test the ‘backlash’ mechanism directly, we evaluate whether anti-BJP effects are strongest around the processions where the BJP arguably created the most egregious political spectacle. We first note that the BJP did politicize the Pulwama funerals to some extent. Unlike all other parties, the BJP flooded many of the processions with high-ranking national party figures (Appendix E, pp. 10–11). In one instance, a BJP politician received viral criticism for treating the funeral as a campaign rally, but this is the only direct evidence of widespread backlash that we can find (Appendix E, pp. 10–11). We therefore define processions around which we expect the greatest backlash in two ways: first, as those where the BJP sent more high-ranking political figures from around the country, and second, as the procession where BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj received flak for disrespectfully politicizing the funeral. While we caution that BJP attendance is non-random (the party sent more figures to processions in less remote regions), we note that neither of these two sets of processions appears to drive our results (Appendix E, pp. 10–11).

In sum, while we cannot fully disentangle the three hypothesized mechanisms at play, we believe that there is relatively limited evidence for the ‘backlash’ and ‘revenge’ mechanisms and relatively stronger evidence for the ‘blame’ mechanism.

## Discussion

Our results suggest that greater exposure to a security crisis can taper the level of rallying in support of incumbents, even those with nationalist credentials. While the Pulwama-Balakot crisis benefited the incumbent

### TABLE 4 Heterogeneous Effects by Initial BJP Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Change in BJP Vote Share</th>
<th>Turnout</th>
<th>Log BJP Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pro BJP (1)</td>
<td>Anti BJP (2)</td>
<td>Pro BJP (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>-0.019 (−0.029,0.004)</td>
<td>-0.031** (−0.059,−0.010)</td>
<td>0.009*** (0.003,0.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC dummies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>1,295</td>
<td>1,219</td>
<td>1,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.436</td>
<td>0.480</td>
<td>0.665</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Cluster (block) bootstrap 95 percentile confidence intervals in parentheses. Full list of controls provided in Appendix C, p. 6. *p < .05, **p < .01.

### TABLE 5 Effects on Opposition Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INC (1)</th>
<th>BSP (2)</th>
<th>SP (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>0.010* (0.002,0.014)</td>
<td>0.013 (−0.019,0.044)</td>
<td>0.019 (−0.004,0.033)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC dummies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>1,596</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>1,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.620</td>
<td>0.714</td>
<td>0.641</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01. Cluster (block) bootstrap 95 percentile confidence intervals in parentheses. Full list of controls provided in Appendix C, p. 6.
BJP nationally, villages exposed to the soldiers’ funeral processions were less likely to rally behind the BJP government despite the patriotic fervor those processions fomented. Importantly, our analysis also provides evidence that incumbency at the constituency level mediates voters’ reactions to national security crises in parliamentary democracies, as our observed effects are concentrated in BJP-held constituencies.

Our results focus on the micro-level impacts of casualty exposure. We estimate that the local anti-BJP effects in our sample are on the order of magnitude of about 60,000 votes, or around 5,000 per death (Appendix R, p. 29). Effects of this size could plausibly tip close parliamentary contests, like one in our sample that was decided by 181 votes. Still, hundreds of millions of Indians cast their ballots in the 2019 election, and the BJP secured a decisive re-election victory. If the BJP won in an effective landslide despite these adverse micro-level consequences, are the latter inconsequential? We believe they are not, for three reasons.

First, our results suggest that rallying effects are more tenuous than previously thought. Had 400 paramilitary soldiers been killed at Pulwama instead of 40, the commemoration of these losses may have mobilized far more citizens to question the government rather than to swell the ranks of BJP supporters. Further, under the ‘fog of war’, illustrated by the murkiness in the details around the Balakot strike, the BJP could easily have lost control over the political narrative had the populace insisted on greater scrutiny of their claims.

Second, we believe our data provide convincing evidence that terrorism and conflict can have significant political consequences in developing countries where national security is considered an ‘elite’ issue—a finding that is somewhat at odds with conventional wisdom. For instance, analysts pointed out that the ‘26/11’ terrorist attacks in Mumbai, just months ahead of the 2009 general election, as well as the 1999 Kargil War did not have a material impact on voting behavior. Pulwama suggests the opposite, at least in certain local contexts.

Third, our argument suggests that even nationalist governments face a real tradeoff in exploiting security crises for political gain. Mobilizing collective anger after an attack could benefit the government through a ‘rally-around-the-flag’ effect, but it could also backfire against an incumbent. Incumbents face competing incentives both to emphasize and downplay security crises, and existing research has not adequately recognized the dilemma these dueling incentives create. Conversely, emphasizing the losses inflicted by an attack may be a winning strategy for opposition parties, even under nationalist party regimes.

We expect our findings to travel to attacks in other contexts, as the BJP’s national security credentials make ours a difficult test case. But we recognize that the Pulwama attack occurred as part of a decades-long conflict in Kashmir, where mounting casualties may have heightened voters’ willingness to punish the incumbent. Nevertheless, there had been no attack of this size in 30 years, and even few opposition leaders even blamed the incumbent for permitting the attack. Exploiting or drumming up national security crises may backfire even for the most secure nationalist governments.

References


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**Supporting Information**

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

**Appendix A:** Booth-Village Matching Procedure

**Appendix B:** Booth Matching Over Time Procedure

**Appendix C:** Covariate Summary Statistics

**Appendix D:** Quotes

**Appendix E:** Procession Attendance

**Appendix F:** Additional Specifications Without Controls

**Appendix G:** GAM

**Appendix H:** Robustness to Functional Form

**Appendix I:** Alternate Standard Errors / Confidence Intervals

**Appendix J:** Additional Electoral Results

**Appendix K:** Effects on Turnout and Vote Totals

**Appendix L:** Heterogeneous Effects by Candidate and Phase

**Appendix M:** Robustness to Alternate Covariates

**Appendix N:** Kelly (2019) Noise Simulations

**Appendix O:** Kelly (2020) Spatial Correlation Checks

**Appendix P:** Additional Spatial Robustness Checks

**Appendix Q:** Political Competition and Demographics

**Appendix R:** Back-of-the-Envelope Calculations

**Appendix S:** Bibliography