An extremist group's loss of operational control will increase its likelihood to de-radicalize or end altogether.

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General Description of the Literature:

Operational control (OC) essentially refers to a VEO's ability to use its chain of command to carry out operations. Terrorism can end from several causes such as failure, decapitation, or repression. Loss of OC is one of the ways terrorism can end due to failure according to Cronin (2009). She provides examples of the Ulster Volunteer Force, Weather Underground and Ulster Defense Alliance.

Detailed Analyses

163: *An extremist group's loss of operational control will increase its likelihood to de-radicalize or end altogether.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Cronin (2009) notes that when the chain of command breaks down splinter groups might begin carrying out actions without benefit of a strategic plan. This hurts the VEOs legitimacy and can hasten its demise even more quickly than state repression. Operational breakdown leads to foolish attacks that hurt VEO credibility and damage its legitimacy with the public.

Empirical Support Score: 1 = Anecdotal support only for the hypothesis

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: The state could take advantage of tactical blunders caused by loss of OC by the VEO. Cronin notes that operational errors make the VEO look bad and its 'romantic' image can be undermined. Cronin also notes the state can take advantage of other 'organizational vulnerabilities' such as the departure of key leaders, poor recruiting, or splintering.

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

Bibliography:

Cronin, Audrey Kurth. 2009. *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.