

EDITORIAL

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Clauset and Woodard (2013) ask, “What is the likelihood of another September 11th-sized or larger terrorist event, worldwide, over the next decade?” This question has implications for numerous policy arenas - national security, international relations, public safety, disaster preparedness, and so on - but it also has resonance for any individual who remembers 9/11. Thus, when the Area Editors wanted to choose a paper that would engage the audience in an active discussion at the 2013 Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) in Montreal, this paper was nominated as one of several potential papers and then ultimately selected by a vote of the Area Editors. The discussions in this issue of the *Annals of Applied Statistics* include those presented formally at JSM 2013 as well as others from individuals who were unable to attend JSM 2013 or who contributed discussions after the meeting.

Clauset and Woodard (2013) indeed stimulated an active discussion. Several points were raised in the discussion about assumptions. Substantive assumptions that were addressed include the framing of the problem - e.g., how useful is it to characterize the impact of an attack by the number of casualties - and the quality and informativeness of terrorism data in general. Assumptions about the statistical modeling strategy were also raised, particularly with respect to how best to model rare and extreme events and whether terrorist events are independent and identically distributed. Some of these assumptions were discussed and examined by the authors themselves in their paper. Considering the controversial topic and the sensitivity of results when using different models for rare event data, this is entirely appropriate. Clauset and Woodard (2013) and the accompanying discussions should provide ample material for an interested reader to evaluate the importance of these assumptions to examining whether a 9/11-sized terrorist attack is an outlier.

References.

- [1] CLAUSET A. AND WOODARD R (2013). ESTIMATING THE HISTORICAL AND FUTURE PROBABILITIES OF LARGE TERRORIST EVENTS. *Annals of Applied Statistics* xxx-xxx.

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