Reconsidering the Irrelevance of Foreign Voices for U.S. Public Opinion: An Experiment

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Abstract: We report the results of a survey experiment designed to gauge the influence of foreign elite voices on U.S. public opinion. Improving on previous work, our experiment exposed subjects to news coverage of proposed airstrikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, rather than simply providing them with sterilized information about a possible military action. We find that subjects who read a news story reporting opposition from the U.N. secretary-general to a U.S. plan to launch military strikes against Iran were significantly less likely to support action than were those who did not encounter international opposition in the news. In addition, partisanship mediated responsiveness, with Democrats more likely to respond to foreign voices than Republicans. Attitudes toward the United Nations had no effect, but predispositions toward multilateralism played a pronounced role in shaping opinion when foreign voices opposed U.S. military action. Multilateralism was unrelated to opinion about strikes against Iran when only domestic elites appeared in the news. Our results offer new evidence that international leaders and institutions can affect American mass opinion.

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On February 22, 2003, an Army Ranger stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington, sat down with
his private thoughts. Along with his brother, the young man had joined the military in the months
after the 9/11 attacks, drawn to the service by what he saw as his patriotic duty to fight terrorism.
Since enlisting, he had suffered through grueling basic training and the demanding Ranger
Indoctrination Program. He was ready for combat.

But as it became clear in the winter of 2003 that the United States was marching toward a
military conflict in Iraq, he was unsettled. Writing in his journal that day, the soldier expressed
misgivings about the looming war and what it would mean for him and his brother—whom he
referred to as “Nub”—to be sent into the fight:

It may be very soon that Nub & I will be called upon to take part in something I see no clear
purpose for. ... Were our case for war even somewhat justifiable, no doubt many of our
traditional allies ... would be praising our initiative. ... However, every leader in the world,
with a few exceptions, is crying foul, as is the voice of much of the people. This ... leads me
to believe that we have little or no justification other than our imperial whim.

Those were the words of Pat Tillman, the former Arizona Cardinals safety who gave up a
$3.6-million NFL contract to join the “war on terror,” and who in 2004 would lose his life to
friendly fire in the mountains along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.1 In many ways, Tillman was an
extraordinary person. And in standing against the Iraq War because of criticism of the invasion from
overseas, he appeared to demonstrate yet another way in which he was unrepresentative of the
American public: According to the conventional scholarly wisdom, Americans take their cues about
war and peace from domestic elites, not from the accented pronouncements of foreign leaders (e.g.,
Mermín 1999; Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey 1987).

Recent studies, however, have challenged this conventional wisdom, suggesting that
Tillman’s response to opposition from abroad may not have been so unique after all. In some cases,
Americans do take cues from foreign officials and international organizations. While the

1 Tillman’s journal is quoted on p. 193 of Where Men Win Glory, Jon Krakauer’s book about Pat Tillman’s life and death.
perspectives of domestic elites continue to play a major role in shaping Americans’ attitudes toward war, views on military action voiced by foreign actors can influence public support (e.g., Chapman 2011; Grieco et al. 2011; Hayes and Guardino forthcoming): The sources of mass opinion about American foreign policy do not reside strictly on the near side of the water’s edge.

At the same time, significant questions remain about the relationship between U.S. mass opinion and foreign elite voices. First, it is not clear which individual-level factors play the strongest roles in mediating receptiveness to the views of non-domestic actors. What influence do partisanship, attitudes toward international institutions, and other general foreign policy predispositions, such as multilateralism, have in conditioning the effects of foreign voices on Americans’ attitudes? Second, the existing evidence for a causal relationship between foreign elite perspectives and U.S. public opinion is based solely on observational data (Chapman 2011; Hayes and Guardino forthcoming) and an experimental study that does not capture well the ways in which people encounter political information through the media (Grieco et al. 2011). As a consequence, whether foreign elite voices influence Americans’ policy opinions, and how they do so, are questions still in search of answers.

In this paper, we report the results of a survey experiment designed to gauge the influence of foreign voices on U.S. public opinion. Improving on previous work, we exposed subjects to realistic news coverage of proposed airstrikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, rather than simply providing them with sterilized information about a possible military action. We find that subjects who read a newspaper story reporting opposition from the U.N. secretary-general to a U.S. plan to launch military strikes against Iran were significantly less likely to support action than were those who did not encounter international opposition in the news. In addition, partisanship mediated responsiveness, with Democrats more likely to respond to foreign voices than Republicans. Attitudes toward the United Nations had no effect, but predispositions toward multilateralism
played a pronounced role in shaping opinion when foreign voices opposed U.S. military action. Multilateralism was unrelated to opinion about strikes against Iran when only domestic elites appeared in the news.

The results provide further evidence that foreign voices can move public opinion when their perspectives are carried in the mass media. They also show that Americans’ reactions to proposals for military action are driven by political discourse, not merely by their seemingly independent assessments of unmediated events. Partisanship plays a major role in conditioning individuals’ reactions to elite rhetoric, but it is not party identification alone that determines Americans’ foreign policy attitudes. Views about the United States’ role in international affairs also become salient when international leaders challenge American foreign policy proposals, underscoring the entanglements of domestic and international politics in an increasingly globalized world.

**Foreign Voices in the News and U.S. Public Opinion**

The role of foreign sources in American news coverage—and their potential effects on mass opinion in the United States—is understudied and underappreciated. Dominant theoretical models in political communication have tended to de-emphasize the prevalence of foreign elite voices in mainstream media coverage and to assume that any non-U.S. sources that do appear would have little impact on public opinion. But recent empirical work has begun to challenge these views. Our study is a contribution to this growing research agenda.

In examining the effects of elite discourse on public opinion, scholars have focused almost exclusively on the influence of persuasive arguments made by domestic political officials (e.g., Baum and Groeling 2010; Berinsky 2007, 2009; Feldman et al. 2007; Groeling and Baum 2008; Zaller 1992). The typical framework posits that Republicans in the electorate take cues from Republican elites, and Democratic identifiers respond to signals from Democratic elites. Though the information sources potentially available to citizens are myriad, on most public issues—especially in
the realm of foreign policy—this is a reasonable theoretical simplification: mainstream news reports are dominated by voices emanating from the centers of government power (Bennett 1990; Bennett et al. 2007; Lawrence 2000; Mermin 1999). When non-official domestic voices do appear in mass media coverage—which remains the primary source of political information for the vast majority of Americans (Graber 2010)—it is usually only when their views are sanctioned by institutional elites, or when their perspectives are summarily denigrated as outside the bounds of acceptable opinion (Entman and Rojecki 1993; Gitlin 1980; Hallin 1994; Shoemaker 1991; McLeod and Hertog 1992).

One implication of this perspective is that foreign voices—leaders of other countries or officials from international organizations, for instance—show up infrequently in mainstream U.S. media coverage of foreign policy, except when they are depicted as hostile to American interests. Moreover, most scholars suggest that even if non-U.S. sources did appear regularly, they would be irrelevant for explaining mass opinion because they lack credibility with American audiences (Mermin 1999; Entman 2004). These assumptions appear to be validated by the little research that has examined the possibility of foreign influence on U.S. public opinion, all of which finds weak or nonexistent effects (Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey 1987; Jordan and Page 1992; Brody 1994).

A growing literature, however, argues that in the context of contemporary post-Cold War foreign policy, it is unrealistic to assume that foreign discourse reported in U.S. mass media is irrelevant for public opinion formation. The few scholars who have empirically examined the prevalence of foreign sources in American news content have found impressive evidence. In his exhaustive study of Gulf War television coverage, Althaus (2003, 390) found that foreign officials and citizens comprised more than one-quarter of the voices cited in the news. Similarly, Jordan and Page (1992), Althaus et al. (1996), Mermin (1999) and Entman (2004) have shown that journalists frequently relied on foreign sources for oppositional perspectives in covering several foreign policy cases, including the U.S.-Libya episode during the 1980s, as well as the invasions of Grenada and
Panama. In previous work (Hayes and Guardino 2010; forthcoming), we found that most criticism of the Bush administration on network TV news before the Iraq War emanated from foreign elites, and that these voices had substantial impacts on the policy opinions expressed by rank-and-file Democrats and independents. These empirical findings have been accompanied by a call to reexamine the role of non-domestic actors in recent U.S. foreign policy debates: with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of a bi-polar global power structure, American media outlets—continually in search of the journalistic holy grails of balance and conflict—may increasingly incorporate the perspectives of external actors into foreign policy discussions (Althaus et al. 1996; Livingston and Eachus 1996).

At the same time, the conventional wisdom that foreign elites are reflexively viewed by the entire American public as hostile or non-credible requires revision. The few empirical studies of attitude formation that examine the possible impact of international voices in the media treat American opinion as an undifferentiated mass. Perhaps in part because of data limitations, researchers have typically analyzed aggregate-level opinion only, rather than breaking down survey results by demographic characteristics and other individual-level factors. This is a serious shortcoming in light of dominant theories of attitude formation and change, which posit that citizens’ social, ideological or value predispositions—as well as their levels of general public affairs knowledge—play important mediating and moderating roles in shaping their responsiveness to political arguments carried in the media (e.g., Chong and Druckman 2007; Druckman 2001; Sniderman and Theriault 2004; Zaller 1992).2

Predispositions alone, however, are insufficient to guide citizens’ policy views. Unless people encounter information and arguments that connect issue debates to their more general (and often

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2 By predispositions, we mean the basic, relatively enduring orientations toward the political world that people form over time through socialization experiences involving family, peers, school, the workplace, longer-term mass media exposure and other mechanisms (e.g., Feldman 1988; Zaller 1992).
inchoate) orientations, most individuals are unlikely to express preferences that square with their predispositions, or even to articulate policy opinions at all. And this topical, policy-relevant discourse must come from actors—in the U.S. system, typically institutional elites who communicate through the mainstream media—that citizens consider credible (Petty et al. 2002). In short, most people lack the political and public affairs knowledge—and the exposure to alternative sources of information and analysis—that could enable them to confidently articulate policy preferences in the absence of elite cues transmitted through mass media.

Previous theory and research suggests that citizens with different predispositions toward the political world—and to foreign policy in particular—and with different levels of exposure to and understanding of public affairs, should not respond in the same ways to the messages offered by non-U.S. voices in the news. While foreign officials quoted in the media are not likely to be viewed as fully aligned with American interests, in some cases certain segments of the mass public may perceive these elites to be reasonably credible in debates over questions of war and international conflict, especially in an increasingly interconnected world marked by global flows of people, information and commerce. Indeed, international relations scholars have recently begun to explore the influence that cues from organizations like the United Nations may have on U.S. public support for both the president and military action (Chapman 2009, 2011; Chapman and Reiter 2004; Gelpi et al. 2009; Grieco et al. 2011). At the very least, the conclusion that all Americans—regardless of their predispositions—view all foreign elites as hostile sources should be based on empirical verification, not on purely a priori assumption.

**Existing Evidence for Influence from Abroad**

However, recent studies of the potential impact of foreign arguments on U.S. public opinion have several shortcomings. In our previous research (Hayes and Guardino forthcoming), we have argued that predispositions condition mass receptivity toward foreign statements in the news, but
the available data before the Iraq War limited our analyses to a focus on partisan identification, which we used as a proxy for general foreign policy postures based on secondary studies. In addition, while our use of observational data allowed us to control for several alternative explanations of public opinion in the pre-Iraq War case, this analytic strategy limits confidence in our causal story.

Chapman (2009, 2011) offers promising evidence for the influence of foreign cues on U.S. public opinion, but his analysis is based on aggregate-level observational data. As a result, this work is unable to specify the individual-level factors that shape Americans’ receptivity toward foreign views, or to highlight the causal mechanisms involved in these opinion-shaping processes. Chapman’s (2009, 2011) analysis also makes the assumption that most Americans have plausible perceptions of the foreign policy views and interests held by U.N. Security Council member states. This supposition, however, is belied by decades of research showing Americans’ generally low levels of basic political knowledge and knowledge of specific policy-relevant facts (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1997). Similarly, Chapman (2009, 2011) assumes that most people are aware of Security Council decisions, pegging this assumption on prominent coverage of foreign policy cases in The New York Times. But however central the so-called “newspaper of record” is to U.S. politics, prestige outlets like these are poor proxies for the information environment that the vast majority of Americans are regularly exposed to.3

3 Moreover, Chapman (2009, 2011) uses presidential approval ratings—rather than opinions toward specific foreign policy proposals—as his key dependent variable. A lack of comparable question-wordings for policy opinion items in multiple cases over time precludes the kind of longitudinal analysis that Chapman (2009, 2011) is aiming at, and he does control for some of the important factors that affect presidential approval ratings. However, these ratings are shaped by a number of forces—including, and especially during the Bush administration (Jacobson 2008), partisanship—that may have little or nothing to do with foreign policy, so they cannot provide a precise test of the effects of foreign elite cues on U.S. public opinion. Not incidentally, using this presidential approval measure Chapman (2009, 2011) finds that lack of U.N. Security Council endorsement of the Iraq War did not dampen mass U.S. public support for the invasion; this contradicts our findings based on detailed analyses of mass media coverage and individual-level survey data probing specific policy attitudes (Hayes and Guardino forthcoming).
Grieco et al. (2011) deploy an experiment (as well as micro-level survey data) to investigate the impact of cues from international organizations on U.S. public opinion toward military intervention. This research design allows them to unpack the causal mechanisms and conditional factors involved in foreign influence on American attitudes, but it carries a substantial cost in external validity. Grieco et al. (2011) use the issue of U.S. intervention in East Timor as a test case for their argument. They choose this case because it is one for which they judge that most highly informed Americans would have some knowledge, but not enough that most subjects would come to the experiment with strong attitudes. However, East Timor is among the most obscure foreign policy issues of recent decades, at least in the context of U.S. mass politics; as such, these findings may not generalize well to high-profile episodes like the Persian Gulf War, the post-Sept. 11 intervention in Afghanistan, or the 2003 invasion of Iraq, during which most Americans likely held stronger predispositions, as well as more numerous and salient “top-of-the-head” considerations policy (Zaller 1992). Moreover, rather than exposing subjects to news stories, Grieco et al. (2011) confront them with simple prompts containing various cues about elite support for or opposition to military intervention. While this strategy offers a straightforward way to provide cues to experimental subjects, it does not accurately depict the process by which most people receive information about political issues, especially on foreign policy matters.

The absence of the mass media from these studies points to a broader blind-spot in the otherwise promising international relations literature examining the influence of foreign elite cues on American mass opinion: much of this work assumes that the public reacts directly to votes taken by international bodies or to pronouncements by foreign officials on U.S. policy—or else they allow that this simplifying assumption is implausible, but argue that it poses no substantial problems for their empirical analyses. In marginalizing the news media and the dynamics of real-world political discourse more generally, however, these approaches misperceive the mechanisms that connect the
actions of international organizations and foreign governments to the views that ordinary Americans report in public opinion polls. The vast majority of people never confront “unmediated elite cues” (Grieco et al. 2011: 571, fn. 11) in the realm of national-level domestic politics, let alone in the foreign policy domain. Moreover—even in today’s more ideologically polarized news media environment—people usually confront some variation in elite (and, occasionally, non-elite) cues: typical news reports include multiple, and often conflicting, statements by political actors embedded within a narrative structure. This means that caution must be taken in generalizing even promising experimental results such as those in Grieco et al. (2011) to actual political behavior. Research designs that more accurately model the context in which citizens encounter political information are needed to provide a firmer foundation from which to draw conclusions about the influence of foreign elites on U.S. public opinion.

**Experimental Design**

In order to investigate the effects of foreign elites on U.S. public opinion in a way that might avoid the shortfalls of previous studies, we designed a between-subjects survey experiment to be executed through an innovative online interface. We recruited subjects through a website run by Amazon.com called Mechanical Turk, where people receive small payments in return for participation in market research, academic surveys, and related work. While some have raised methodological concerns about online experiments, a recent analysis shows that these concerns are unfounded in the case of Mechanical Turk: For instance, samples recruited though the service are more demographically representative than are the convenience samples of undergraduate students that are typical for political science and related research (Berinsky et al. 2010). We conducted the experiment during June 2011, garnering a sample of 600, from which we subtracted eight subjects.

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4 For more information on Mechanical Turk, go to: [https://www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome](https://www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome). In keeping with similar studies (e.g., Albertson and Gadarian 2011; Berinsky et al. 2010), we paid respondents $0.75 for participating in the survey.
for potentially participating in the study more than once (since these cases came from duplicate IP addresses). This left us with a sample of 592.⁵

We randomly assigned subjects to one of five treatments, or to a control condition. Subjects in each treatment were exposed to fake newspaper stories about proposed U.S. airstrikes on suspected Iranian nuclear facilities that were modeled closely on the Internet edition of USA Today. These reports—and their headlines—varied the elite sources (President Barack Obama, Republican House Speaker John Boehner, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon) who advocated or opposed military action. Except for these key variations, the treatments were alike. Those assigned to the control condition read an unrelated USA Today story about singer-songwriter Jimmy Buffett’s recent forays into virtual gaming. Table 1 describes the experimental conditions, and the treatments are shown in Appendix B.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Starting with the top of the table, we included the control condition to create a baseline group against which to measure the effects of the various treatments. Subjects in the “GOP/Obama Support, U.N. Opposition” condition read a story in which major-party domestic elites are unified in support of military action against Iran, and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon opposes action; this allowed us to examine the effects of media coverage showing bipartisan U.S. elite support for airstrikes combined with foreign elite criticism. Those in the “GOP/Obama Support” group read a story reporting that Speaker Boehner was urging airstrikes and Obama was agreeing that military action was needed; no foreign or other opposition voices appeared in this treatment. This enabled us to compare the effects of bipartisan official support for military action with no (foreign or domestic)

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⁵ Descriptive statistics for selected demographic and political characteristics are presented in Appendix A. In general, the sample is younger, more female, and more educated than the U.S. population. Democrats and liberals are somewhat overrepresented. But the sample is fairly diverse, and far more diverse than other commonly used convenience samples, such as undergraduates. Critically, we find no differences in the makeup of the respondents across the treatments, in terms of party identification ($\chi^2 = 7.0, p = .72$), ideology ($\chi^2 = 29.1, p = .51$), age ($\chi^2 = 282.7, p = .22$), race ($\chi^2 = 11.5, p = .93$), or sex ($\chi^2 = 3.3, p = .65$). The distribution of education is slightly imbalanced ($\chi^2 = 37.6, p = .05$), but we do not regard this as a significant threat to the design.
opposition. Subjects in the “GOP Support/No Opposition” condition encountered a news story reporting that Boehner was proposing airstrikes against Iran, but that included no (foreign or domestic) criticism of the idea. This allowed us to investigate the effects of a “one-sided information flow” (Zaller 1992) with support for military action voiced by only one of the major parties, while elites from the other party are silent. Those exposed to the “GOP Support/U.N. Opposition” treatment read a story reporting that Boehner was proposing military action against Iran but Ban was expressing opposition to the idea. This allowed us to test the effects of a mass communications environment in which one of the major political parties supports war but faces opposition from abroad, while the other major party is silent. Finally, those in the “GOP Support/Obama Opposition” group read a news report in which Boehner proposes airstrikes while Obama opposes the idea and foreign elites are silent. This condition mimics the basic “two-sided information flow” theorized by Zaller (1992), in which elites from the two major parties are polarized.

Three of these treatments are most crucial for our analytic purposes: 1) The “GOP/Obama Support, U.N. Opposition” condition provides the strongest test of our key theoretical proposition—that a substantial percentage of ordinary Americans (depending on their predispositions) will respond positively to foreign elite voices that are critical of U.S. foreign policy, even when major-party domestic elites are united in support. 2) The “GOP Support/U.N. Opposition” treatment enables us to investigate the effects of a mass communications environment in which elites from one of the major parties support military action in the face of opposition from foreign officials. This allows us to test the extent to which the mass public may respond favorably to non-U.S. elites who criticize American foreign policy when one of the major parties proposes military action while the other is mute. In addition, both of these treatments model the mainstream media environment that our previous research shows dominated the months before the Iraq War (Hayes and Guardino 2010; forthcoming). In that case, Republican elites—of course, led by the
Bush administration—appeared frequently in the news advocating military action against Saddam Hussein’s regime, and faced their most consistent opposition from the leaders of foreign governments and officials at international organizations. Democratic elites often appeared in the news as supporters of military action, but generally, they did not appear at all (our analyses showed that official Democratic voices made up a very small percentage of overall pre-war discourse in the mainstream media during the months before the invasion). 3) Among all the treatment groups, the “GOP/Obama Support” condition provides the best comparison with the “GOP/Obama Support, U.N. Opposition” condition: here, we were able to gauge patterns of public opinion amidst a mass communications environment that features bipartisan elite support for military action with no opposition (either from within the United States or from abroad). By making this comparison, we could specify the influence of foreign elite opposition in the news against a closely analogous information environment that includes no such criticism.

In designing our study with these asymmetrical treatments, we chose to trade off a measure of analytic neatness and ease of interpretation of results, on the one hand, for communicative realism and theoretical power, on the other: we settled on these treatments in order to 1) Mimic the actual patterns of coverage in a key real-world foreign policy case—as well as what we would expect typical patterns of mainstream news coverage in most such cases to reflect, and 2) Isolate the effects predicted both by conventional theoretical frameworks (which marginalize the influence of foreign elite discourse) and those predicted by our challenges to that conventional wisdom.

We embedded the news reports in a survey—reproduced in Appendix C—that tapped subjects’ general foreign policy orientations, levels of basic political knowledge, partisan and ideological orientations, and demographic traits. After reading the stories, subjects were asked for their opinions regarding the proposed air strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities. This design allowed us to isolate the effects of exposure to different forms of realistic news discourse, to explore the role of
basic foreign policy predispositions and partisan and ideological orientations in shaping receptiveness to foreign and domestic elite statements, and to examine the role of general political knowledge in moderating receptiveness.6

Our design improves on previous experimental studies examining the effects of foreign cues along several dimensions. First, our study features strong external validity: we presented subjects with treatments that mimic plausible real-world political discourse very closely. We use a foreign policy issue—Iran’s alleged drive for nuclear weapons—that has been the subject of ongoing news coverage for several years, but that during the time we ran our experiment was not so highly salient in mainstream political debate that we risked significant contamination of treatment effects in subjects who were aware of actual ongoing developments with the issue. Our stories feature plausible statements from high-profile political leaders, and were constructed with close attention to mass-market journalistic realism in terms of writing style, narrative structure, length and visual presentation.7

Moreover, the issue of military action against Iran provided a case that was roughly analogous to the 2002-2003 pre-invasion debate over the Iraq War, which is the subject of our previous and ongoing research on the effects of foreign elite voices on U.S. public opinion (Hayes and Guardino 2010; forthcoming). Iran and Iraq are Muslim-majority nations in the same region, each has faced allegations of illegal and dangerous weapons production, and each has endured various forms of unilateral and international sanctions over these allegations. As such, the case of Iran allows us to investigate counterfactual possibilities about the influence of mainstream news

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6 Previous theory and research identifies the key role of general political knowledge not only as a proxy for media exposure, but also as a marker for the background information and cognitive habits that smooth reception of news discourse on specific issues (e.g. Zaller 1992, Delli Carpini and Keeter 1997). Our experimental design virtually guarantees exposure, so for simplicity’s sake we decided not to conduct analyses that integrate the role of pre-existing political knowledge. We plan, however, to explore these dynamics in future iterations of the project.

7 In addition, unlike typical experiments that require subjects to congregate in university computer labs, our Internet-based module enabled participants to read realistic news stories in environments that mirror actual media consumption habits—i.e. sitting in front of their own computer screens at home or at work.
coverage during the pre-Iraq War debate and similar episodes. The U.S. mass media environment in the months before the war was characterized by more or less bipartisan elite support for the invasion, combined with a substantial volume of opposition from foreign officials, centrally including representatives of the U.N. bureaucracy and members of the Security Council. This experiment allows us to investigate potential effects on U.S. public opinion that might have flowed from different patterns of elite discourse in the media during this earlier historic policy episode.

In addition, we employ individual-level data that enables us to test opinion effects according to well-established information processing paradigms in communication studies and political psychology (e.g. Zaller 1992). We are able to measure the effects of key predispositions—including not only partisan and ideological orientations but more precise foreign policy postures, such as support for the U.N. and multilateralism—in conditioning the receptiveness of the U.S. public to foreign elite statements. Thus, our design allows us to closely model the processes that connect predispositions and news coverage in producing opinion poll results on salient foreign policy issues. Moreover, while care should always be taken in generalizing laboratory-style experimental results, our survey sample was fairly representative of the overall U.S. population along several key dimensions. Combined with the realism of our news treatments and the strong theoretical logic that underlies our study, this provides greater confidence in inferring like effects in the larger political world.

Thus, our design combines precise measures of foreign policy predispositions in a diverse sample with the causal discrimination afforded by a randomized experiment and the external validity generated by modeling real-world political communications. Rather than measuring reactions to highly artificial stimuli reporting unmediated actions by international bodies where public knowledge of and attention to policy issues is assumed a priori, our study foregrounds the crucial role of elite discourse as covered in the news media in the processes by which ordinary people construct
opinions about war and peace. This places the mass media in its central role in the causal chains that determine the effects of U.S. and foreign elites on public attitudes. We turn now to our empirical results.

The Influence of Elite Discourse on Public Opinion

Figure 1 shows the average level of support for a military strike against Iran for each of the treatment groups. The control group is presented on the far left, and the treatments are arrayed in descending order of support. The variable ranges from 1 to 4, though the charts are scaled only to 3.5 for clarity of presentation.

The power of the president emerges clearly from the chart. The two conditions in which Obama supported military action yielded the strongest support for attacking Iran. Subjects exposed to Obama’s opposition were the least supportive. This is not surprising: When the president endorses military action, Americans often line up behind him. But when the president is opposed, they are more reticent to commit U.S. resources.

We also found support for our key hypothesis—that opposition from abroad suppresses support for an attack. This is evident in two ways. First, subjects in the condition in which GOP support was paired with opposition from U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon generated the second lowest level of support of all the conditions. Only the GOP Support/Obama Opposition condition was more effective in spurring opposition.

Comparing the GOP/Obama Support to the GOP/Obama Support, U.N. Opposition conditions also provides evidence that foreign voices can move opinion. Subjects presented only with Republican support and Obama endorsement of military action were even more supportive than in the control condition. But when presented with a nearly identical news story whose only difference was the addition of U.N. opposition, support for a military strike declined significantly by
about three-tenths of a point ($p < .05$). Hearing the secretary-general of the United Nations actively reject military action—and this is key: this was not a Security Council vote or resolution, but merely a statement of displeasure—caused subjects to become more skeptical of an attack. This provides support for the causal conclusion drawn from the observational data in Hayes and Guardino (forthcoming).

**Partisanship and Support for a Strike against Iran**

While subjects were clearly affected by support and opposition to the strikes from different political actors, these patterns were not consistent among partisans. In general, Democrats were the least likely to support the military strikes. Across all conditions, 78% opposed the strikes (evenly split between “strongly” and “somewhat”). Just 22% of Democrats supported military action, with only 5% of those “strongly” advocating for military action. Independents took similar positions: 75% opposed the strikes (34% strongly) and just 5% strongly supported them. The distributions for Democrats and independents were statistically indistinguishable. Republicans, on the other hand, were significantly more likely to support attacking Iran. Fifty-six percent favored military action (23% strongly), and just 44% opposed (10% strongly). The differences between Republicans, on one hand, and independents and Democrats, on the other, were statistically significant.

Our key concern, however, is the differences across conditions. Do partisans respond differently to rhetoric from various political actors? And in particular, do they respond differently to opposition from foreign voices?

The top panel in Figure 2 displays the average Democratic support for military action in each treatment group. In part because Democrats comprise a majority of the sample, the top plot looks very similar to Figure 1. Support was highest among Democrats when Obama endorsed military action and declined substantially—by about seven-tenths of a point ($p < .05$)—when the president opposed it. The data also suggest that Democrats were responsive to foreign opposition, though
relevant differences in mean support were not statistically significant. Comparing the GOP/Obama Support and GOP/Obama Support, U.N. Opposition conditions, Democrats were .14 point ($p = .19$) less supportive when Ban articulated opposition to the strikes. And the GOP Support/U.N. Opposition condition finds Democrats .12 point ($p = .23$) less supportive than when exposed only to Republican support. These patterns reveal that President Obama’s position on the invasion was the prime mover of Democratic attitudes. Foreign opposition, too, moved Democrats in the expected direction, though the relatively small sample sizes in the treatments left those differences short of statistical significance.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

The Republican plot, on the other hand, reveals that negative attitudes toward Obama (his average feeling thermometer score was 28 for Republicans, 74 for Democrats) shaped their reaction to the proposed strike far more than did international opposition. Support for the invasion was high when Obama agreed with the GOP’s proposal. But when offered a reason that Obama might be wrong—when the United Nations opposed him—GOP support dropped by half a point ($p < .05$). On one hand, this could indicate that the United Nations carries sway with Republican voters. But when Obama was out of the equation—in the GOP Support/U.N. Opposition treatment—support rebounded. Here, Republicans were equally as favorable to the strikes as they were in the GOP Support/No Opposition treatment, indicating a lack of influence from abroad. Obama opposition produced a drop in support, but the effect was much weaker than for Democrats exposed to the same treatment. The meaning of these patterns is not entirely clear, but we are inclined to conclude that Republicans were not reacting primarily to the position taken by Ban. Instead, they reacted primarily to the fact that criticism of Obama was evident at all, and thus became less likely to support something he was advocating.
We must interpret cautiously the data on independents, presented in the bottom panel; the number of non-partisans in the treatments ranges from just eight to 17. But aside from the control, the figure looks similar to the Democratic plot. From these few data points, it appears that independents responded strongly to Obama’s support and opposition, and perhaps to U.N. opposition. They were not particularly persuaded by GOP support in the absence of the positions of other relevant actors.

In sum, partisanship conditioned subjects’ responses to the treatments. Democrats (and independents, with caveats about sample size) responded strongly to Obama’s position on an Iran attack. When he endorsed action, support rose. When he opposed it, support fell. There is also some tentative evidence that U.N. opposition prompted Democrats to express doubts about the strikes, though these differences were not quite statistically significant. Republicans, on the other hand, were less persuaded by the Democratic president’s position. Overall, our findings confirm that partisanship does condition how people respond to discourse from political elites (Zaller 1992).

The Role ofFeelings toward Obama, the GOP, and the United Nations

We turn now to the role of attitudes toward different political actors and institutions in shaping reactions to the proposed strikes. Grieco et al. (2011) report that responsiveness to cues from the U.N. Security Council depends significantly on individuals’ level of confidence in international organizations, and Hayes and Guardino (forthcoming) suggest that Democrats’ positive orientation toward the United Nations led them to respond favorably to criticism of the Bush administration by foreign officials in the lead-up to the Iraq War. But do these attitudes matter above and beyond partisanship?

Table 2 presents a series of logistic regression models to explain subjects’ level of support. The dependent variable is coded 1 if a subject in our experiment supported attacking Iran, 0 if she opposed it. In other words, we collapse together “strong” and “somewhat” supportive or opposed
subjects. To simplify the presentation of the results, we ran separate models for each treatment. These simple models include as independent variables the feeling thermometer scores for Obama, the Republican Party, and the United Nations. The seven-point party identification scale serves as a control. The models test whether these general attitudes conditioned how subjects responded to the news media treatments. We are especially interested in whether feelings about the United Nations play a pronounced role in the treatments that included Ban Ki-moon’s opposition to the airstrikes.

Somewhat surprisingly, attitudes toward the United Nations in our experiment mattered not a whit. In not one treatment—even those in which Ban voiced opposition—did the U.N. feeling thermometer measure significantly affect support for military action against Iran. In the GOP Support/U.N. Opposition condition, the variable is negative, as expected, but its standard error is the same size as the coefficient, rendering the effect insignificant. In the GOP/Obama Support, U.N. Opposition treatment, the variable is signed positively, in contrast to our expectations. In short, we find no evidence that feelings toward the United Nations made subjects more or less likely to support military action, even when the international body was explicitly brought into the news story.

[Insert Table 2 here]

By contrast, feelings toward the Republican Party—the chief proponent of the airstrikes against suspected Iranian nuclear facilities in our news stories—were better predictors of support for military action, though by no means consistent ones. Warmer feelings toward the party were associated with a higher likelihood of supporting strikes in two of the five conditions. For instance,

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8 The results are the same if we use the full 4-point scale and run ordered logit models.
9 We have substantively similar findings if we run pooled models with interaction terms for the various experimental treatments. Those results are available from the authors. We eliminate the control group from the presentation of the results in Tables 2 and 3.
10 The survey also included thermometer ratings for House Speaker Boehner and the Democratic Party. About 20% of subjects did not rate Boehner on the feeling thermometer. And since that measure was highly correlated with the GOP feeling thermometer (r = 0.72), we chose to use the latter variable, which resulted in the loss of fewer cases. We used the Obama measure instead of the Democratic Party scale because we expect attitudes toward the president—who is prominently featured in four of the news stories—to be more salient than attitudes toward his party.
in the GOP/Obama Support treatment, an increase of 10 points from a neutral assessment of the GOP resulted in a 0.11 increase in the probability of supporting the strikes.\footnote{This estimate is based on a hypothetical independent subject with mean scores for Obama and the United Nations.}

Attitudes toward Obama were significant only in the GOP Support/No Opposition treatment: warmer feelings toward the president made subjects more likely to oppose the GOP-backed strikes. The absence of effects for attitudes toward Obama is somewhat surprising given the importance the literature has attached to presidential approval as a mediator of war support (e.g., Berinsky 2009). This may be due in part to the fact that the Obama feeling thermometer and party identification variables are highly correlated ($r=-0.67$). Ultimately, our results show that attitudes toward the United Nations and domestic political actors appeared to play a lesser part in support for military action than did partisanship, though these two cannot be completely disentangled.

The Activation of Multilateralism by Foreign Voices

In Table 3, we take what we have learned about the importance of partisanship and attitudes toward the GOP—both mattered in certain experimental treatments—and run a model that incorporates a measure of multilateralism. This variable is based on a survey question that asked subjects how desirable it is that the United States “exert strong leadership in world affairs.” Subjects could say that they viewed this as “very” or “somewhat” desirable or undesirable.\footnote{Subjects who said “not sure” were eliminated from the analysis.} We scale the variable so that higher scores indicate more unilateralism—that is, a stronger preference for U.S. leadership in world affairs. We expect that individuals who view U.S. leadership as more desirable will be more inclined to support the Iran strikes even in the face of opposition from abroad. And we expect that this predisposition will play a stronger role in shaping attitudes toward an attack in the conditions that involve United Nations opposition than in those where the discourse comes solely from domestic elites. In those treatments, the United States’ role in world affairs is not being
challenged by external actors, and thus we expect general predispositions toward multilateralism to play a less prominent role.

For the most part, our expectations are met. In every model, the U.S. leadership measure is positively signed, but it is significant only in the two treatments that contain U.N. opposition to airstrikes against Iran. In the GOP Support/U.N. Opposition and GOP/Obama Support, U.N. Opposition conditions, people who viewed U.S. leadership more favorably were more likely to support military action than those who saw leadership as less desirable. This relationship did not exist, however, when the news stories we presented our subjects contained statements only from domestic actors. It appears that explicit opposition from foreign voices activated attitudes about multilateralism, and that these attitudes then were brought to bear on opinions about military action.13

Figure 3 displays graphically the conditioning role of multilateralism when subjects were exposed to opposition from the United Nations. In the top panel, data from subjects in the GOP Support/U.N. Opposition treatment, which did not include a statement from Obama, are displayed. The more desirable a subject said that strong U.S. leadership in world affairs was, the more likely she was to support the Iran airstrikes.14 We plot the effect separately for Democrats and Republicans. The effect was strongest among Republicans, as shown by the steeper slope of the line. When exposed to foreign opposition in the news, a general preference for strong U.S. leadership became an especially powerful predisposition for GOP identifiers. In our experiment, this means that relatively unilateral Republicans reacted to foreign opposition to a GOP-backed plan for military action.

13 We also ran models that employed a scale of multilateralism based on three variables from the survey: the “strong leadership” measure, an item that asked subjects about America’s role in solving international problems, and the United Nations feeling thermometer. Those models produced very similar results to those in Table 3—the multilateralism scale was positively signed in all the regressions but was significant only in the two conditions involving U.N. opposition in the news stories. The coefficients were slightly smaller than Table 3.

14 The simulations in Figure 3 are based on a model that included dummies for Democratic and Republican subjects instead of the 7-point party identification scale shown in Table 3. The rest of the model was the same.
action by rallying behind their party leaders’ positions. In other words, international opposition created a backlash. The relationship was weaker, though still statistically significant, among Democrats. The effect may have been less pronounced because Democrats already had higher levels of responsiveness to international criticism of U.S. foreign policy in general.15

[Insert Figure 3 here]

The bottom panel of Figure 3 presents the same data for subjects in GOP/Obama Support, U.N. Opposition treatment. Here, the importance of domestic elites is thrown into stark relief. Having heard Obama’s endorsement of military action, Democrats are actually slightly more likely than Republicans—though not significantly so—to support military action. And the relationship between the activation of multilateral predispositions and partisanship is non-existent: The two lines are virtually identical. With endorsement of military action from a Democratic president, the influence of multilateralism remains, but its effect does not vary by party affiliation.

Collectively, the analyses reveal that partisanship and multilateralism mediate Americans’ reactions to elite arguments about U.S. military action. Democrats were strongly affected by Obama’s statements about a strike against Iran, while Republicans were less moved by the Democratic president. Our results also suggest—with an important caveat about the lack of statistical significance—that Democratic identification promoted responsiveness to foreign voices, as Democrats were less likely to support military action when the U.N. secretary-general spoke out against attacking Iran. Finally, while pre-existing attitudes toward the United Nations itself played no role in shaping opinion, respondents’ views of the United States’ role in world affairs did. When foreign criticism appeared in the news, Americans with a preference for a more cooperative, less U.S.-dominated international system were less likely to support airstrikes on Iran than were their more unilateral counterparts.

15 Because there are so few independents in the sample, we do not analyze them separately.
Conclusion

For years, scholars have cast aside foreign leaders and institutions as irrelevant for domestic public opinion. Americans, the argument has gone, simply will not take cues from actors who reside beyond the U.S. borders. But our findings add to a growing body of work that says otherwise: When the perspectives of international officials are made available to the U.S. public (primarily through channels such as the news media), many Americans may indeed heed their views. In this case, we found in our survey experiment that reported opposition from a prominent United Nations official—Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon—lowered public support for a proposed military strike against Iran, even when Republican leaders and President Obama backed the plan. Democrats and individuals more highly predisposed toward multilateralism were the most likely to respond to international criticism of possible American military action.

Our design amplifies the findings from observational studies (Chapman 2009, 2011; Hayes and Guardino forthcoming) and an earlier survey experiment (Grieco et al. 2011). By randomly assigning respondents to treatments that varied discourse from several elite sources, we have good evidence for a causal relationship between foreign elite rhetoric and changes in domestic mass opinion. And by embedding our treatments in realistic news stories that respondents encountered in much the way they might in their real lives—in their homes or at work on their own computers—we have more precisely accounted for the flow of political information in actual policy debates. In particular, the various treatments—which were designed to replicate facets of the information environment in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War—provide further evidence that U.S. opinion was indeed moved by international criticism of the Bush administration during that historic policy debate (Hayes and Guardino forthcoming).

The experiment is not without its own shortcomings, of course. Because we did not create treatments for the full range of potential discourse from all of our elite sources, we cannot speak to
the response of public opinion under other important scenarios. For instance, we cannot say how respondents would react to United Nations support for striking Iran, something that Chapman (2009, 2011) and Grieco et al. (2011) suggest would move public opinion in favor of military action. Nor do we know whether international opposition would matter if the Republican Party opposed an Obama-backed proposal for military action. Perhaps more importantly, we chose in our treatments to make the GOP the prime advocate of airstrikes, rather than the president. We made this choice to maximize the realism of the treatments. Leaders of the Republican Party—and especially its neoconservative wing—have been more supportive of a hard line with Iran than has the Obama administration. It is possible that the opinion dynamics would be different if Obama had proposed the action. Based on our current findings, our supposition is that this would make foreign elite voices even more influential. Lacking Democratic elite opposition to a pre-emptive military strike, we suspect that Democratic identifiers in the mass public would be especially responsive to international criticism of an action that would contravene their more dovish predispositions. This is all to say that there remains much to learn about the circumstances under which foreign voices do and do not shape domestic opinion. Regardless of how future studies are conducted, however, we believe it is imperative that scholars employ research designs that as accurately as possible mimic the flow of political discourse to individuals through the news media.

We could only speculate where Pat Tillman would come down on a plan to strike Iranian nuclear facilities were he alive today. But based on Tillman’s views in the run-up to the Iraq War, we suspect that if a debate over such a proposal did occur, he would be acutely interested in how the United States’ traditional allies and the larger community of nations were reacting. Despite his status as an American hero, the growing research on the foreign sources of domestic public opinion suggests that in this way, Tillman might be better described as an American everyman.
### Appendix A: Sample Characteristics

Selected Descriptive Statistics for Experimental Subjects from Mechanical Turk (N=592)

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<td>Very conservative</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haven’t thought much about it</td>
<td>4%</td>
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</table>
GOP leaders urge air strikes on Iranian nuke facilities; Obama agrees military action needed, but UN balks

By Bryan Fitzpatrick, USA Today

Republican leaders announced Monday that they believe President Obama should order the U.S. military to launch unilateral air strikes against Iran’s nuclear facilities. Obama agreed that military action is necessary, but the idea faces resistance from the United Nations.

In a press conference at the U.S. Capitol, House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), said his party’s congressional representatives believed that military action was in the country’s national security interest.

“Iran presents a significant threat to America, and to our allies,” Boehner said. “The tyrannical regime of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad cannot continue to pursue nuclear weapons without facing the consequences. This game has gone on too long.”

Boehner said the U.S. should use fighter jets to target Iranian nuclear facilities. The strikes would be designed to knock out the Iranians’ ability to produce weapons-grade uranium.

In the past, Iranian officials have kept international nuclear inspectors from visiting those sites, raising suspicion that they may be manufacturing weapons. Iran says it is building a civilian nuclear power program, but the U.S. suspects it seeks the capacity to build nuclear bombs.

Boehner said the current policy of diplomatic and economic sanctions was not curtailing Iran’s nuclear ambitions, and more direct action was required.

At the White House, President Obama said he would order U.S. airstrikes “in the near future, when we feel they would be most effective.”

“Although I would never want to use military action when a diplomatic solution was available, the Iranians time and time again have failed to come clean and reveal whether or not they are using their nuclear program to create weapons,” Obama said.

Obama said he believed it was in the United States’ interest to prevent Iran from developing its nuclear program further. He said he is consulting with military officials to determine how and when military strikes could be carried out.

Boehner said that if the United Nations Security Council and major nations such as China, Russia, France and Germany will not agree to endorse a military campaign, the United States must act alone to protect its citizens and the world at large. Obama said he would consider unilateral action against Iran if international support is not forthcoming.

At the United Nations, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said he opposed the proposal.

“There is insufficient evidence that Iran’s nuclear facilities are—or are even capable of—producing weapons-grade uranium,” he said. “At this point, military action would be premature, and could potentially be destabilizing.”

Ban said he did not believe air strikes on Iran would make the United States or its allies safer.

“International security is a top priority, but military action against Iran would not make America or the world more secure,” he said.

Ban said he and other international officials preferred to continue the current sanctions against Iran in an effort to pressure its leaders to provide full information on their nuclear program and to halt any attempts to build weapons.

Boehner and Obama said that the priority should be to launch air strikes to eliminate Iran’s capacity to produce nuclear arms, but neither would rule out the possibility of wider military action if that proves necessary for U.S. national security in the future.

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Appendix C: Survey Instrument

Pre-exposure Survey

What is your sex?
- Male
- Female

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?
- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Other party

[Note: Depending on respondent’s answer, one of the three follow-up questions about strength of partisanship or preference for one of the parties would be shown.]

- Would you call yourself a strong Republican, or a not very strong Republican?
  - Strong Republican
  - Not very strong Republican

- Would you call yourself a strong Democrat, or a not very strong Democrat?
  - Strong Democrat
  - Not very strong Democrat

- Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?
  - Republican Party
  - Democratic Party
  - No preference

Some people follow what’s going on in government and public affairs most of the time. Others aren’t that interested. Would you say you follow what’s going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Only now and then
- Hardly at all

Which statement comes closest to your position?
- As the sole remaining superpower, the U.S. should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems.
- The U.S. should do its share in efforts to solve international problems together with other countries.
- The U.S. should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems.
- Not sure

From your point of view, how desirable is it that the U.S. exert strong leadership in world affairs?
- Very desirable
- Somewhat desirable
- Somewhat undesirable
- Very undesirable
- Not sure
We’d like to get your feelings toward some political figures and groups who have been in the news. For each name or group, we’d like you to rate them using something we call a feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorably and warm toward the person or group; ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you don’t feel favorably and that you don’t care too much for that person or group. You would rate them at the 50 degree mark if you don’t feel particularly warm or cold toward the person or group. Use the sliding bars below to rate each person or group. If you see a name you don’t recognize, just click the box to the right. (Order of options was randomized.)

______ The Republican Party
______ The Democratic Party
______ Speaker of the House John Boehner
______ President Barack Obama
______ The United Nations

We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate, slightly conservative, conservative, extremely conservative, or haven’t you thought much about this?
- Extremely liberal
- Liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Moderate
- Slightly conservative
- Conservative
- Extremely conservative
- Haven’t thought much about it

What job or political office is now held by Joe Biden? If you don’t know, just type DK.

Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not … is it the president, the Congress, or the Supreme Court?
- President
- Congress
- Supreme Court
- Don’t know

How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a presidential veto? If you don’t know, just type DK.

Which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington? If you don’t know, just type DK.

Would you say that one of the major parties is more conservative than the other at the national level? If so, which major party is more conservative? If you don’t know, just type DK.

[Note: At this point, respondents were be presented with a news story that “recently appeared in the national newspaper USA Today.” The assignment into the treatments (or control) was random. After reading the story, respondents took a short post-exposure survey]

Post-exposure survey:

Would you say that you support or oppose U.S. military strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities?
Strongly support
Somewhat support
Somewhat oppose
Strongly oppose

What is the highest level of formal education you have earned?
- Grade school
- High school or GED
- Some college
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Advanced degree

Some people believe the United States should solve international problems by using diplomacy and other forms of international pressure, and use military force only if absolutely necessary. Suppose we put such people on a scale that goes from 1 to 7, placing them at the end of the scale numbered “1”. Other people believe that diplomacy and pressure often fail and the U.S. must be more willing to use military force. Suppose these people are at the other end of the scale, at point number “7”. And of course, other people fall into positions in-between, at points 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

What is your race?
- White
- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Other

How old are you?
References


Table 1. Experimental Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Content of News Story</th>
<th>N (592)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Unrelated story</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOP/Obama Support, U.N. Opposition</td>
<td>Boehner proposes airstrikes; Obama supports; Ban opposes</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOP/Obama Support</td>
<td>Boehner proposes airstrikes; Obama supports</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOP Support/No Opposition</td>
<td>Boehner proposes airstrikes; no other sources</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOP Support/U.N. Opposition</td>
<td>Boehner proposes airstrikes; Ban opposes</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOP Support/Obama Opposition</td>
<td>Boehner proposes airstrikes; Obama opposes</td>
<td>99</td>
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</table>
Table 2. The Effect of Attitudes toward UN, Obama, and the GOP on Support for an Iran Strike

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
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<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
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<td>Obama Feeling</td>
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<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOP Feeling</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.05**</td>
<td>-0.00</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party ID</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>0.74**</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.18)</td>
<td>(0.23)</td>
<td>(0.29)</td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-5.26***</td>
<td>-2.16</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.97)</td>
<td>(1.21)</td>
<td>(1.44)</td>
<td>(1.16)</td>
<td>(1.17)</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
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<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
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<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>17.81</td>
<td>19.04</td>
<td>28.08</td>
<td>10.62</td>
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</table>

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Cell entries are logistic regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses.
Table 3. The Effect of Attitudes toward the GOP, Multilateralism and Party ID on Support for an Iran Strike

<table>
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<th></th>
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<td>0.46 (0.29)</td>
<td>0.88 (0.51)</td>
<td>1.18** (0.44)</td>
<td>0.74* (0.35)</td>
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<td>GOP Feeling</td>
<td>0.02 (0.01)</td>
<td>0.04** (0.01)</td>
<td>-0.00 (0.02)</td>
<td>0.02 (0.01)</td>
<td>0.02 (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party ID</td>
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<td>-0.27 (0.19)</td>
<td>0.62* (0.27)</td>
<td>0.55** (0.21)</td>
<td>-0.05 (0.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>-2.03* (0.87)</td>
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<td>-7.07*** (1.63)</td>
<td>-3.63** (1.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
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<td>-67.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chi-square</td>
<td>17.95</td>
<td>18.24</td>
<td>20.87</td>
<td>38.78</td>
<td>11.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Cell entries are logistic regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses.
Figure 1. Support for Strike against Iran, by Experimental Condition

The data points are means. The lines are 95% confidence intervals.
Figure 2. Support for Strike against Iran, by Experimental Condition and Partisanship

The data points are means. The lines are 95% confidence intervals.
Figure 3. The Effect of Multilateralism on Support for an Iran Strike

**GOP Support/U.N. Opposition Treatment**

- **Republicans**
- **Democrats**

**GOP/Obama Support, U.N. Opposition Treatment**

- **Democrats**
- **Republicans**

U.S. Leadership in World Affairs