Appendix for

Elite-Public Gaps on Nuclear Weapons
The Role of Salience and Knowledge

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Figure A1: Crisis Primacy Vignette

Fighting Continues Between Russia and U.S. Ally: President Considers Military Action

Joint Chiefs Say Nuclear Exchange Would Kill 69 Million Russians, zero Americans

The Associated Press

Intense fighting has continued in the European countries of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania after Russian troops entered the countries three days ago. The countries have called on the United States and their NATO allies to "come to our defense in honor of their treaty commitments." The three countries are members of NATO and allies of the United States.

The U.S. President has been considering options for how to respond. Yesterday, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff delivered a report to the President including two options for responding. The first option, called the "aggressive strategy," would dispatch 10,000 U.S. troops to Europe to directly fight Russian forces back to Russian territory. The second option, called the "cautious strategy," would not dispatch U.S. troops to Europe and instead would impose economic sanctions against Russia. The report was leaked to the press by a high-ranking administration official.

The Joint Chiefs' report also included estimates about Russian capabilities. The report estimated that the United States enjoys a moderate military advantage over Russia in the region and that if U.S. troops were dispatched to the Baltics, they would eventually succeed in defeating Russian troops, though both the U.S. and Russia would suffer several thousand casualties.

"The United States possesses complete nuclear superiority over Russia"

The report also estimated that the likelihood of a nuclear exchange between the United States and Russia was low. In addition, the report said that the United States enjoys complete nuclear superiority over Russia and that, in the event of a nuclear exchange between the two countries, Russia would suffer 69 million fatalities and the United States would suffer zero fatalities. Finally, the report estimated that while both the United States and Russia have important political interests in the conflict, neither country would prefer a major war.

The report did not recommend a specific course of action.

President deciding between "aggressive" strategy of military action and "cautious" strategy of economic sanctions

Note: Superiority treatment for first crisis vignette describing fighting between U.S. allies in the Baltics and Russia. Vignette notes that U.S. president is deciding between strategy of military action and strategy of economic sanctions against Russia. Treatment language is in red and randomly changed to provide different depictions of the strategic nuclear balance. Treatment is presented qualitatively in a pull quote, quantitatively in a pull quote (estimates of anticipated fatalities), and in the body of the text. Public samples were also presented with a primacy treatment ("the United States possesses complete nuclear superiority over Russia" and "nuclear exchange would kill 69 million Russians and zero Americans"), a parity treatment ("the United States possesses equal nuclear capability with Russia" and "nuclear exchange would kill 69 million Russians and 69 million Americans"), and an inferiority treatment ("Russia possesses greater nuclear capability than the United States" and "nuclear exchange would kill 27 million Russians and 69 million Americans"). Elite sample received either the superiority or the inferiority treatment due to smaller sample size.

Figure A2: Crisis Superiority Vignette

Fighting Continues Between Russia and U.S. Ally: President Considers Military Action

Joint Chiefs Say Nuclear Exchange Would Kill 69 Million Russians, 27 Million Americans

The Associated Press

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"The United States possesses greater nuclear capability than Russia"

The report also estimated that the likelihood of a nuclear exchange between the United States and Russia was low. In addition, the report said that the United States enjoys a nuclear advantage over the Russians and that, in the event of a nuclear exchange between the two countries, Russia would suffer 69 million fatalities and the United States would suffer 27 million fatalities. Finally, the report estimated that while both the United States and Russia have important political interests in the conflict, neither country would prefer a major war.

The report did not recommend a specific course of action.

President deciding between "aggressive" strategy of military action and "cautious" strategy of economic sanctions

Figure A3: Crisis Parity Vignette

Fighting Continues Between Russia and U.S. Ally: President Considers Military Action

Joint Chiefs Say Nuclear Exchange Would Kill 69 Million Russians, 69 Million Americans

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The report did not recommend a specific course of action.

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Figure A4: Crisis Inferiority Vignette

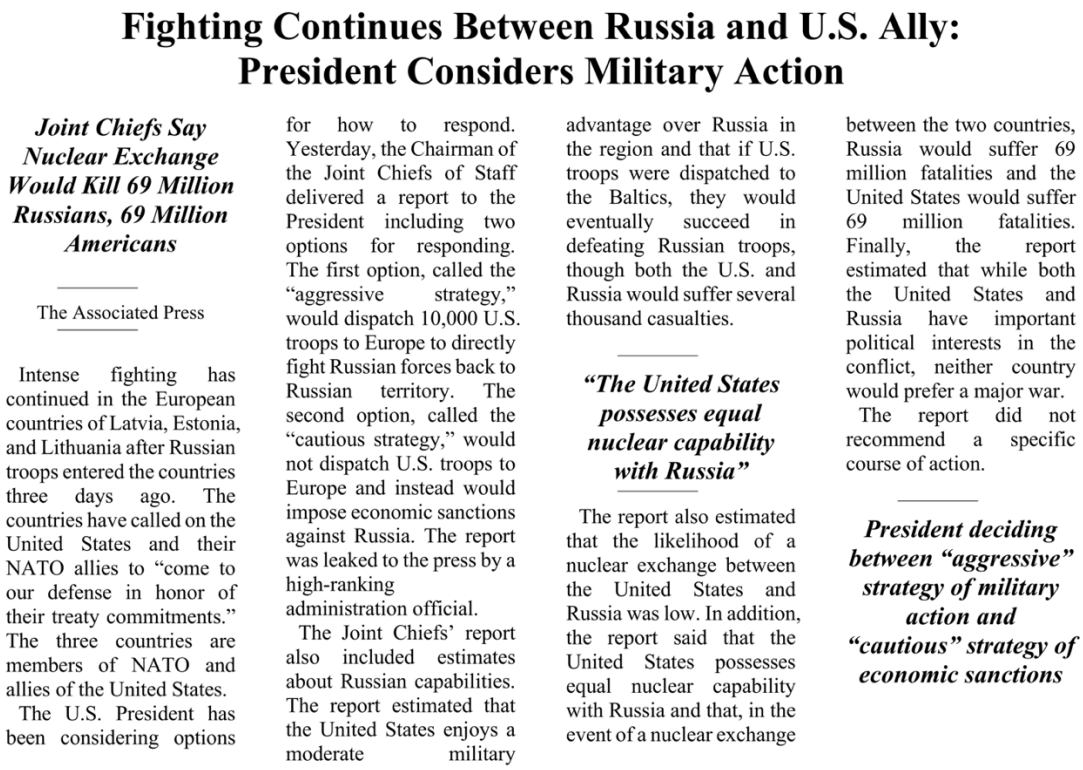

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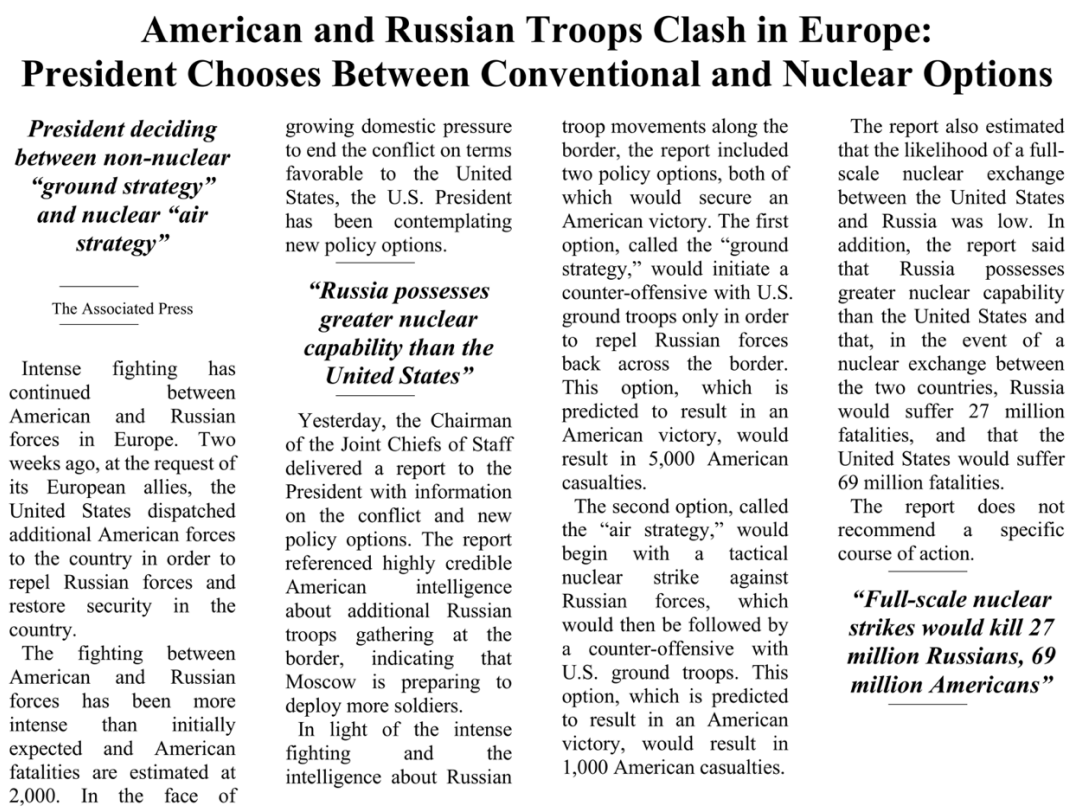
Figure A5: Conflict Primacy Vignette



American and Russian Troops Clash in Europe: President Chooses Between Conventional and Nuclear Options

President deciding between non-nuclear "ground strategy" and nuclear "air strategy"

The Associated Press

Intense fighting has continued between American and Russian forces in Europe. Two weeks ago, at the request of its European allies, the United States dispatched additional American forces to the country in order to repel Russian forces and restore security in the country.

The fighting between American and Russian forces has been more intense than initially expected and American fatalities are estimated at 2,000. In the face of growing domestic pressure to end the conflict on terms favorable to the United States, the U.S. President has been contemplating new policy options.

"Russia possesses greater nuclear capability than the United States"

Yesterday, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff delivered a report to the President with information on the conflict and new policy options. The report referenced highly credible American intelligence about additional Russian troops gathering at the border, indicating that Moscow is preparing to deploy more soldiers.

In light of the intense fighting and the intelligence about Russian troop movements along the border, the report included two policy options, both of which would secure an American victory. The first option, called the "ground strategy," would initiate a counter-offensive with U.S. ground troops only in order to repel Russian forces back across the border. This option, which is predicted to result in an American victory, would result in 5,000 American casualties.

The second option, called the "air strategy," would begin with a tactical nuclear strike against Russian forces, which would then be followed by a counter-offensive with U.S. ground troops. This option, which is predicted to result in an American victory, would result in 1,000 American casualties.

The report also estimated that the likelihood of a full-scale nuclear exchange between the United States and Russia was low. In addition, the report said that Russia possesses greater nuclear capability than the United States and that, in the event of a nuclear exchange between the two countries, Russia would suffer 27 million fatalities, and that the United States would suffer 69 million fatalities.

The report does not recommend a specific course of action.

"Full-scale nuclear strikes would kill 27 million Russians, 69 million Americans"

Figure A6: Conflict Superiority Vignette

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The Associated Press

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Figure A7: Conflict Parity Vignette

American and Russian Troops Clash in Europe President Chooses Between Conventional and Nuclear Options

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The report does not recommend a specific course of action.

"Full-scale nuclear strikes would kill 69 million Russians, 69 million Americans"

Figure A8: Conflict Inferiority Vignette

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The report does not recommend a specific course of action.

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Table A1: Summary Statistics

	Pre-Ukraine Public	Post-Ukraine Public	Elite
Male	57%	45%	87.25%
Median Age	45	47	45
College Graduate	64.2%	47.2%	97.6%
Republican	26.6%	28.3%	16.9%
Democrat	58.2%	42.9%	21.9%
Military	23.9%	10.84%	66.53%
Observations	263	2,020	337

Manipulation Check

Just over 60 percent of all respondents passed the manipulation check. This is average for manipulation checks and screener questions in political science survey experiments. Li and Gulotty (2023) report a median pass rate of 66% for manipulation checks, Kane, Velez, and Barabas (2023) report pass rates of between 30% and 80% depending on the survey platform, and Berinsky et al. (2021) report pass rates of roughly 60% on screener questions.

Table A2 Full Regression Results

VARIABLES	(1) Prefer Nukes	(2) Approve Nukes
High Knowledge	-0.0879***	-0.0865***
	(0.0228)	(0.0235)
Cold War Generation	-0.124***	-0.114***
	(0.0367)	(0.0367)
Post-Ukraine Sample	-0.118***	-0.181***
	(0.0311)	(0.0323)
Elite	-0.271***	-0.148***
	(0.0267)	(0.0361)
Black or African American	0.0736	0.0870*
	(0.0488)	(0.0512)
Hispanic or Latino	0.0111	-0.00455
	(0.0457)	(0.0478)
Middle Eastern	0.229	0.201
	(0.209)	(0.215)
Native American	-0.0835	-0.0738
	(0.101)	(0.108)
White	0.00840	-0.0104
	(0.0425)	(0.0444)
More than One Race	0.0122	-0.0849
	(0.0712)	(0.0717)
Other	-0.123	-0.241**
	(0.110)	(0.0977)
Male	-0.00205	-0.0458**
	(0.0187)	(0.0192)
Other	0.0109	-0.0843
	(0.147)	(0.159)
Not Strong Democrat	-0.0804***	-0.104***
	(0.0286)	(0.0293)
Neither	-0.0827***	-0.104***
	(0.0262)	(0.0268)
Not Strong Republican	-0.121***	-0.0951***
	(0.0309)	(0.0322)
Strong Republican	-0.0275	-0.0198
	(0.0301)	(0.0309)
Not Sure	0.000286	0.0611
	(0.0695)	(0.0720)
Other	-0.145**	-0.168**
	(0.0688)	(0.0677)
Favor Death Penalty	0.110***	0.163***
	(0.0200)	(0.0201)
Age	-0.000435	0.000892
	(0.00106)	(0.00108)
Observations	2,504	2,504

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table reports marginal effects for full logistic regression with other variables set at average. Values reported as hundredths of a percentage point.

Table A3: Policy Preferences by Group

	Pre-Ukraine Public	Post-Ukraine Public	Elite
Prefer Troops	11.03%	17.72%	60.88%
Approve Troops	69.58%	51.63%	77.21%
Prefer Nuclear Use	50.95%	35.50%	5.69%
Approve Nuclear Use	58.94%	37.28%	15.85%

Table A4: Distribution of Nuclear Knowledge by Group

	Pre-Ukraine Public	Post-Ukraine Public	Elite
Knowledge = 0	11.79%	6.49%	0.00%
Knowledge = 1	30.04%	16.83%	0.45%
Knowledge = 2	28.90%	28.66%	1.35%
Knowledge = 3	17.11%	27.67%	15.32%
Knowledge = 4	8.75%	15.74%	41.44%
Knowledge = 5	3.42%	4.60%	41.44%
Low Knowledge	41.83%	23.32%	0.45%
High Knowledge	12.17%	20.35%	82.88%
Average # Qs Correct	1.91	2.43	4.22

Note: Differences between each group in number of nuclear knowledge questions answered correctly, proportion of low knowledge respondents, and proportion of high knowledge respondents all high statistically significant ($p<0.0001$).

Figure A9: Distribution of Nuclear Knowledge by Group

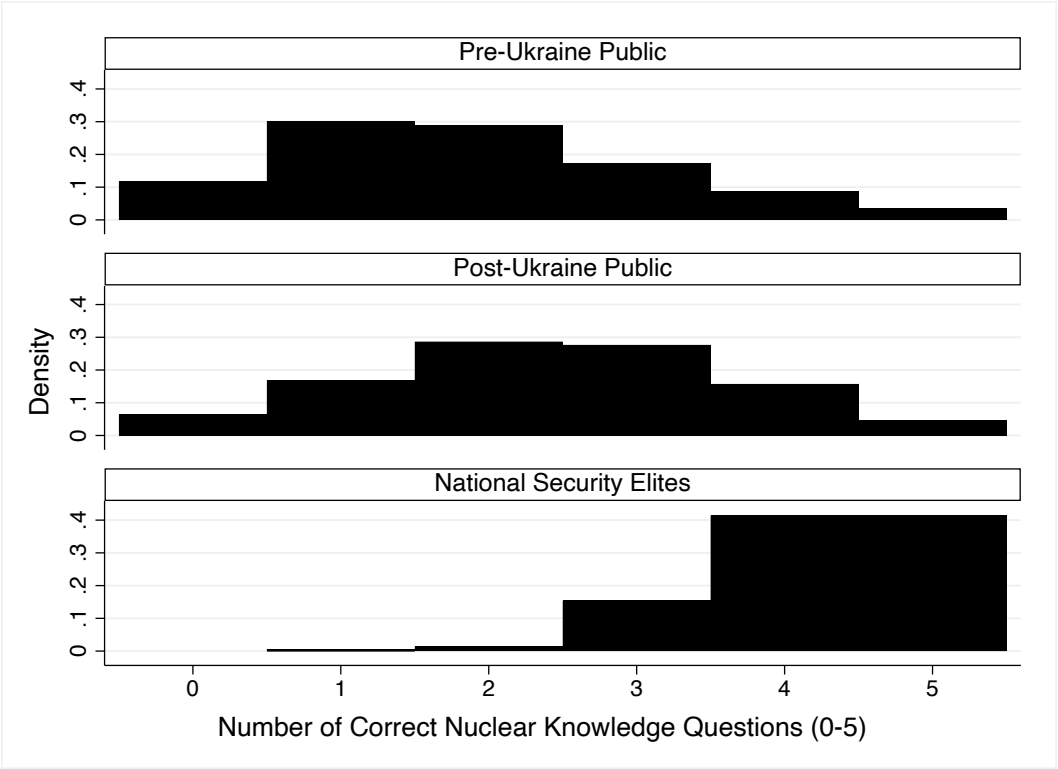
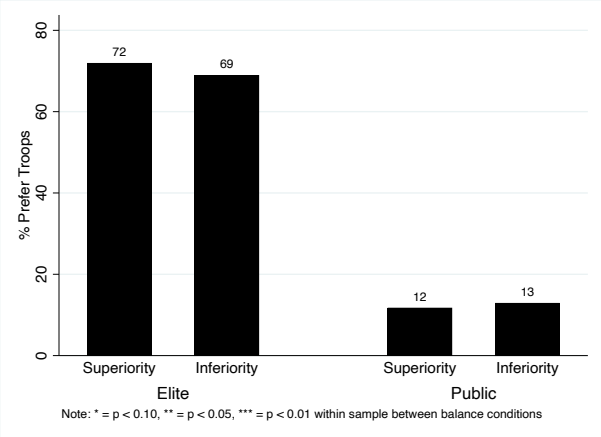
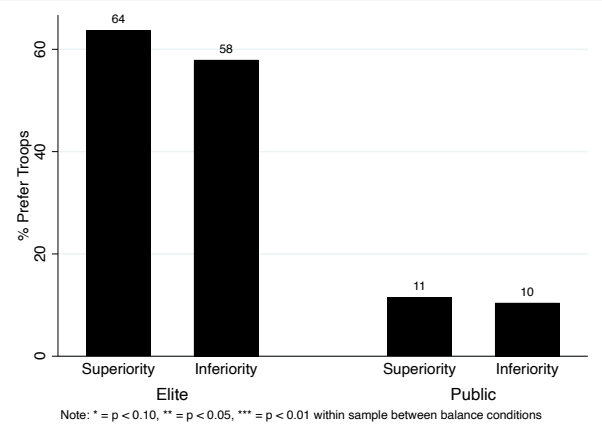


Figure A10: Preference for Deploying Troops by Elite and Low Salience (Pre-Ukraine) Public Samples Across Nuclear Balance Treatments



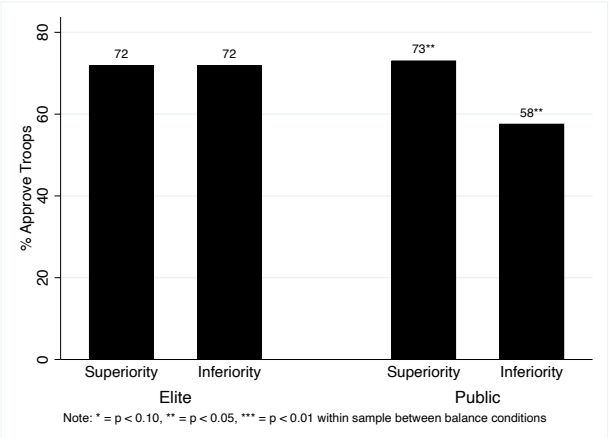
(a) Manipulation Check (ATE)



(b) Vignette Exposure (ITT)

Note: Comparing preference for deploying troops (as opposed to levying economic sanctions) following exposure to the crisis vignette. Compares between superiority and inferiority treatments between elite and low salience (pre-Ukraine) public samples. None of the differences within samples and between nuclear balance conditions are statistically significant at conventional thresholds. Shifts in the nuclear balance do not influence policy preferences.

Figure A11: Approval of Deploying Troops by Elite and Low Salience (Pre-Ukraine) Public Samples Across Nuclear Balance Treatments



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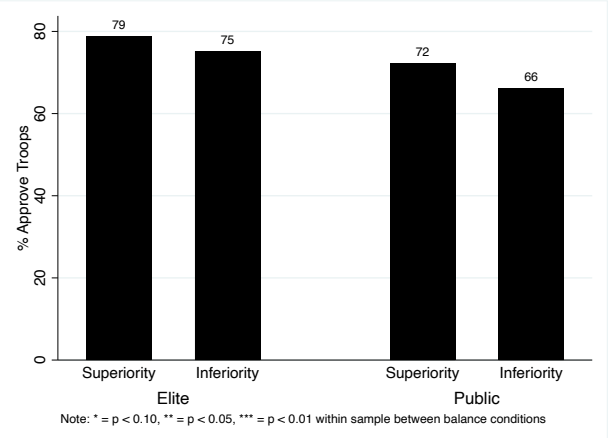
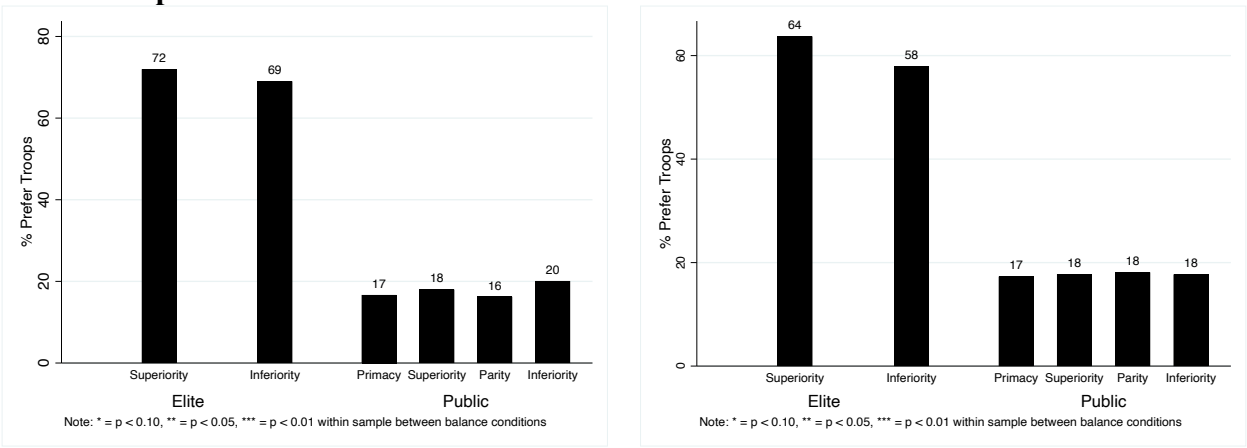


(b) Vignette Exposure (ITT)

Note: Comparing approval for deploying troops following exposure to the crisis vignette. Compares between superiority and inferiority treatments between elite and low salience (pre-Ukraine) public samples. Within sample difference between balance conditions for public ATE is significant at 0.05-level. None of the other differences within samples and between nuclear balance conditions are statistically significant at conventional thresholds. In general, shifts in the nuclear balance do not appear to influence policy preferences.

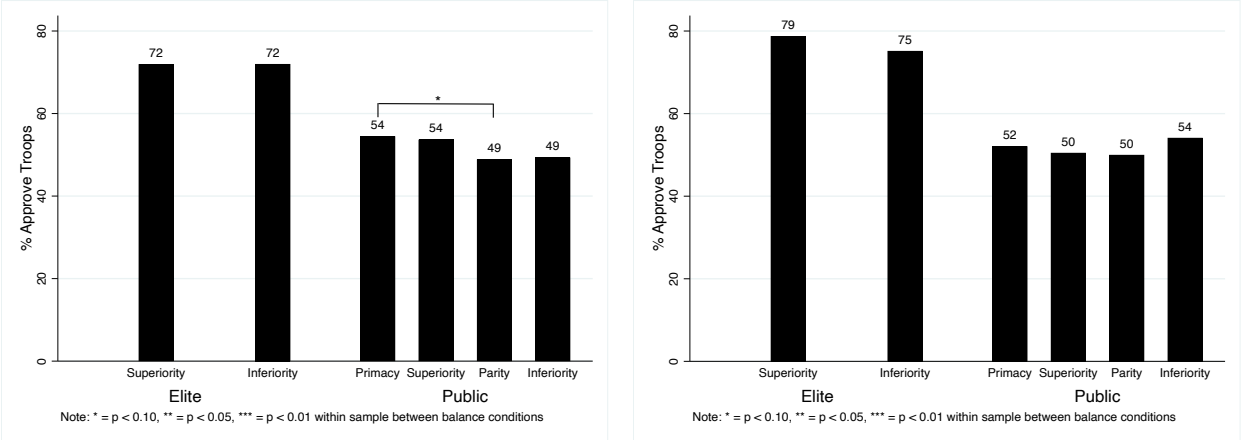
Figure A12: Preference for Deploying Troops by Elite and High (Post-Ukraine) Salience Public Samples Across Nuclear Balance Treatments



(a) Manipulation Check (ATE) **(b)** Vignette Exposure (ITT)

Note: Comparing preference for deploying troops (as opposed to levying economic sanctions) following exposure to the crisis vignette. Compares between superiority and inferiority treatments between elite and high salience (post-Ukraine) public samples. None of the differences within samples and between nuclear balance conditions are statistically significant at conventional thresholds. In general, shifts in the nuclear balance do not appear to influence policy preferences.

Figure A13: Approval for Deploying Troops by Elite and High (Post-Ukraine) Salience Public Samples Across Nuclear Balance Treatments



(a) Manipulation Check (ATE) **(b)** Vignette Exposure (ITT)

Note: Comparing approval for deploying troops following exposure to the crisis vignette. Compares between superiority and inferiority treatments between elite and high salience (post-Ukraine) public samples. In manipulation check tests, difference between public superiority and parity conditions is statistically significant at the 0.10-level. No other within sample differences are statistically significant at conventional thresholds. In general, shifts in the nuclear balance do not appear to influence policy preferences.

Discussion of Nuclear Balance Descriptions

To maximize the external validity of the descriptions of the strategic nuclear balance, fatality estimates are taken from nuclear exchange models in Kroenig (2018, chapter 2). Kroenig simulates a large-scale nuclear exchange between Russia and the United States. In the exchange, Russia is expected to suffer 69 million fatalities while the United States is expected to suffer 27 million fatalities. I use anticipated fatalities for several reasons. First, the historical record shows that U.S. attempts to assess the balance between Russia and the United States typically summarized that balance in terms of expected relative fatalities. In this respect, I mirror the actual practices of state leaders, thereby enhancing the external validity of the study. In addition, presenting the balance in this way makes the treatment (the relative strategic nuclear balance) both more vivid and more comprehensible, especially to a general audience. There is, admittedly, significant uncertainty about how many people a large-scale nuclear strike would kill depending on the features of the strike. The estimates used might influence willingness to use nuclear weapons. Here, I use estimates for countervalue strikes drawn from Kroenig's work. However, future work might investigate whether results shift with the absolute level of fatalities expected. For more on the nuclear balance and fatality estimates, see Logan (2022).

Discussion of Elite Sample

Elite samples are drawn from students, faculty, and researchers at the U.S. Naval War College and the U.S. National Defense University. These two professional military education institutions provide joint professional military education (JPME) to mid-career and senior U.S. and non-U.S. military officers and civilian national security professionals. Students at these institutions are typically assigned to one of two cohorts, a "junior" cohort undergoing Phase I JPME and a "senior" cohort undergoing Phase II JPME. Students in the junior cohort must be either O-3 or O-4 rank or above while those in the senior cohort must be either O-5 or O-6 (the last rank before general or flag officer ranks). Despite the designation "students," these individuals represent promising mid-career and senior military officers and their civilian counterparts in the Departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security, and intelligence agencies and their equivalents in U.S. partners and allies around the world.

The survey was distributed to roughly 1,300 individuals. Of those, 337 began the survey. Of these, 275 (82%) completed the questions relating to approval and preference of nuclear use and 250 (74%) answered every question.

The elite sample response rate estimate of roughly 20-25% is given based on rough aggregate information provided by institutions and available on their websites about size of student body, faculty, and researchers. Details are not publicly releasable but the estimated number of individuals receiving the survey link at both institutions is approximately 1,300. With 337 partial responses and 250 complete responses, this computes to a response rate of roughly 20-25%.

While nearly 100% of faculty and researchers at these institutions are U.S. citizens, approximately 15-20% of students are non-U.S. citizens. The proportion of U.S. citizens in the sample (roughly 12%) is roughly equal to the proportion of U.S. citizens within the target population, meaning the response rates for U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens is roughly equal. Analyses presented in the paper are conducted using only respondents who identified as U.S. citizens. However, the results hold when including non-U.S. citizens in the elite sample.

Table A5: Survey Experimental Research on Nuclear Use

Study	Sample	Country
Press, D.G., Sagan, S.D. and Valentino, B.A., 2013. Atomic aversion: Experimental evidence on taboos, traditions, and the non-use of nuclear weapons. *American Political Science Review*, *107*(1), pp.188-206.	Public	U.S.A.
Sagan, S.D. and Valentino, B.A., 2017. Revisiting Hiroshima in Iran: What Americans really think about using nuclear weapons and killing noncombatants. *International Security*, *42*(1), pp.41-79.	Public	U.S.A.
Carpenter, C. and Montgomery, A.H., 2020. The stopping power of norms: saturation bombing, civilian immunity, and US attitudes toward the laws of war. *International Security*, *45*(2), pp.140-169.	Public	U.S.A.
Koch, L.L. and Wells, M., 2021. Still taboo? Citizens' attitudes toward the use of nuclear weapons. *Journal of Global Security Studies*, *6*(3), p.ogaa024.	Public	U.S.A.
Rathbun, B.C. and Stein, R., 2020. Greater goods: morality and attitudes toward the use of nuclear weapons. *Journal of conflict resolution*, *64*(5), pp.787-816.	Public	U.S.A.
Sukin, L., 2020. Experimental evidence on determinants of support for nuclear use in response to threats of nuclear retaliation. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, *26*(3), p.336.	Public	South Korea, U.S.A.
Clary, C., Lalwani, S. and Siddiqui, N., 2021. Public opinion and crisis behavior in a nuclearized south Asia. *International Studies Quarterly*, *65*(4), pp.1064-1076.	Public	Pakistan
Smetana, M. and Vranka, M., 2021. How moral foundations shape public approval of nuclear, chemical, and conventional strikes: new evidence from experimental surveys. *International Interactions*, *47*(2), pp.374-390.	Public	U.S.A.
Allison, D.M., Herzog, S. and Ko, J., 2022. Under the umbrella: Nuclear crises, extended deterrence, and public opinion. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *66*(10), pp.1766-1796.	Public	Japan, South Korea, U.S.A.
Dill, J., Sagan, S.D. and Valentino, B.A., 2022. Kettles of hawks: Public opinion on the nuclear taboo and noncombatant immunity in the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Israel. *Security Studies*, *31*(1), pp.1-31.	Public	France, Israel, U.S.A., U.K.
Herzog, S., Baron, J. and Gibbons, R.D., 2022. Antinormative messaging, group cues, and the nuclear ban treaty. *The Journal of Politics*, *84*(1), pp.591-596.	Public	U.S.A.
Horschig, D., 2022. Israeli Public opinion on the use of nuclear weapons: lessons from terror management theory. *Journal of Global Security Studies*, *7*(2), p.ogac006.	Public	Israel
Smetana, M. and Onderco, M., 2022. Elite-public gaps in attitudes to nuclear weapons: new evidence from a survey of German citizens and parliamentarians. *International Studies Quarterly*, *66*(2), p.sqac017.	Elite-Public	Germany
Brutger, R., Kertzer, J.D., Renshon, J., Tingley, D. and Weiss, C.M., 2023. Abstraction and detail in experimental design. *American Journal of Political Science*, *67*(4), pp.979-995.	Public	U.S.A.
Bowen, T., Goldfien, M.A. and Graham, M.H., 2023. Public opinion and nuclear use: Evidence from factorial experiments. *The Journal of Politics*, *85*(1), pp.345-350.	Public	U.S.A.
Casler, D. and Groves, D., 2023. Perspective taking through partisan eyes: Cross-national empathy, partisanship, and attitudes toward international cooperation. *The Journal of Politics*, *85*(4), pp.1471-1486.	Public	U.S.A.
Smetana, M. and Onderco, M., 2023. From Moscow with a mushroom cloud? Russian public attitudes to the use of nuclear weapons in a	Public	Russia

conflict with NATO. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *67*(2-3), pp.183-209.		
Smetana, M., Vranka, M. and Rosendorf, O., 2023. The lesser evil? Experimental evidence on the strength of nuclear and chemical weapon "taboos". *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, *40*(1), pp.3-21.	Public	U.K., U.S.A.
Ju, C. and Byun, J., 2024. Under no circumstances? What the Chinese really think about the wartime use of nuclear weapons. *International Studies Quarterly*, *68*(2), p.sqae037.	Public	China
Schwartz, J.A., 2024. When foreign countries push the button. *International Security*, *48*(4), pp.47-86.	Public	India, U.S.A.
Smetana, M., Vranka, M. and Rosendorf, O., 2024. The "Commitment Trap" Revisited: Experimental Evidence on Ambiguous Nuclear Threats. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, *11*(1), pp.64-77.	Public	U.S.A.
Smetana, M., Vranka, M. and Rosendorf, O., 2024. Elite-public gaps in support for nuclear and chemical strikes: New evidence from a survey of British parliamentarians and citizens. *Research & Politics*, *11*(3), p.20531680241276795.	Elite-Public	U.K.
Sagan, S.D. and Valentino, B.A., 2025. Atomic Arguments and Counter-Arguments: How Exposure to Conflicting Information Influences American Public Support for the Use of Nuclear Weapons. *International Studies Quarterly*, *69*(1), p.sqae154.	Public	U.S.A.

Questionnaire

Statement of Consent. I have read the information provided above. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and all the questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been provided a copy of this form for my records and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that by agreeing to participate in this research and signing this form, I do not waive any of my legal rights.

I agree
I disagree

Attention Commitment. Thank you for your time in taking our survey. We care about the quality of our survey data and hope to receive the most accurate measure of your opinions, so it is important to us that you thoughtfully provide your best answer to each question in the survey.

Q: Do you commit to providing your thoughtful and honest answers to the questions in this survey?
I will provide my best answers
I will not provide my best answers
I can't promise either way

Q: What is your age in years?
_____

Pre-Treatment Questions
Q: Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: *My major accomplishments are entirely due to my hard work and ability.*

Strongly disagree					Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

Q: Indicate how much do you agree with the following statement: *Once war has broken out, it is possible to control its course*.

Strongly disagree					Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

Q: How big of a role should military force play in U.S. foreign policy?

No role at all					Extremely big role
1	2	3	4	5	6

Q: How big of a role should the United States play in trying to solve conflicts around the world?

No role at all					Extremely big role
1	2	3	4	5	6

Crisis Vignette
Please read the short news article paying attention to the main ideas. Then, based on information in the article, answer the questions that follow. Thank you for your time and thoughtful attention.

Manipulation Check
Q: According to the article, which of the following best describes the nuclear balance between the United States and Russia?

The United States possessed complete nuclear superiority over Russia
The United States possessed greater nuclear capability than Russia (but not complete nuclear superiority)
Russia possessed greater nuclear capability than the United States
The United States possesses equal nuclear capability with Russia

Crisis Policy Preferences
Q: Given the facts described in the article, if you had to choose between dispatching U.S. ground troops (aggressive option) or levying economic sanctions (cautious option), which option would you prefer?

Strongly prefer dispatching troops				Strongly prefer economic sanctions	
1	2	3	4	5	6

Q: Regardless of which option you preferred, if the United States decided to dispatch U.S. ground troops, how much would you approve or disapprove of that decision?

Strongly disapprove				Strongly approve	
1	2	3	4	5	6

Conflict Vignette
Please read the short news article paying attention to the main ideas. Then, based on information in the article, answer the questions that follow. Thank you for your time and thoughtful attention.

Conflict Policy Preferences
Q: Given the facts described in the second article, if you had to choose between deploying more U.S. ground troops or launching a nuclear strike, which option would you prefer?

Strongly prefer deploying more troops				Strongly prefer launching nuclear strike	
1	2	3	4	5	6

Q: Regardless of which option you preferred, if the United States decided to launch the nuclear strike against Russian forces, how much would you disapprove or approve of that decision?

Strongly disapprove				Strongly approve	
1	2	3	4	5	6

Attitudes Toward Nuclear Use
Q: Regardless of which option you preferred, how unethical (left) or ethical (right) do you think it would be if the United States decided to launch the nuclear strike against the Russian forces?

Highly unethical				Highly ethical	
1	2	3	4	5	6

Q: You indicated in an earlier question that you would NOT have approved of the United States launching a nuclear strike against Russian forces. Please indicate which of the following reasons influenced your thinking for disapproving of the nuclear option:

It would have increased the chance of a Russian nuclear strike against the United States
It would not have provided a significant military advantage
It would have increased the likelihood of other countries using nuclear weapons in the future
It would have hurt the reputation of the United States
It would have been unethical
Other _____

Q: Of the reasons you selected in the previous question for not launching the nuclear strike against Russian forces, rank the reasons from most important to least important, beginning with one (1) for the most important reason:

_____ It would have increased the chance of a Russian nuclear strike against the United States
_____ It would not have provided a significant military advantage
_____ It would have increased the likelihood of other countries using nuclear weapons in the future
_____ It would have hurt the reputation of the United States
_____ It would have been unethical
_____ Other

Q: You indicated in an earlier question that you would have approved of the United States launching a nuclear strike against Russian forces. Please indicate which of the following reasons influenced your thinking for approving of the nuclear option:

It would have saved American lives
It would have provided a military advantage
It would have deterred further aggression by Russia
It would have signaled resolve to American allies
It would have been an appropriate retaliation to Russian aggression
Other _____

Q: Of the reasons you selected in the previous question for approving the launching the nuclear strike against Russian forces, rank the reasons from most important to least important, beginning with one (1) for the most important reason:

_____ It would have saved American lives
_____ It would have provided a military advantage
_____ It would have deterred further aggression by Russia
_____ It would have signaled resolve to American allies
_____ It would have been an appropriate retaliation to Russian aggression
_____ Other

Demographic Questions

Q: What is your gender?

Male
Female
Other

Q: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Did not graduate from high school
High school graduate
Some college, but no degree (yet)
2-year college
4-year college degree
Postgraduate degree (MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, etc.)

Q: What racial or ethnic group best describes you?
- Asian or Asian-American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Middle Eastern
- Native American
- White
- More than one of the above
- Other

Q: Which of the following best describes your military experience?
- Enlisted member of the U.S. military (current or former)
- Officer in the U.S. military (current or former)
- No military experience

Q: Have you been in combat or received a Combat Action Ribbon (CAR), Combat Action Badge (CAB), or Combat Action Medal (AFCAM)?
- Yes
- No

Q: What was the highest military rank you achieved?
- E-1
- E-2
- E-3
- E-4
- E-5
- E-6
- E-7
- E-8
- E-9

Q: What was the highest military rank you achieved?
- O-1
- O-2
- O-3
- O-4
- O-5
- O-6
- O-7
- O-8
- O-9
- O-10

Q: Has any member of your immediate family or a close personal friend died in war?
- Yes
- No

Q: Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a …?
- Strong Democrat
- Not very strong Democrat
- Neither
- Not a very strong Republican
- Strong Republican
- Not sure
- Other

Q: Did you vote in the last election?
- Yes
- No

Q: In the last presidential election, which candidate did you vote for?
- Democratic candidate
- Republican candidate
- Other

Q: Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?
- Strongly favor
- Favor
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

Nuclear Knowledge Questions

Q: Which of the following materials is used as a key fuel in nuclear weapons?
- Americium
- Polonium
- Radon
- Thorium
- Uranium

Q: Which of the following countries possesses nuclear weapons? (Mark all that apply)
- China
- France
- India
- Iran
- Iraq
- Japan
- North Korea
- South Korea

Q: Which of the following countries has used nuclear weapons in war against another country?
- China
- France
- North Korea
- Soviet Union
- United States

Q: In the study of nuclear weapons, what does the acronym MAD stand for?
- Massed Armed Division
- Maximum Acceptable Damage
- Measured Atomic Detonation
- Minimal Attack Determinant
- Mutually Assured Destruction

Q: Roughly how many people died as a result of the atomic bombings of Japan?
- fewer than 1,000
- between 1,000 and 10,000
- between 10,000 and 50,000
- between 50,000 and 200,000
- between 200,000 and 500,000
- More than 500,000

Nuclear Policy Preferences (Only Presented to Elite Sample)

Q: How confident are you that the "nuclear taboo" -- domestic and international norms against using nuclear weapons -- constrains nuclear-armed countries from using nuclear weapons in a first strike?

Very confident
Somewhat confident
Not very confident
Not very confident at all

Q: How confident are you that a state that has an assured second strike nuclear capability can deter nuclear attacks by another state?

Very confident
Somewhat confident
Not very confident
Not very confident at all

Q: How confident are you that a state that has an assured second strike nuclear capability can coerce states without nuclear weapons to change their behavior?

Very confident
Somewhat confident
Not very confident
Not very confident at all

Q: Do you agree or disagree with the proposition that the United States should adopt a No First Use nuclear policy?

Agree strongly
Agree somewhat
Disagree somewhat
Disagree strongly

Q: Do you agree or disagree with the proposition that the United States should produce and deploy new low-yield nuclear weapons?

Agree strongly
Agree somewhat
Disagree somewhat
Disagree strongly

Q: Under the New START Treaty, which is set to expire on February 4, 2026, the United States is limited to deploying no more than 1,550 nuclear warheads. How many nuclear warheads do you think the United States should deploy? Please enter a numerical answer. You may enter any number zero or greater.

_____

Debriefing. Thank you for completing the survey. The articles presented in this survey were entirely fictional. If you have any questions or comments you can contact: