Supplementary Materials

When Foreign Countries Push The Button

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Study 1: Nuclear Terrorism

Robustness

Table S.1 demonstrates that the main results are robust to using the full 6-point measure of approval instead of a binary measure of approval as used in the main text. For example, column 5 shows that approval for a U.S. nuclear strike is 0.581 points greater than for a Russian strike and approval for a French nuclear strike is 0.450 points greater than for a Russian strike. However, there is no significant differences in approval for a U.S. compared to a French nuclear strike.

Table S.1: 6-Point Measure of Approval

-	**Approval**	**US**	**France**	**Russia**	**Pakistan**
US	3.66	-	0.131	0.581***	0.407***
France	3.53	-0.131	-	0.450***	0.276*
Russia	3.08	-0.581***	-0.450***	-	-0.174
Pakistan	3.25	-0.407***	-0.276*	0.174	-

Note: Results are calculated from 2,000 bootstraps. * = p<0.10, ** = p<0.05, and *** = p<0.01. Values in columns 3-6 correspond to differences in nuclear attack approval for the countries listed on the left-hand side of the table minus the countries listed on the top of the table.

Similarly, Table S.2 illustrates that the main results hold when using the full 6-point measure and including all respondents in the analysis (i.e., those that failed the factual manipulation check).

Table S.2: 6-Point Measure of Approval for All Respondents

-	**Approval**	**US**	**France**	**Russia**	**Pakistan**
US	3.61	-	0.018	0.394***	0.240*
France	3.59	-0.018	-	0.376***	0.222**
Russia	3.21	-0.394***	-0.376***	-	-0.153
Pakistan	3.37	-0.240*	-0.222**	0.153	-

Note: Results are calculated from 2,000 bootstraps. * = p<0.10, ** = p<0.05, and *** = p<0.01. Values in columns 3-6 correspond to differences in nuclear attack approval for the countries listed on the left-hand side of the table minus the countries listed on the top of the table.

Table S.3 demonstrates the robustness of the main results to a regression that controls for a range of demographic and attitudinal factors such as party identification, militant assertiveness, education, respondent gender, age, etc. The principal quantities of interest—which compare approval between different countries—are located at the bottom of the table. Note also that the only consistent factor that is statistically associated with approval for the nuclear strike is militant assertiveness. While previous studies found that approval for a nuclear attack is greater for Republicans (Press, Sagan, and Valentino 2013; Sagan and Valentino 2017), party identification is correlated with militant assertiveness and the results from this experiment suggest the latter is a more important factor.

Table S.3: Controlling for Other Factors

	Approval Binary (Passed Attention)	Approval Full (Passed Attention)	Approval Full (All Respondents)
	(1)	(2)	(3)
US Treatment	0.22	2.56***	2.40***
	(0.15)	(0.44)	(0.36)
France Treatment	0.24	2.50***	2.44***
	(0.15)	(0.43)	(0.35)
Russia Treatment	0.09	2.06***	2.08***
	(0.15)	(0.43)	(0.35)
Pakistan Treatment	0.13	2.21***	2.19***
	(0.15)	(0.43)	(0.35)
Stronger Republican	−0.003	−0.002	−0.01
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Militant Assertiveness	0.05***	0.22***	0.24***
	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Female	−0.02	0.04	−0.04
	(0.04)	(0.12)	(0.10)
Education	0.001	0.001	0.03
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Income	0.004	0.01	0.003
	(0.003)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Prefer Not to Reveal Income	−0.12	−0.09	−0.08
	(0.10)	(0.27)	(0.22)
Age	0.002	0.001	−0.002
	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Religiosity	0.01	0.06	0.10***
	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.04)
News Engagement	0.02	0.06	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Climate Change Belief	−0.01	−0.04	−0.003
	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Observations	578	578	782
Difference Between	US/France: -0.022	US/France: 0.065	US/France: -0.031
	US/Russia: 0.127**	US/Russia: 0.504***	US/Russia: 0.330**
	US/Pakistan: 0.085*	US/Pakistan: 0.355**	US/Pakistan: 0.210*
	France/Russia: 0.148***	France/Russia: 0.439***	France/Russia: 0.360***
	France/Pakistan: 0.107**	France/Pakistan: 0.289**	France/Pakistan: 0.241**

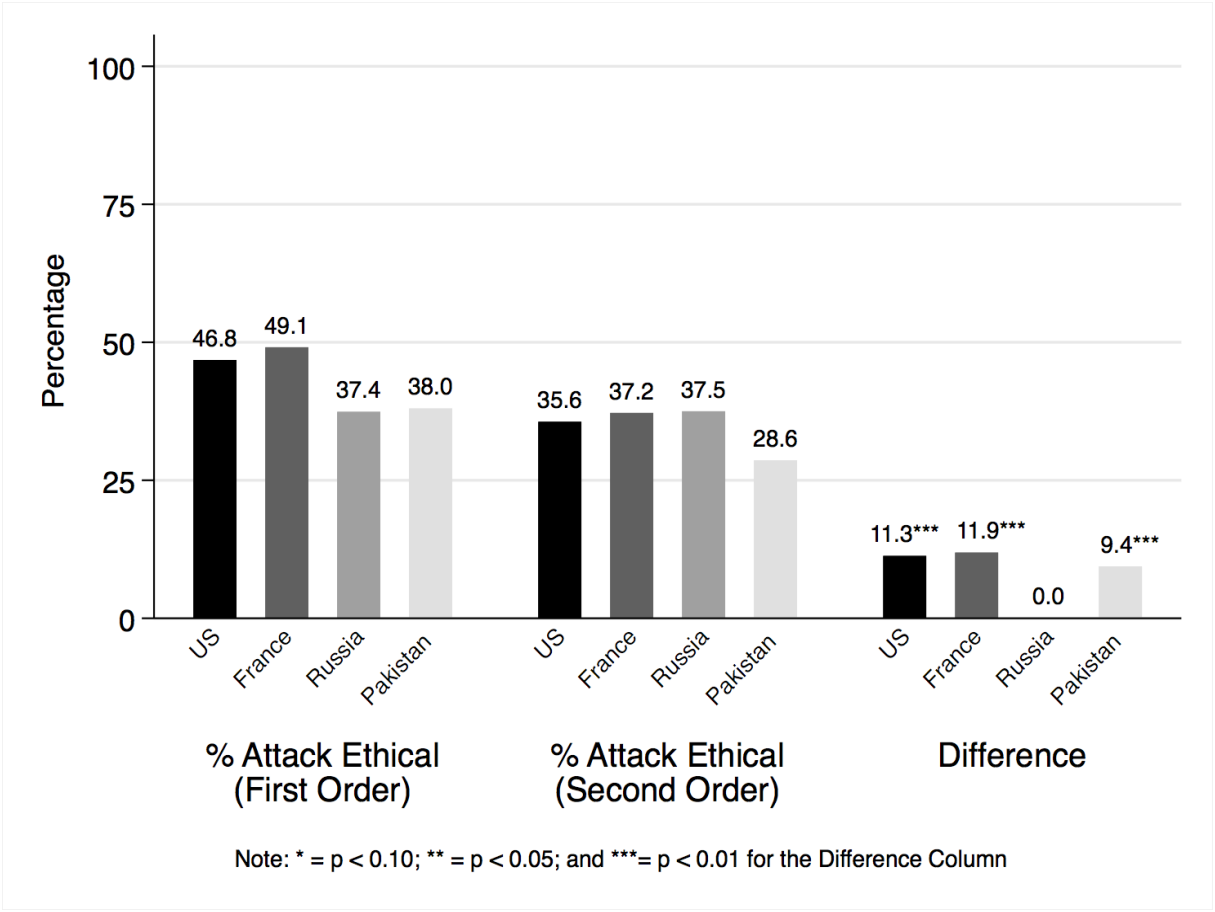
Notes: Results calculated from 2,000 bootstraps. Standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.10; **p< 0.05; ***p<0.01

First-Order vs. Second-Order Beliefs

In addition to asking respondents whether they personally believe the nuclear strike was ethical (first-order ethical beliefs), I also asked them whether they believe the international community would view the strike as ethical (second-order ethical beliefs). I compare the results for these questions in Figure S.1. Interestingly, respondents are significantly more likely to personally believe a nuclear strike by the U.S. or France is ethical than believe the international community will view a strike as ethical. The same does not hold for Russia; first and second-order beliefs about ethics are nearly identical. These findings suggest that respondents may recognize their own in-group bias. American citizens realize that they would evaluate nuclear use by their own government and the French government more leniently than the international community would, but believe their views on Russia are relatively representative of the broader international community since in-group bias does not apply. How conscious and intentional in-group bias is would be an interesting avenue for future research, especially because Moral Foundations Theory suggests that in-group bias is a core element of many people's moral codes.[1]

[1] On the other hand, first-order ethical beliefs about Pakistan are also greater than second-order ethical beliefs. Perhaps this reflects an assumption that the international community is biased against Muslim-majority countries or biased towards major powers like Russia.

Figure S.1: Difference in First and Second-Order Beliefs About Morality



Probing External Validity to Political Elites

In a wide-ranging analysis of previous studies, Kertzer (2022) finds that elites react to experimental treatments in similar ways as the public in the large majority of cases. This means that the results presented in this paper may also speak to how policymakers would view the use of nuclear weapons by a foreign country relative to their own country. Since Kertzer (2022) does find that political elites differ from members of the public in terms of their typical gender, education, income, and age, I analyze in Table S.4 whether the results are significantly weaker among members of the public that are more elite-like.[2]

I operationalize the following 5 elite-like traits in accordance with the studies by Kertzer (2022) and Mattes and Weeks (2022):

- Male: Respondents that identify as male.
- High Education: Respondents that completed a four-year college degree.
- High Income: Respondents whose income was above the median in this survey sample.
- Prime Age: Respondents between 40 and 64 years old.
- High Political Interest: Respondents that claim they follow what is going on in public affairs some or most of the time.

To test whether the results are weaker among members of the public that are more elite-like, I interact these five factors with the treatments of interest. Models 1 and 2 test whether approval for the U.S. and France relative to Russia and Pakistan differs based on elite-like traits. None of the interactions are statistically significant, suggesting the answer is no. Moreover, I set up the analysis so that the standalone "US/France Compared to Russia/Pakistan" variable would test whether approval for the U.S. and France is still greater than for Russia and Pakistan when the sample is most elite-like (i.e., male, high education, high income, prime age, and high political interest). This variable is positive and statistically significant, suggesting that in-group bias for domestic and allied countries relative to non-allies still holds even when the sample is most elite-like.

[2]This analysis is based off a similar one conducted by Mattes and Weeks (2022).

Models 3 and 4 test whether approval for the U.S. relative to France differs based on elite-like traits. Again, none of the interactions are statistically significant, suggesting the answer is no. As in the main analysis, there is also not a significant difference in approval between the U.S. and France when the sample is most elite-like.

Overall, these tests suggest the central results in this paper are more likely to hold among elites. Of course, only future studies conducted on elites themselves could confirm this.

Table S.4: Do the Results Vary Based on Elite-Like Traits?

	Approval Full			
	Passed Attention	All Respondents	Passed Attention	All Respondents
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
US/France Compared to Russia/Pakistan	0.63**	0.42**		
	(0.25)	(0.21)		
US/France Compared to Russia/Pakistan x Female Respondent	0.05	0.07		
	(0.24)	(0.20)		
US/France Compared to Russia/Pakistan x Low Education	−0.29	−0.22		
	(0.25)	(0.21)		
US/France Compared to Russia/Pakistan x Low Income	−0.10	−0.14		
	(0.24)	(0.20)		
US/France Compared to Russia/Pakistan x Non-Prime Age	−0.01	0.09		
	(0.24)	(0.20)		
US/France Compared to Russia/Pakistan x Low Political Interest	−0.18	−0.20		
	(0.31)	(0.25)		
US Compared to France			0.22	−0.12
			(0.36)	(0.30)
US Compared to France x Female Respondent			−0.33	−0.24
			(0.34)	(0.28)
US Compared to France x Low Education			−0.39	0.07
			(0.36)	(0.30)
US Compared to France x Low Income			0.09	0.06
			(0.35)	(0.30)
US Compared to France x Non-Prime Age			0.12	0.13
			(0.34)	(0.28)
US Compared to France x Low Political Interest			0.58	0.33
			(0.43)	(0.36)
Female Respondent	−0.004	−0.11	0.25	0.10
	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.26)	(0.20)
Low Education	0.12	−0.01	0.08	−0.26
	(0.18)	(0.15)	(0.28)	(0.22)
Low Income	−0.03	−0.003	−0.16	−0.17
	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.26)	(0.21)
Non-Prime Age	−0.07	−0.09	−0.13	−0.04
	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.25)	(0.20)
Low Political Interest	−0.02	0.09	−0.55*	−0.27
	(0.23)	(0.18)	(0.32)	(0.24)
Stronger Republican	−0.004	−0.02	0.03	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Militant Assertiveness	0.23***	0.26***	0.26***	0.28***
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Climate Belief	−0.05	−0.002	−0.03	−0.01
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.07)
Constant	2.59***	2.60***	2.79***	2.95***
	(0.36)	(0.30)	(0.53)	(0.44)
Observations	584	789	303	395

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.10; **p< 0.05; ***p<0.01.

Pre-Registered Hypotheses

Main Effect Hypotheses

- Respondents should be more likely to approve of a nuclear strike when the United States conducts it than when a foreign country does so.
    - Mostly Supported: There is strong evidence that approval for the US is higher than for Russia and Pakistan. However, there is not strong evidence that approval for the US is higher than for France.
- Respondents should be more likely to approve of a nuclear strike when France conducts it than when Russia or Pakistan does so.
    - Supported

Nuclear Taboo Hypotheses

- *Null Hypothesis*: If skeptics of the nuclear taboo are correct, then a majority of respondents (50%) should not disapprove of a nuclear strike conducted by the United States, France, Russia, or Pakistan. *Alternate Hypothesis*: If proponents of the nuclear taboo are correct, then at least a majority of respondents (50%) should disapprove of a nuclear strike conducted by the United States, France, Russia, or Pakistan.
    - US: Cannot reject the null hypothesis and so there's stronger evidence for the views of nuclear taboo skeptics.
    - France: Cannot reject the null hypothesis and so there's stronger evidence for the views of nuclear taboo skeptics.
    - Russia: Can reject the null hypothesis and so there's stronger evidence for the views of nuclear taboo proponents.
    - Pakistan: Can reject the null hypothesis and so there's stronger evidence for the views of nuclear taboo proponents.
    - All Countries Pooled: Cannot reject the null hypothesis and so there's stronger evidence for the views of nuclear taboo skeptics.

Mechanism Hypotheses

- Respondents should be more likely to personally believe a nuclear strike is ethical when the United States conducts it than when a foreign country does so.
    - Mostly Supported: Holds for the US relative to Russia and Pakistan, but not relative to France.
- Respondents should be more likely to personally believe a nuclear strike is ethical when France conducts it than when Russia or Pakistan does so.
    - Supported

- Respondents should be more likely to believe the international community will view a nuclear strike as ethical when the United States conducts it than when a foreign country does so.

    - Somewhat Supported: Strong evidence that this holds for the US relative to Pakistan (holds using the binary DV/respondents that passed the attention check or the full DV/respondents that passed the attention check), but not relative to France or Russia.

- Respondents should be more likely to believe the international community will view a nuclear strike as ethical when France conducts it than when Russia or Pakistan does so.

    - Somewhat Supported: Strong evidence that this holds for France relative to Pakistan (holds using the binary DV/respondents that passed the attention check, the full DV/respondents that passed the attention check, or the full DV/all respondents), but not relative to Russia.

- Respondents should be more likely to believe a reasonable effort was made to minimize the loss of human life when the United States conducts it than when a foreign country does so.

    - Mostly Supported: Strong evidence that this holds for the US relative to Russia and Pakistan, but somewhat mixed evidence that it holds for the US relative to France (only holds using the full DV/respondents that passed the attention check).

- Respondents should be more likely to believe a reasonable effort was made to minimize the loss of human life when France conducts it than when Russia or Pakistan does so.

    - Not Supported

- Respondents should be more likely to believe the use of nuclear weapons was an act of self defense when the United States conducts it than when a foreign country does so.

    - Somewhat Supported: Strong evidence this holds for the US relative to Russia, but mixed evidence it holds relative to Pakistan (only holds when when using the full DV/respondents that passed the attention check) and no evidence it holds relative to France.

- Respondents should be more likely to believe the use of nuclear weapons was an act of self defense when France conducts it than when Russia or Pakistan does so.

    - Somewhat Supported: Strong evidence this holds for France relative to Russia, but no evidence it holds relative to Pakistan.

- Respondents should be less likely to believe a nuclear strike is a violation of international law when the United States conducts it than when a foreign country does so.

    - Mostly Supported: Strong evidence this holds for the US relative to Russia and Pakistan, but not for the US relative to France.

- Respondents should be less likely to believe a nuclear strike is a violation of international law when France conducts it than when Russia or Pakistan does so.

    - Somewhat Supported: Some evidence that this holds for France relative to Russia (it holds when using the full DV/respondents that passed the attention check and the full DV/all respondents), but not for France relative to Pakistan.

Disarmament/Proliferation Hypotheses

- Respondents should be less likely to support global nuclear disarmament when the United States uses nuclear weapons than when a foreign country does so.

    - Not Supported

- Respondents should be less likely to support global nuclear disarmament when France uses nuclear weapons than when Russia or Pakistan does so.

    - Not Supported

- Respondents should be less likely to believe nuclear proliferation is the greatest international security threat facing the United States when the United States uses nuclear weapons than when a foreign country does so.

    - Not Supported

- Respondents should be less likely to believe nuclear proliferation is the greatest international security threat facing the United States when France uses nuclear weapons than when Russia or Pakistan does so.

    - Somewhat Supported: Holds for France relative to Pakistan, but not for France relative to Russia.

Individual-Level Hypotheses

- Respondents that score higher in a measure of militant assertiveness should be more likely to support a nuclear strike.

    - Supported

- Respondents that are stronger Republicans or conservatives should be more likely to support a nuclear strike.

    - Not Supported

- Respondents that are older should be more likely to support a nuclear strike.

    - Not Supported

- Respondents that have greater levels of belief in human-caused climate change should be less likely to support a nuclear strike.

    - Not Supported

Modifications to Press, Sagan, and Valentino's (2013) Design

I make a few small modifications to Press, Sagan, and Valentino's (2013) original design. First, whereas they experimentally manipulate the type of air strike (nuclear or conventional), I hold that factor constant (nuclear) in order to enhance statistical power. Second, instead of the terrorist group being al-Qaeda, I make it the Islamic State since they have become more salient in the last several years.[3] Third, instead of the nuclear lab being located in Syria, which has a close relationship with Russia, I have it located in Yemen, which is a country where the Islamic State operates. Fourth instead of the strike being conducted by the United States and the nuclear material being stolen from Russia, I have both the striking country and the country from whom nuclear material was stolen be the same in my design. Given that Russia is one of the countries conducting a nuclear strike in my experiment, it would not be consistent for the striking country to be the same as the country from whom nuclear material was stolen for one experimental condition but different for the other three. Fifth, since the justification for the strike is self-defense, I adjust the city discussed at the end of the article depending on the country conducting the strike: New York for the United States, Paris for France, Moscow for Russia, and Karachi for Pakistan. All four of these cities are the largest in terms of population size in their respective countries. Finally, in the treatment introduction, I note that this scenario takes places in 2027 in order to disassociate it with the current political moment (Mattes and Weeks 2019).

[3] This small change is unlikely to have a substantive impact on the results. Rathbun and Stein (2019) varied whether the terrorist group in their vignette was al-Qaeda or Hezbollah and found it had little impact.

Questionnaire

[Some Demographic Information Collected by Lucid]

Informed Consent[4]

Please read the following consent form:

This is a research study of U.S. public opinion on political issues. Your participation will be voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. The alternative is not to participate. The survey answers you provide will be stored as de-identified/anonymous data and used for this and potentially future research studies. The survey will take about 15 minutes. There are no apparent risks or benefits to your participation in this study. If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, you may contact the researchers at josha@sas.upenn.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject and you cannot reach a member of the study team, you may contact the Office of Regulatory Affairs with any question, concerns or complaints at the University of Pennsylvania by calling (215) 898-2614 or emailing irb@pobox.upenn.edu. If you understand and would like to continue, please click continue to the next page.

I have read the consent form, and I want to continue with this study	I do not want to participate in this study
○	○

Age Eligibility & Attention Screener

- Are you eighteen years of age or older?[5]
  - Yes
  - No

We'd like to know how you feel about local news coverage. Please read this short article. On the next page, we will ask you a few questions about your reactions to this article

MAN ARRESTED FOR STRING OF BANK THEFTS

Columbus Police have arrested a man they say gave his driver's license to a teller at a bank he was robbing.

According to court documents, Bryan Simon is accused of robbing four Central Ohio banks between October 3 and November 5, 2018.

During a robbery on November 5 at the Huntington Bank, the sheriff's office says Simon was tricked into giving the teller his drivers' license.

[4] If respondents answer "No" to the consent, then they are removed from the study.

[5] If respondents answer "No," then they are removed from the study.

According to court documents, Simon approached the counter and presented a demand note for money that said "I have a gun." The teller gave Simon about $500, which he took.

Documents say Simon then told the teller he wanted more money. The teller told him a driver's license was required to use the machine to get out more cash. Simon reportedly then gave the teller his license to swipe through the machine and then left the bank with a total of about $1500, but without his ID.

Detectives arrested him later that day at the address listed on his ID.

- Do you think this article is typical of local news coverage?
  - Yes
  - Maybe
  - No
- Do you think there is too much coverage of crime in local news coverage?
  - Yes
  - Maybe
  - No
- How was Simon identified by police for the crime he allegedly committed?[6]
  - From video surveillance
  - Because he left his ID
  - He turned himself in
  - None of the above
- How much money did Simon allegedly steal in total?[7]
  - About $500
  - About $1,500
  - About $25,000
  - About $1 million
  - None of the above

[6] If respondents answer anything other than "Because he left his ID," then they are removed from the study. See Vaughn, Peyton, and Huber (2022) for a similar screener question.

[7] I do not remove respondents that answer this question incorrectly.

Pre-Treatment Questions[8]

To what extent do you agree with the following?[9]

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The best way to ensure peace is through American military strength	○	○	○	○	○
Going to war is unfortunate, but sometimes the only solution to international problems	○	○	○	○	○

- The Earth is getting warmer, mostly because of human activity, such as burning fossil fuels.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
- Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you typically attend religious services?
  - Never
  - Seldom
  - A few times per year
  - A few times per month
  - Weekly
  - More than weekly
- Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. 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
  - Hardly at all

[8] The order of questions in this section is randomized.

[9] The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

Political ID

- Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a...
  - Democrat
  - Republican
  - Independent
  - Other
- Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not so strong Democrat?[10]
  - Strong Democrat
  - Not so strong Democrat
- Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not so strong Republican?[11]
  - Strong Republican
  - Not so strong Republican
- Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or Republican Party?[12]
  - The Democratic Party
  - The Republican Party
  - Neither
  - Not sure
- In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?
  - Very liberal
  - Liberal
  - Moderate
  - Conservative
  - Very conservative
  - Not sure

[10] This question is only presented to respondents who chose "Democrat" for the first question in this section.

[11] This question is only presented to respondents who chose "Republican" for the first question in this section.

[12] This question is only presented to respondents who chose "Independent" or "Other" for the first question in this section.

Treatment Conditions[13]

We are now going to describe a situation the world could face in the future, in 2027. Please read carefully and imagine how you would feel if these events were actually happening.

Figure S.2: U.S. Treatment

Red Cross Estimates 1,000 Dead in U.S. Nuclear Strike against Islamic State Atomic Bomb Lab in Yemen

United States used nuclear weapons to ensure destruction of deeply buried facility

The Associated Press

A new International Red Cross report estimates that the total death toll from the U.S. nuclear strike against an Islamic State atomic bomb lab in Yemen will eventually reach 1,000 civilians, including long term deaths due to the strike. An additional 1,200 people are still being treated in local hospitals for non-life-threatening injuries, primarily burns suffered during the attack.

Two American nuclear-tipped missiles struck targets in Yemen yesterday in what U.S. officials have called an act of self-defense against an imminent terrorist nuclear attack.

Since the strike, high ranking government sources from the United States have confirmed that the U.S. military operation destroyed an underground Islamic State weapons facility in which the components for at least two nuclear weapons were being assembled. Last week, U.S. intelligence agents intercepted a shipment of approximately 70 pounds of nuclear weapons-grade uranium being smuggled from America to the Islamic State camp. The seized uranium would have been sufficient to fuel a crude nuclear bomb.

"We decided to use nuclear weapons to destroy the Islamic Sate's nuclear weapons before they could use them against us."

U.S. officials determined that the suspects in the smuggling operation were employed at a U.S. nuclear facility, and that an additional 150 pounds of weapons-grade uranium were missing from the site. The suspects confirmed under questioning that an earlier shipment of uranium was successfully delivered to the Islamic State weapons lab, where two nuclear weapons were being assembled.

The Islamic State facility was compromised of a series of deeply buried caves and tunnels, which made destruction of the facility difficult. Speaking to reporters, a U.S. government spokesman said, "We did everything possible to minimize the loss of life in Yemen, but we decided to use nuclear weapons to destroy the Islamic State's nuclear weapons before they could use them against us."

According to Dr. David Wright, an expert on military operations and weapons at the Union of Concerned Scientists, an independent think-tank based in Washington, D.C., the U.S. had few other options. "It would have been very difficult to destroy the deeply buried bunkers without using nuclear weapons," he said. Wright also warned that the Islamic State bombs, while crude, would have caused catastrophic damage if used in a crowded urban area. "If a bomb of this size exploded in New York City, it could easily kill 50,000-70,000 people," he said.

[13] Respondents are randomly assigned to treatment conditions.

Figure S.3: France Treatment

Red Cross Estimates 1,000 Dead in French Nuclear Strike against Islamic State Atomic Bomb Lab in Yemen

France used nuclear weapons to ensure destruction of deeply buried facility

The Associated Press

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Two French nuclear-tipped missiles struck targets in Yemen yesterday in what French officials have called an act of self-defense against an imminent terrorist nuclear attack.

Since the strike, high ranking government sources from France have confirmed that the French military operation destroyed an underground Islamic State weapons facility in which the components for at least two nuclear weapons were being assembled. Last week, French intelligence agents intercepted a shipment of approximately 70 pounds of nuclear weapons-grade uranium being smuggled from France to the Islamic State camp. The seized uranium would have been sufficient to fuel a crude nuclear bomb.

"We decided to use nuclear weapons to destroy the Islamic Sate's nuclear weapons before they could use them against us."

French officials determined that the suspects in the smuggling operation were employed at a French nuclear facility, and that an additional 150 pounds of weapons-grade uranium were missing from the site. The suspects confirmed under questioning that an earlier shipment of uranium was successfully delivered to the Islamic State weapons lab, where two nuclear weapons were being assembled.

The Islamic State facility was compromised of a series of deeply buried caves and tunnels, which made destruction of the facility difficult. Speaking to reporters, a France government spokesman said, "We did everything possible to minimize the loss of life in Yemen, but we decided to use nuclear weapons to destroy the Islamic State's nuclear weapons before they could use them against us."

According to Dr. David Wright, an expert on military operations and weapons at the Union of Concerned Scientists, an independent think-tank based in Washington, D.C., France had few other options. "It would have been very difficult to destroy the deeply buried bunkers without using nuclear weapons," he said. Wright also warned that the Islamic State bombs, while crude, would have caused catastrophic damage if used in a crowded urban area. "If a bomb of this size exploded in Paris, it could easily kill 50,000-70,000 people," he said.

Figure S.4: Russia Treatment

Red Cross Estimates 1,000 Dead in Russian Nuclear Strike against Islamic State Atomic Bomb Lab in Yemen

Russia used nuclear weapons to ensure destruction of deeply buried facility

The Associated Press

A new International Red Cross report estimates that the total death toll from the Russian nuclear strike against an Islamic State atomic bomb lab in Yemen will eventually reach 1,000 civilians, including long term deaths due to the strike. An additional 1,200 people are still being treated in local hospitals for non-life-threatening injuries, primarily burns suffered during the attack.

Two Russian nuclear-tipped missiles struck targets in Yemen yesterday in what Russian officials have called an act of self-defense against an imminent terrorist nuclear attack.

Since the strike, high ranking government sources from Russia have confirmed that the Russian military operation destroyed an underground Islamic State weapons facility in which the components for at least two nuclear weapons were being assembled. Last week, Russian intelligence agents intercepted a shipment of approximately 70 pounds of nuclear weapons-grade uranium being smuggled from Russia to the Islamic State camp. The seized uranium would have been sufficient to fuel a crude nuclear bomb.

"We decided to use nuclear weapons to destroy the Islamic Sate's nuclear weapons before they could use them against us."

Russian officials determined that the suspects in the smuggling operation were employed at a Russian nuclear facility, and that an additional 150 pounds of weapons-grade uranium were missing from the site. The suspects confirmed under questioning that an earlier shipment of uranium was successfully delivered to the Islamic State weapons lab, where two nuclear weapons were being assembled.

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According to Dr. David Wright, an expert on military operations and weapons at the Union of Concerned Scientists, an independent think-tank based in Washington, D.C., Russia had few other options. "It would have been very difficult to destroy the deeply buried bunkers without using nuclear weapons," he said. Wright also warned that the Islamic State bombs, while crude, would have caused catastrophic damage if used in a crowded urban area. "If a bomb of this size exploded in Moscow, it could easily kill 50,000-70,000 people," he said.

Figure S.5: Pakistan Treatment

Red Cross Estimates 1,000 Dead in Pakistani Nuclear Strike against Islamic State Atomic Bomb Lab in Yemen

Pakistan used nuclear weapons to ensure destruction of deeply buried facility

The Associated Press

A new International Red Cross report estimates that the total death toll from the Pakistani nuclear strike against an Islamic State atomic bomb lab in Yemen will eventually reach 1,000 civilians, including long term deaths due to the strike. An additional 1,200 people are still being treated in local hospitals for non-life-threatening injuries, primarily burns suffered during the attack.

Two Pakistani nuclear-tipped missiles struck targets in Yemen yesterday in what Pakistani officials have called an act of self-defense against an imminent terrorist nuclear attack.

Since the strike, high ranking government sources from Pakistan have confirmed that the Pakistani military operation destroyed an underground Islamic State weapons facility in which the components for at least two nuclear weapons were being assembled. Last week, Pakistani intelligence agents intercepted a shipment of approximately 70 pounds of nuclear weapons-grade uranium being smuggled from Pakistani to the Islamic State camp. The seized uranium would have been sufficient to fuel a crude nuclear bomb.

"We decided to use nuclear weapons to destroy the Islamic Sate's nuclear weapons before they could use them against us."

Pakistani officials determined that the suspects in the smuggling operation were employed at a Pakistani nuclear facility, and that an additional 150 pounds of weapons-grade uranium were missing from the site. The suspects confirmed under questioning that an earlier shipment of uranium was successfully delivered to the Islamic State weapons lab, where two nuclear weapons were being assembled.

The Islamic State facility was compromised of a series of deeply buried caves and tunnels, which made destruction of the facility difficult. Speaking to reporters, a Pakistan government spokesman said, "We did everything possible to minimize the loss of life in Yemen, but we decided to use nuclear weapons to destroy the Islamic State's nuclear weapons before they could use them against us."

According to Dr. David Wright, an expert on military operations and weapons at the Union of Concerned Scientists, an independent think-tank based in Washington, D.C., Pakistan had few other options. "It would have been very difficult to destroy the deeply buried bunkers without using nuclear weapons," he said. Wright also warned that the Islamic State bombs, while crude, would have caused catastrophic damage if used in a crowded urban area. "If a bomb of this size exploded in Karachi, it could easily kill 50,000-70,000 people," he said.

Dependent Variable Question

- How much do you approve or disapprove of the military operation described in this article?
    - Strongly disapprove
    - Disapprove
    - Somewhat disapprove
    - Somewhat approve
    - Approve
    - Strongly approve

Mechanism Questions[14]

- How ethical or unethical was the military operation described in this article in your opinion?
    - Highly unethical
    - Unethical
    - Somewhat unethical
    - Somewhat ethical
    - Ethical
    - Highly ethical
- How ethical or unethical would the international community view the military operation described in this article?
    - Highly unethical
    - Unethical
    - Somewhat unethical
    - Somewhat ethical
    - Ethical
    - Highly ethical
- A reasonable effort was made to minimize the loss of human life in the military operation described in this article.
    - Strongly disagree
    - Disagree
    - Somewhat disagree
    - Somewhat agree

[14] The order of questions in this section is randomized.

- Agree
- Strongly agree

- The military operation described in this article was an act of self defense.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree

- The military operation described in this article would be a violation of international law.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree

Disarmament & Proliferation Questions[15]

- Every country with nuclear weapons should agree to give up all of their nuclear weapons.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree

- The spread of nuclear weapons to countries that do not currently possess them is the greatest international security threat facing the United States.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Somewhat agree

[15] The order of questions in this section is randomized.

- Agree
- Strongly agree

Manipulation Check

- What country conducted the military operation in Yemen described in the article you read?
  - United States
  - France
  - Russia
  - Pakistan

Sample Composition

Table S.5: Study 1 Sample Composition

Variable	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Female	0.54	0	1	1
Education[a]	4.58	1	4	8
Age	47.94	18	49	87
Income[b]	9.23	1	8	24
White	0.77	0	1	1
Political Identification[c]	3.70	1	4	7
Militant Assertiveness	3.34	1	3	5
Religiosity	2.42	1	2	6
News Engagement	3.15	1	3	4
Climate Change Belief	3.67	1	4	5

a. 1 = Some high school or less; 2 = High school graduate; 3 = Post-high school vocational training; 4 = Some college; 5 = Associate's degree; 6 = Bachelor's degree; 7 = Master's or professional degree; 8 = Doctoral degree

b. 1 = 0-15k; 2 = 15-20k; 3 = 20-25k; 4 = 25-30k; 5 = 30-35k; 6 = 35-40k; 7 = 40-45k; 8 = 45-50k; 9 = 50-55k; 10 = 55-60k; 11 = 60-65k; 12 = 65-70k; 13 = 70-75k; 14 = 75-80k; 15 = 80-85k; 16 = 85-90k; 17 = 90-95k; 18 = 95-100k; 19 = 100-125k; 20 = 125-150k; 21 = 150-175k; 22 = 175-200k; 23 = 200-250k; 24 = 250k+

c. 1 = Strong Democrat; 7 = Strong Republican

Study 2: Hiroshima in Iran

Manipulating Leader Gender

Besides some smaller modifications to Sagan and Valentino's (2017) original design discussed below, a bigger change is that I experimentally manipulate leader gender while they leave leader gender ambiguous (meaning most respondents likely assume a male leader). Although the impact of leader gender is not the main focus of this study, I did pre-register an expectation that approval for a nuclear strike should be higher for female than male leaders. This hypothesis follows from previous research that finds female leaders have political incentives to adopt relatively hawkish foreign policies in order to combat (incorrect) gender stereotypes about women's weakness and incompetence in foreign affairs (e.g., Koch and Fulton 2011; Bashevkin 2018; Schramm and Stark 2020; Schwartz and Blair 2020). For example, among the U.S. public, Schwartz and Blair (2020) find that domestic female leaders are punished less than male leaders for belligerence. Nuclear use constitutes an extreme form of belligerence, but belligerence nonetheless. More relevant to this paper, including leader gender as a factor in Study 2 allows for an examination of how gender interacts with the country conducting a nuclear strike. For example, while domestic female leaders may have political incentives to adopt hawkish policies to combat *descriptive* gender stereotypes about their weakness in foreign affairs, perhaps foreign female leaders are more likely to be punished for such actions due to *prescriptive* gender stereotypes implying that women should not be too assertive (Goldstein 2001; Rudman and Glick 2001). If this is the case, then approval for a U.S. nuclear strike relative to an Israeli strike may be greater when comparing female rather than male leaders.

To manipulate leader gender, I randomize whether the leader that is considering conducting a nuclear strike is referred to as Eric/he or Erica/she.[16] To prevent a lack of information equivalence across experimental conditions (Dafoe, Zhang, and Caughey 2018), in the treatment introduction I also control for the leader's party identification and

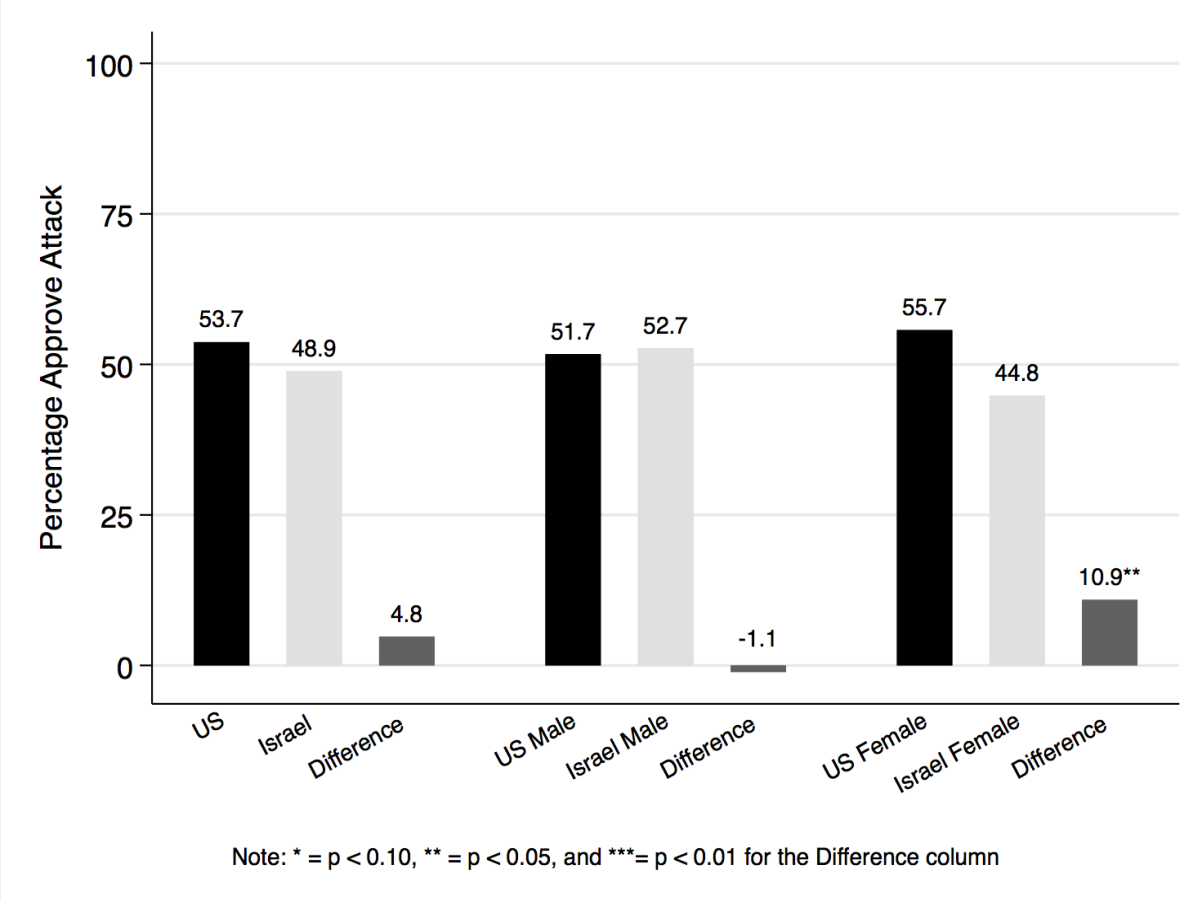
[16] See Schwartz and Blair (2020) for the use of a similar strategy.

experience since female leaders may be perceived of as more liberal and less experienced than male leaders. As in Study 1, I note that the scenario takes in 2027.

Robustness

In Figure S.6 I show the main results for Study 2 broken down by leader gender. As in the main text, there is not a statistically significant difference in aggregate approval between a nuclear strike carried out by the U.S. (53.7%) and a strike conducted by Israel (48.9%) when using a binary measure of approval. However, there is a significant—though small—difference in approval when using the full 6-point measure of approval (see Figure S.7) or including respondents that failed the factual manipulation check (see Figure S.8).

Figure S.6: Disaggregating Results By Leader Gender



Digging into the data deeper reveals that any aggregate differences in approval between the U.S. and Israel are driven by differences in approval between *female* U.S. leaders and *female* Israeli leaders. For male leaders, the difference in approval between a

U.S. president (51.7%) and an Israeli prime minister (52.7%) is just 1.1 percentage points and not statistically significant. For female leaders, the difference in approval between a U.S. president (55.7%) and an Israeli prime minister (44.8%) is a statistically significant 10.9 percentage points.

What explains these differences? Among American survey subjects, approval for a female U.S. leader that presses the nuclear button is generally greater than for a male U.S. leader, as hypothesized in my pre-analysis plan.[17] Given extant literature that finds female leaders have political incentives to adopt relatively hawkish foreign policies, this finding makes logical sense. On the other hand, the *opposite* dynamic generally holds true for Israeli leaders: the use of nuclear weapons by a female prime minister is viewed more unfavorably than use by a male prime minister.[18] The disadvantage foreign female leaders face compared to the advantage domestic female leaders incur is ripe for future research. For the purposes of this paper, the lack of difference in approval between male U.S. and Israeli leaders suggests that in most cases allied use of nuclear weapons would not necessarily be met with greater rebuke than the use of nuclear weapons by a domestic government. Although female leadership is becoming more prevalent worldwide, the large majority of leaders are still men.

[17] This difference is also statistically significant when analyzing the full 6-point measure of approval and the full sample.

[18] This difference is statistically significant when using the binary approval variable or the full 6-point measure of approval for respondents that passed the manipulation check.

Figures S.7 and S.8 show that the results are robust to using the full 6-point measure of approval or including all respondents in the analysis.

Figure S.7: 6-Point Measure of Approval

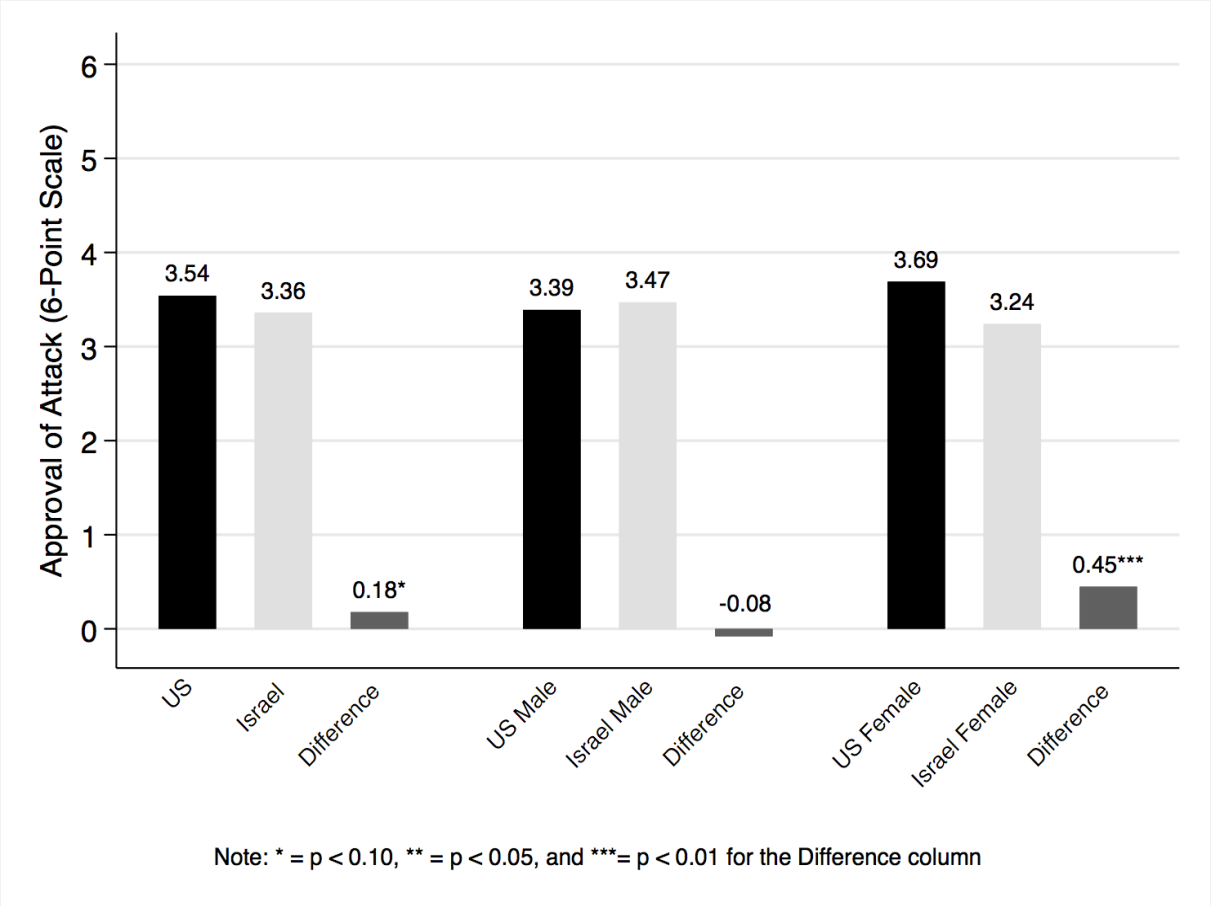


Figure S.8: 6-Point Measure of Approval for All Respondents

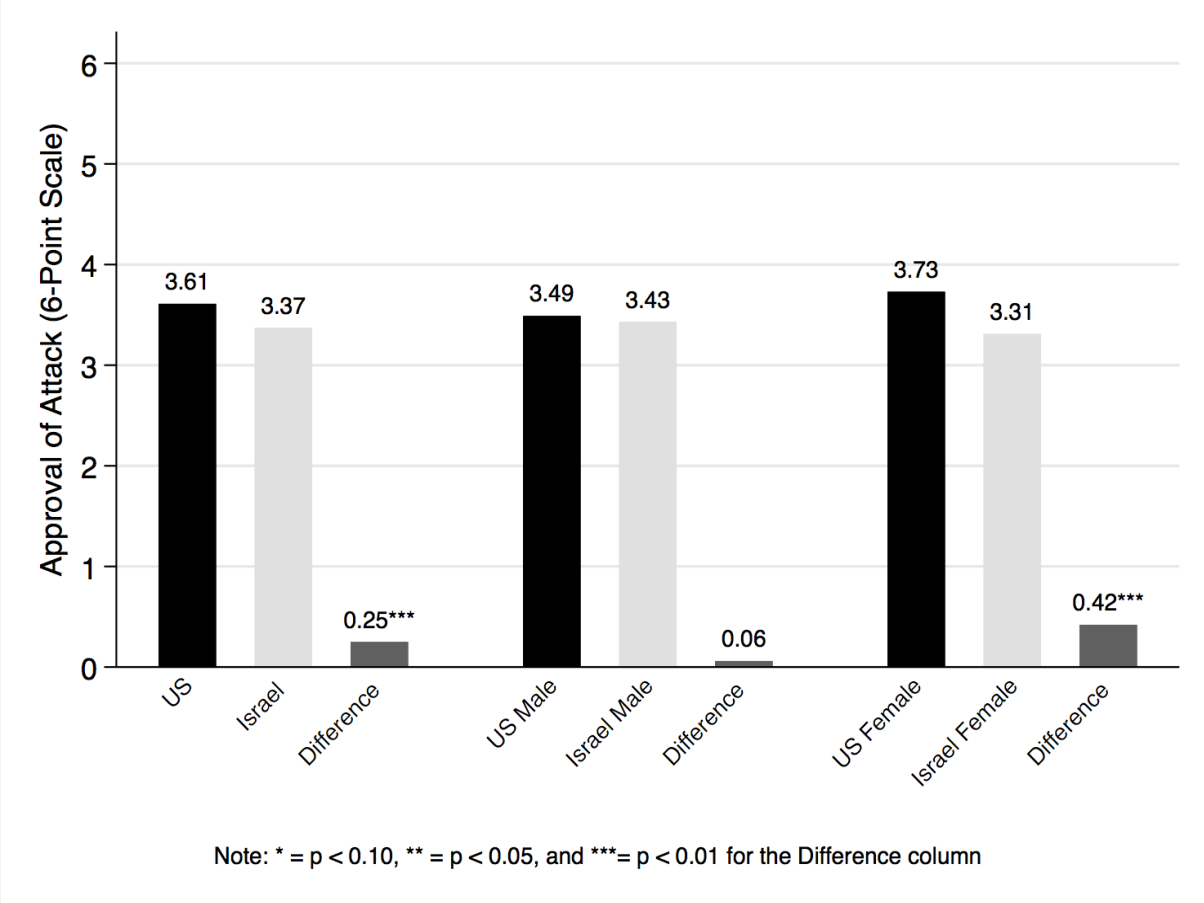


Table S.6 further shows that any aggregate differences in approval between the U.S. and Israel are driven by differences in approval between female U.S. leaders and female Israeli leaders. Model 1 shows that when using the full 6-point measure, approval for a nuclear strike is not statistically greater for the U.S. than Israel. Model 2 shows that there is a significant interaction between the country considering a nuclear strike (the U.S. or Israel) and the gender of the leader considering a nuclear strike (male or female). The positive and significant coefficient on "US Treatment" means that approval for the U.S. is statistically greater than that for Israel when the leader in question is female.[19] However, model 3 shows that when the leader is male, there is no statistically significant difference in approval between the U.S. and Israel.[20] As in Study 1, these models also

[19] The interaction term zeroes out when the leader is male, meaning we can interpret the "US Treatment" variable as the impact of the U.S. relative Israel when the leader is female.

[20] The interaction term zeroes out when the leader is female in this model, meaning we can interpret the "US Treatment" variable as the impact of the U.S. relative Israel when the leader is male.

show that militant assertiveness is significantly associated with approval while political identification is not. Unlike Study 1, but in accordance with Press, Sagan, and Valentino (2013), female survey subjects are less likely to approve of a nuclear strike in this context. Finally, Models 2 and 3 also shows that approval for a nuclear strike carried about by a male Israeli leader is higher than that carried out by a female Israeli leader.

Table S.6: Controlling for Other Factors

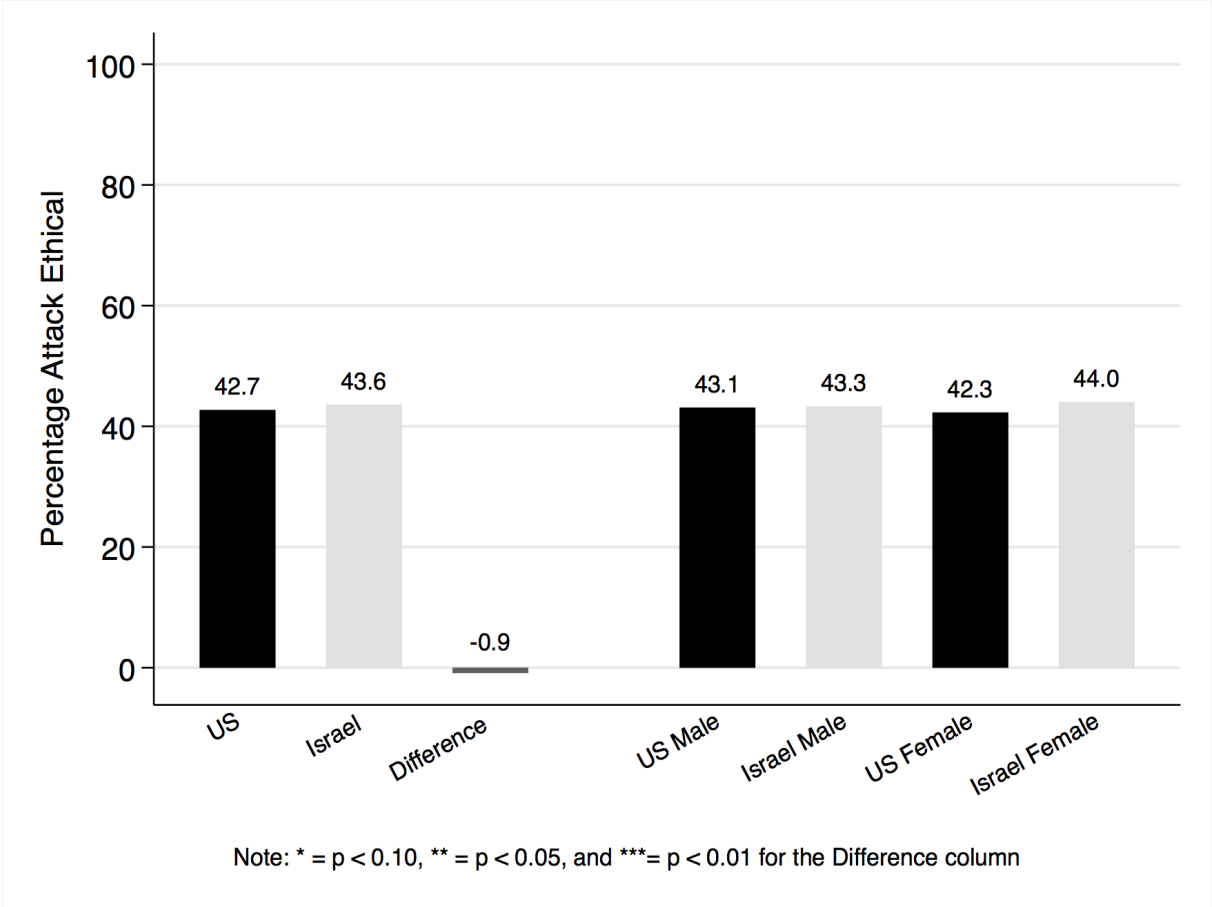
	Approval		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
US Treatment	0.16	0.50***	−0.16
	(0.11)	(0.16)	(0.16)
US Treatment x Male Treatment		−0.67***	
		(0.23)	
US Treatment x Female Treatment			0.67***
			(0.23)
Male Treatment	−0.02	0.35**	
	(0.11)	(0.17)	
Female Treatment			−0.35**
			(0.17)
Stronger Republican	0.02	0.02	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Militant Assertiveness	0.37***	0.38***	0.38***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Female Respondent	−0.32***	−0.31***	−0.31***
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Education	−0.03	−0.03	−0.03
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Income	0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Prefer Not to Reveal Income	−0.29	−0.30	−0.30
	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Age	0.005	0.004	0.004
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Religiosity	−0.004	−0.002	−0.002
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
News Engagement	−0.06	−0.06	−0.06
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Climate Belief	−0.02	−0.02	−0.02
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Constant	2.33***	2.10***	2.45***
	(0.43)	(0.43)	(0.43)
Observations	629	629	629

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.10; **p< 0.05; ***p<0.01

Perceived Morality and Effectiveness

As in Study 1 when comparing the U.S. and France, Figure S.9 illustrates that there is no significant difference in perceived morality between the U.S. and Israel.

Figure S.9: Perceived Morality of a Nuclear Strike By Country



On the other hand, Figure S.10 suggests that respondents believe a nuclear strike by the U.S. is more likely to successfully convince Iran to surrender than a nuclear strike by Israel. A formal causal mediation analysis shown in Table S.7 confirms that perceived effectiveness is a significant mechanism and mediates over 50% of the effect that country has on approval (Imai, Keele, and Tingley 2010; Hicks and Tingley 2011). Specifically, model 1 shows that respondents in the U.S. treatment condition are more likely to believe Iran will surrender after a nuclear strike. Model 2 then shows that respondents that believe Iran is more likely to surrender after a nuclear strike are more likely to approve of said strike. This finding is in accordance with my pre-registered expectations and could be due to the fact that the U.S. is perceived by survey subjects as a more powerful country and thus they believe Iran has greater military incentives to surrender. It could also be due to an expectation that Iranian leaders are more anti-Semitic than they are anti-American, making surrender to Israel particularly embarrassing. Future research should try and better understand what particular logic drives these results.

Figure S.10: Perceived Effectiveness of a Nuclear Strike By Country

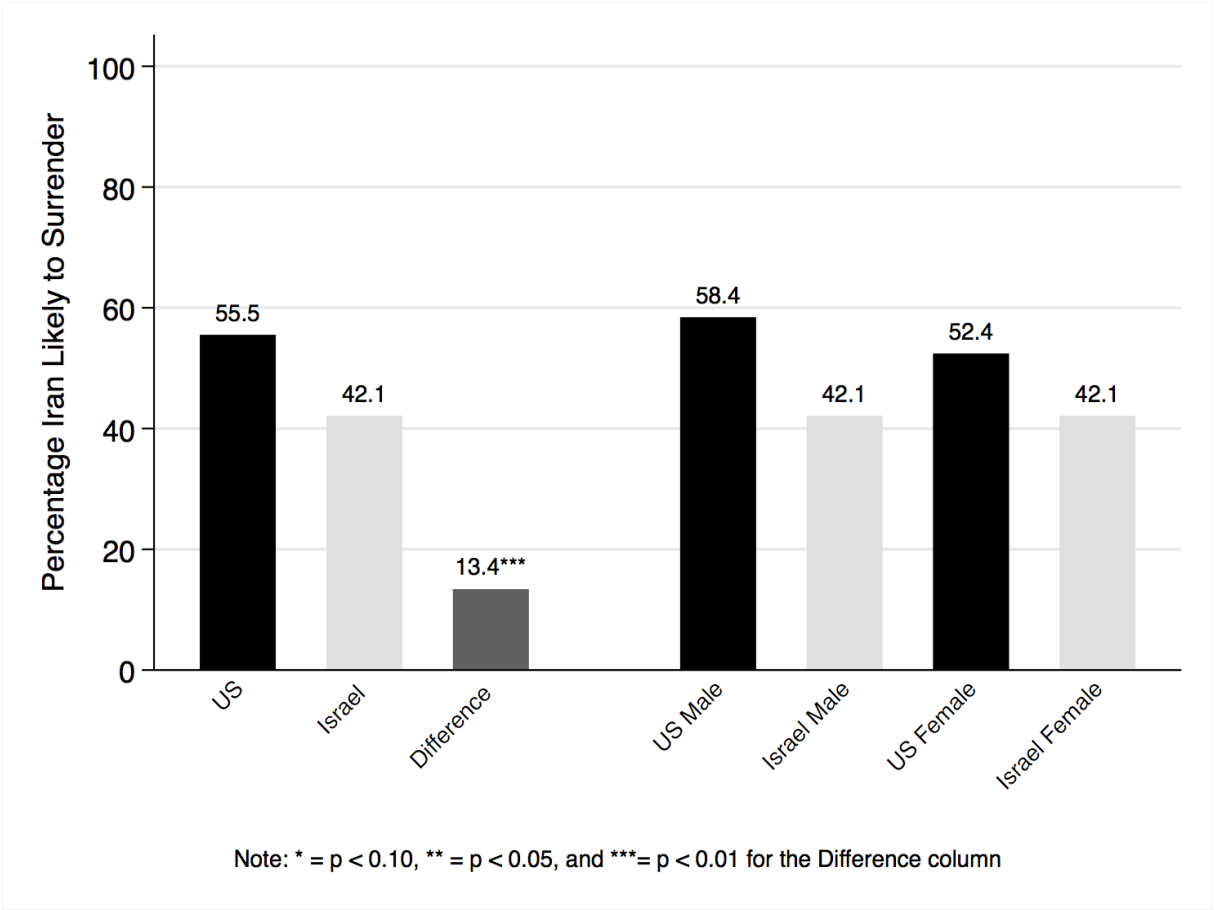


Table S.7: Mediation Analysis

	(1) Effect of Treatment on Likelihood of Iran Surrendering	(2) Effect of Likelihood of Iran Surrendering on Approval
US Treatment	0.4152***	0.0571
	(0.1177)	(0.1104)
Likelihood of Iran Surrendering		0.2514***
		(0.0374)
Stronger Republican	-0.0361	0.0264
	(0.0305)	(0.0284)
Militant Assertiveness	0.1609***	0.3335***
	(0.0483)	(0.0453)
Female	-0.2438**	-0.2568**
	(0.1223)	(0.1139)
Education	-0.0546	-0.0190
	(0.0341)	(0.0317)
Income	0.0123	0.0075
	(0.0098)	(0.0091)
Prefer Not to Reveal Income	-0.4207	-0.1861
	(0.3086)	(0.2870)
Age	-0.0047	0.0058*
	(0.0035)	(0.0033)
Religiosity	0.0398	-0.0138
	(0.0457)	(0.0425)
News Engagement	0.0328	-0.0712
	(0.0711)	(0.0661)
Climate Change Belief	0.0133	-0.0192
	(0.0561)	(0.0521)
Constant	3.1365***	1.5258***
	(0.4418)	(0.4267)
Observations	629	629

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.10; **p< 0.05; ***p<0.01.

Probing External Validity to Political Elites

Table S.8 shows that the main results from Study 2 do not significantly vary based on elite-like traits.[21] Furthermore, it shows that there is no statistically significant difference in approval between the U.S. and Israel when the sample is most elite-like.

Table S.8: Do the Results Vary Based on Elite-Like Traits?

	Approval Full	
	Passed Attention	All Respondents
	(1)	(2)
US Treatment	0.15	0.30
	(0.35)	(0.30)
US Treatment x Female Respondent	−0.47	−0.45
	(0.35)	(0.30)
US Treatment x Low Education	0.12	0.18
	(0.38)	(0.32)
US Treatment x Low Income	0.13	0.04
	(0.37)	(0.32)
US Treatment x Non-Prime Age	−0.32	−0.31
	(0.34)	(0.29)
US Treatment x Low Political Interest	0.24	0.13
	(0.43)	(0.35)
Female Respondent	−0.09	−0.07
	(0.26)	(0.21)
Low Education	0.08	−0.07
	(0.28)	(0.23)
Low Income	−0.20	−0.20
	(0.27)	(0.23)
Non-Prime Age	0.14	0.14
	(0.26)	(0.21)
Low Political Interest	−0.29	−0.22
	(0.33)	(0.26)
Stronger Republican	0.01	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Militant Assertiveness	0.44***	0.36***
	(0.07)	(0.06)
Climate Belief	−0.07	−0.10
	(0.08)	(0.07)
Constant	2.35***	2.66***
	(0.53)	(0.46)
Observations	299	393

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.10; **p< 0.05; ***p<0.01.

[21] This analysis only focuses on male leaders.

Pre-Registered Hypotheses

Main Effect Hypotheses (Country Treatment)

- Respondents should be more likely to approve of a nuclear strike when the country engaged in military operations is the United States rather than Israel.
    - Mostly Supported: Approval for the US strike is higher than approval for the Israeli strike when examining the full DV/respondents that passed the attention check and the full DV/all respondents (the difference is just slightly over conventional levels of significance when using the binary DV/respondents that passed the attention check).
- Respondents should be more likely to prefer a nuclear strike relative to continuing the ground war when the country engaged in military operations is the United States rather than Israel.
    - Supported
- Respondents should be more likely to prefer a nuclear strike relative to withdrawing when the country engaged in military operations is the United States rather than Israel.
    - Not Supported

Nuclear Taboo Hypotheses (Country Treatment)

- *Null Hypothesis*: If skeptics of the nuclear taboo are correct, then a majority of respondents (50%) should not disapprove of a nuclear strike and prefer other options like continuing the ground war or withdrawing. *Alternate Hypothesis*: If proponents of the nuclear taboo are correct, then at least a majority of respondents (50%) should disapprove of a nuclear strike and prefer other options like continuing the ground war or withdrawing.
    - US: Cannot reject the null hypothesis and so there's more evidence for the views of nuclear taboo skeptics.
    - Israel: Cannot reject the null hypothesis and so there's more evidence for the views of nuclear taboo skeptics.
    - Both Countries Pooled: Cannot reject the null hypothesis and so there's more evidence for the views of nuclear taboo skeptics.

Mechanism Hypotheses (Country Treatment)

- Respondents should be more likely to personally believe a nuclear strike is ethical when the country engaged in military operations is the United States rather than Israel.
    - Little Support: This hypothesis holds when using the full DV/all respondents, but not when those that failed the attention check are excluded.

- Respondents should be more likely to believe the international community will view a nuclear strike as ethical when the country engaged in military operations is the United States rather than Israel.
    - Mostly supported: This hypothesis holds when using the full DV/respondents that passed the attention check and the full DV/all respondents, but not when the binary DV is used for respondents that passed the attention check.
- Respondents should be more likely to believe a nuclear strike will cause Iran to surrender when the country engaged in military operations is the United States rather than Israel.
    - Supported
- Respondents should be more likely to believe Iran will face a high amount of humiliation on the world stage if they surrender after the strike when the country engaged in military operations is Israel rather than the United States.
    - Not Supported
- Respondents should be more likely to believe a nuclear strike is a violation of international law the country engaged in military operations is Israel rather than the United States.
    - Somewhat Supported: This hypothesis holds when using the binary DV/respondents that passed the attention check, but doesn't quite hold when the full DV is used.

Main Effect Hypotheses (Gender Treatment)

- Respondents should be more likely to approve of a nuclear strike when the leader is female rather than male.
    - Not Supported
- Respondents should be more likely to prefer a nuclear strike relative to continuing the ground war when the leader is female rather than male.
    - Mostly Supported: This hypothesis holds when the binary DV/respondents that passed the attention check or the full DV/respondents that passed the attention check is used, but not when the full DV/all respondents is employed.
- Respondents should be more likely to prefer a nuclear strike relative to withdrawing when the leader is female rather than male.
    - Somewhat Supported: This hypothesis holds when the binary DV/respondents that passed the attention check is used, but not when the full DV/respondents that passed the attention check is used or the full DV/all respondents is used.

Nuclear Taboo Hypotheses (Gender Treatment)

- *Null Hypothesis*: If skeptics of the nuclear taboo are correct, then a majority of respondents (50%) should not disapprove of a nuclear strike and prefer other options like continuing the ground war or withdrawing. *Alternate Hypothesis*: If proponents of the nuclear taboo are correct, then at least a majority of respondents (50%) should disapprove of a nuclear strike and prefer other options like continuing the ground war or withdrawing.
    - Women: Cannot reject the null hypothesis and so there's more evidence for the views of nuclear taboo skeptics.
    - Men: Cannot reject the null hypothesis and so there's more evidence for the views of nuclear taboo skeptics.
    - Both Genders Pooled: Cannot reject the null hypothesis and so there's more evidence for the views of nuclear taboo skeptics.

Mechanism Hypotheses (Gender Treatment)

- Respondents should be more likely to personally believe a nuclear strike is ethical when the leader is female rather than male.
    - Not Supported
- Respondents should be more likely to believe the international community will view a nuclear strike as ethical when the leader is female rather than male.
    - Somewhat Supported: This hypothesis holds when full DV/all respondents is used, but not when the binary DV/respondents that passed the attention check or the full DV/respondents that passed the attention check is used.
- Respondents should be more likely to believe a nuclear strike will cause Iran to surrender when the leader is female rather than male.
    - Not Supported
- Respondents should be more likely to believe a nuclear strike will cause Iran to surrender when the leader is male rather than female (Competing hypothesis to the above).
    - Not Supported
- Respondents should be more likely to believe Iran will face a high amount of humiliation on the world stage if they surrender after the strike when the leader is female rather than male.
    - Supported
- Respondents should be more likely to believe a nuclear strike is a violation of international law when the leader is male rather than female.

- Somewhat Supported: This hypothesis holds when full DV/all respondents is used, but not when the binary DV/respondents that passed the attention check or the full DV/respondents that passed the attention check is used.

Individual-Level Hypotheses

- Respondents that score higher in a measure of militant assertiveness should be more likely to support a nuclear strike.
    - Supported
- Respondents that are stronger Republicans or conservatives should be more likely to support a nuclear strike.
    - Not Supported
- Respondents that are older should be more likely to support a nuclear strike.
    - Not Supported
- Respondents that have greater levels of belief in human-caused climate change should be less likely to support a nuclear strike.
    - Not Supported
- Respondents that are stronger Republicans or conservatives should be more likely to support an Israeli nuclear strike.
    - Not Supported
- Respondents that are older should be more likely to support an Israeli nuclear strike.
    - Not Supported
- Respondents that are more religious should be more likely to support an Israeli nuclear strike.
    - Not Supported
- Respondents that pay a greater amount of attention to public affairs will be less likely to support an Israeli nuclear strike.
    - Not Supported

Modifications to Sagan and Valentino's (2017) Design

I make a few small modifications to Sagan and Valentino's (2017) original design. First, while they experimentally manipulate the number of expected Iranian casualties (100,000 or 2 million) and partially manipulate the type of air strike (nuclear or conventional), I hold these factors constant (100,000 expected casualties and a nuclear strike). Second, one concern specific to this experimental design is respondents in the Israeli condition will assume that the U.S. has also had soldiers die in the war with Iran and consequently ending the war early will also save U.S. lives. If this is the case, then American survey subjects may not perceive much difference between the U.S. and Israeli experimental conditions. To guard against this possibility, I include language in the Israeli vignette stating that the U.S. has not been involved in nor suffered any military casualties in the war with Iran.

Questionnaire

All pre-treatment questions are the same as in the above Press, Sagan, and Valentino (2013) extension.

Treatment Conditions[22]

We are now going to describe a situation [the U.S./Israel] could face in the future, in 2027. The [U.S. President/Israeli Prime Minister] in 2027 is [Eric/Erica] [Smith/Cohen]. [President Smith/Prime Minister Cohen] took office in 2025 after serving in the [U.S. Congress/Israeli Knesset (the equivalent of the U.S. Congress)] for several years. [He/She] is a lifelong member of [the Democratic party/a relatively left-leaning political party in Israel].

Figure S.11: US/Male Treatment

President Eric Smith Considering Nuclear Attack On Iranian City to End War

Joint Chiefs' Report Estimates 20,000 More American Military Deaths if Ground War Continues

The Associated Press

U.S. troops continue to suffer heavy losses as they move inland from the Iranian coast, facing stiff resistance from Iranian military forces. The war began three months ago, in response to increased American economic sanctions imposed after UN inspectors discovered evidence of a covert Iranian nuclear weapons facility, in violation of Iran's agreement to dismantle its nuclear weapons program. Iranian Air Force jets launched a surprise attack on the USS Theodore Roosevelt in international waters in the Persian Gulf, sinking the U.S. aircraft carrier, killing 2,403 sailors and injuring 1,178. After the United States Senate and House of Representatives voted unanimously to declare war on Iran, U.S. forces retaliated immediately with large-scale airstrikes that destroyed all of Iran's nuclear infrastructure, air defenses, and all Iranian Air Force bases and planes. When Iran rejected the United States' demand for the "immediate and unconditional surrender" of the Iranian government, President Eric Smith (a Democrat) ordered a ground invasion by U.S. Marines and Army forces designed to destroy the Iranian military and replace the government of Iran.

An estimated 100,000 Iranian civilians would be killed in the nuclear strike

Since U.S. troops first landed on Iranian beaches three months ago, the American advance has slowed considerably. Over 10,000 American troops have been killed in the fighting thus far, including almost 4,000 in just two weeks of intense urban fighting in the city of Shiraz, the bloodiest battle for the U.S. military since World War II.

President Eric Smith has issued multiple public statements that "the United States will accept nothing less than the unconditional surrender of the Iranian regime." In response, Ayatollah Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, has regularly told cheering crowds in Tehran that "the Iranian nation will never surrender to anyone."

President Eric Smith has been considering options for ending the war as soon as possible. Yesterday, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff delivered a report to the President including an option called the "shock strategy," which would authorize a major expansion of air strikes against Iran. The report was leaked to the Associated Press by a high-ranking administration official.

Until now, the United States has restricted its air strikes to conventional weapons against military targets in Iran. The "shock strategy," however, would target a single U.S. nuclear weapon directly on Mashhad, the second largest city in Iran, in the effort to undermine civilian support for the war and pressure the Iranian government to surrender. Much of the city is expected to be destroyed. The report estimates that the nuclear strike would kill approximately 100,000 Iranian civilians living in the city, including both immediate deaths and long-term fatalities from the strike. Since Iran's air defenses were destroyed in the first days of the war, no American military deaths are anticipated in the air strike.

20,000 more American military deaths expected if Iran does not surrender

According to the Joint Chiefs' report, if the United States continues the ground war, it will eventually defeat Iran, but doing so would require heavy fighting to reach and capture the heavily defended capital, Tehran, and would likely result in an additional 20,000 American military deaths.

The report does not recommend a specific course of action.

[22] Respondents are randomly assigned to treatment conditions.

Figure S.12: Israel/Male Treatment

Israeli Prime Minister Eric Cohen Considering Nuclear Attack On Iranian City to End War

Israeli Defense Forces' Report Estimates 20,000 More Israeli Military Deaths if Ground War Continues

The Associated Press

Israeli troops continue to suffer heavy losses as they move inland from the Iranian coast, facing stiff resistance from Iranian military forces. The war began three months ago, in response to increased international economic sanctions imposed after UN inspectors discovered evidence of a covert Iranian nuclear weapons facility, in violation of Iran's agreement to dismantle its nuclear weapons program. Iranian Air Force jets launched a surprise attack on Israeli naval forces in international waters in the Persian Gulf, killing 2,403 sailors and injuring 1,178. After the Israeli Knesset (the equivalent of the U.S. Congress) voted unanimously to declare war on Iran, Israeli forces retaliated immediately with large-scale airstrikes that destroyed all of Iran's nuclear infrastructure, air defenses, and all Iranian Air Force bases and planes. When Iran rejected Israel's demand for the "immediate and unconditional surrender" of the Iranian government, Prime Minister Eric Cohen ordered a ground invasion by Israeli forces designed to destroy the Iranian military and replace the government of Iran.

An estimated 100,000 Iranian civilians would be killed in the nuclear strike

Since Israel's troops first landed on Iranian beaches three months ago, the Israeli advance has slowed considerably. Over 10,000 Israeli troops have been killed in the fighting thus far, including almost 4,000 in just two weeks of intense urban fighting in the city of Shiraz.

Prime Minister Eric Cohen has issued multiple public statements that "Israel will accept nothing less than the unconditional surrender of the Iranian regime." In response, Ayatollah Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, has regularly told cheering crowds in Tehran that "the Iranian nation will never surrender to anyone."

Prime Minister Eric Cohen has been considering options for ending the war as soon as possible. Yesterday, the head of the Israeli Defense Force delivered a report to the Prime Minister including an option called the "shock strategy," which would authorize a major expansion of air strikes against Iran. The report was leaked to the Associated Press by a high-ranking administration official.

Until now, Israel has restricted its air strikes to conventional weapons against military targets in Iran. The "shock strategy," however, would target a single Israeli nuclear weapon directly on Mashhad, the second largest city in Iran, in the effort to undermine civilian support for the war and pressure the Iranian government to surrender. Much of the city is expected to be destroyed. The report estimates that the nuclear strike would kill approximately 100,000 Iranian civilians living in the city, including both immediate deaths and long-term fatalities from the strike. Since Iran's air defenses were destroyed in the first days of the war, no Israeli military deaths are anticipated in the air strike.

20,000 more Israeli military deaths expected if Iran does not surrender

According to the Israeli Defense Force report, if Israel continues the ground war, it will eventually defeat Iran, but doing so would require heavy fighting to reach and capture the heavily defended capital, Tehran, and would likely result in an additional 20,000 Israeli military deaths. The report does not recommend a specific course of action.

The United States government supports Israel's war on Iran but has not been involved in any of the fighting or suffered any military casualties. The U.S. has taken no public position on a possible nuclear strike.

Figure S.13: US/Female Treatment

President Erica Smith Considering Nuclear Attack On Iranian City to End War

Joint Chiefs' Report Estimates 20,000 More American Military Deaths if Ground War Continues

The Associated Press

U.S. troops continue to suffer heavy losses as they move inland from the Iranian coast, facing stiff resistance from Iranian military forces. The war began three months ago, in response to increased American economic sanctions imposed after UN inspectors discovered evidence of a covert Iranian nuclear weapons facility, in violation of Iran's agreement to dismantle its nuclear weapons program. Iranian Air Force jets launched a surprise attack on the USS Theodore Roosevelt in international waters in the Persian Gulf, sinking the U.S. aircraft carrier, killing 2,403 sailors and injuring 1,178. After the United States Senate and House of Representatives voted unanimously to declare war on Iran, U.S. forces retaliated immediately with large-scale airstrikes that destroyed all of Iran's nuclear infrastructure, air defenses, and all Iranian Air Force bases and planes. When Iran rejected the United States' demand for the "immediate and unconditional surrender" of the Iranian government, President Erica Smith (a Democrat) ordered a ground invasion by U.S. Marines and Army forces designed to destroy the Iranian military and replace the government of Iran.

An estimated 100,000 Iranian civilians would be killed in the nuclear strike

Since U.S. troops first landed on Iranian beaches three months ago, the American advance has slowed considerably. Over 10,000 American troops have been killed in the fighting thus far, including almost 4,000 in just two weeks of intense urban fighting in the city of Shiraz, the bloodiest battle for the U.S. military since World War II.

President Erica Smith has issued multiple public statements that "the United States will accept nothing less than the unconditional surrender of the Iranian regime." In response, Ayatollah Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, has regularly told cheering crowds in Tehran that "the Iranian nation will never surrender to anyone."

President Erica Smith has been considering options for ending the war as soon as possible. Yesterday, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff delivered a report to the President including an option called the "shock strategy," which would authorize a major expansion of air strikes against Iran. The report was leaked to the Associated Press by a high-ranking administration official.

Until now, the United States has restricted its air strikes to conventional weapons against military targets in Iran. The "shock strategy," however, would target a single U.S. nuclear weapon directly on Mashhad, the second largest city in Iran, in the effort to undermine civilian support for the war and pressure the Iranian government to surrender. Much of the city is expected to be destroyed. The report estimates that the nuclear strike would kill approximately 100,000 Iranian civilians living in the city, including both immediate deaths and long-term fatalities from the strike. Since Iran's air defenses were destroyed in the first days of the war, no American military deaths are anticipated in the air strike.

20,000 more American military deaths expected if Iran does not surrender

According to the Joint Chiefs' report, if the United States continues the ground war, it will eventually defeat Iran, but doing so would require heavy fighting to reach and capture the heavily defended capital, Tehran, and would likely result in an additional 20,000 American military deaths.

The report does not recommend a specific course of action.

Figure S.14: Israel/Female Treatment

Israeli Prime Minister Erica Cohen Considering Nuclear Attack On Iranian City to End War

Israeli Defense Forces' Report Estimates 20,000 More Israeli Military Deaths if Ground War Continues

The Associated Press

Israeli troops continue to suffer heavy losses as they move inland from the Iranian coast, facing stiff resistance from Iranian military forces. The war began three months ago, in response to increased international economic sanctions imposed after UN inspectors discovered evidence of a covert Iranian nuclear weapons facility, in violation of Iran's agreement to dismantle its nuclear weapons program. Iranian Air Force jets launched a surprise attack on Israeli naval forces in international waters in the Persian Gulf, killing 2,403 sailors and injuring 1,178. After the Israeli Knesset (the equivalent of the U.S. Congress) voted unanimously to declare war on Iran, Israeli forces retaliated immediately with large-scale airstrikes that destroyed all of Iran's nuclear infrastructure, air defenses, and all Iranian Air Force bases and planes. When Iran rejected Israel's demand for the "immediate and unconditional surrender" of the Iranian government, Prime Minister Erica Cohen ordered a ground invasion by Israeli forces designed to destroy the Iranian military and replace the government of Iran.

An estimated 100,000 Iranian civilians would be killed in the nuclear strike

Since Israel's troops first landed on Iranian beaches three months ago, the Israeli advance has slowed considerably. Over 10,000 Israeli troops have been killed in the fighting thus far, including almost 4,000 in just two weeks of intense urban fighting in the city of Shiraz.

Prime Minister Erica Cohen has issued multiple public statements that "Israel will accept nothing less than the unconditional surrender of the Iranian regime." In response, Ayatollah Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, has regularly told cheering crowds in Tehran that "the Iranian nation will never surrender to anyone."

Prime Minister Erica Cohen has been considering options for ending the war as soon as possible. Yesterday, the head of the Israeli Defense Force delivered a report to the Prime Minister including an option called the "shock strategy," which would authorize a major expansion of air strikes against Iran. The report was leaked to the Associated Press by a high-ranking administration official.

Until now, Israel has restricted its air strikes to conventional weapons against military targets in Iran. The "shock strategy," however, would target a single Israeli nuclear weapon directly on Mashhad, the second largest city in Iran, in the effort to undermine civilian support for the war and pressure the Iranian government to surrender. Much of the city is expected to be destroyed. The report estimates that the nuclear strike would kill approximately 100,000 Iranian civilians living in the city, including both immediate deaths and long-term fatalities from the strike. Since Iran's air defenses were destroyed in the first days of the war, no Israeli military deaths are anticipated in the air strike.

20,000 more Israeli military deaths expected if Iran does not surrender

According to the Israeli Defense Force report, if Israel continues the ground war, it will eventually defeat Iran, but doing so would require heavy fighting to reach and capture the heavily defended capital, Tehran, and would likely result in an additional 20,000 Israeli military deaths. The report does not recommend a specific course of action.

The United States government supports Israel's war on Iran but has not been involved in any of the fighting or suffered any military casualties. The U.S. has taken no public position on a possible nuclear strike.

Dependent Variable Questions

- Given the facts described in the article, if you had to choose between launching the strike against the Iranian city or continuing the ground war against Iran, which option would you prefer?
    - Strongly prefer to continue ground war
    - Prefer to continue ground war
    - Somewhat prefer to continue ground war
    - Somewhat prefer to launch strike
    - Prefer to launch strike
    - Strongly prefer to launch strike
- Given the facts described in the article, if you had to choose between launching the strike against the Iranian city or withdrawing all soldiers from Iran before securing their surrender, which option would you prefer?
    - Strongly prefer to withdraw all soldiers
    - Prefer to withdraw all soldiers
    - Somewhat prefer to withdraw all soldiers
    - Somewhat prefer to launch strike
    - Prefer to launch strike
    - Strongly prefer to launch strike
- Regardless of which option you preferred, if the decision was made to conduct the strike against the Iranian city, how much would you approve or disapprove of that decision?
    - Strongly disapprove
    - Disapprove
    - Somewhat disapprove
    - Somewhat approve
    - Approve
    - Strongly approve

Mechanism Questions[23]

- Regardless of which option you preferred, how ethical or unethical do you think it would be if the decision was made to conduct the strike against the Iranian city in the situation described in the article?
    - Highly unethical
    - Unethical
    - Somewhat unethical
    - Somewhat ethical
    - Ethical
    - Highly ethical
- Regardless of which option you preferred, how do you think the international community would view it if the decision was made to conduct the strike against the Iranian city in the situation described in the article?
    - Highly unethical
    - Unethical
    - Somewhat unethical
    - Somewhat ethical
    - Ethical
    - Highly ethical
- Regardless of which option you preferred, how likely do you think it is that the strike against the Iranian city would cause Iran to surrender?
    - Very unlikely to surrender
    - Unlikely to surrender
    - Somewhat unlikely to surrender
    - Somewhat likely to surrender
    - Likely to surrender
    - Very likely to surrender
- Regardless of which option you preferred, how much do you think Iran would be humiliated on the world stage if the strike caused them to surrender?
    - Very low amount of humiliation
    - Low amount of humiliation
    - Somewhat low amount of humiliation
    - Somewhat high amount of humiliation
    - High amount of humiliation

[23] The order of questions in this section is randomized.

- Very high amount of humiliation

- Conducting the strike against the Iranian city would be a violation of international law.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree

Manipulation Check

- What was the first name of the leader who was considering conducting a nuclear strike on Iran?
  - Eric
  - Erica
  - None of the above

Sample Composition

Table S.9: Study 2 Sample Composition

Variable	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Female	0.54	0	1	1
Education[a]	4.80	1	5	8
Age	47.77	18	46	96
Income[b]	9.52	1	8	24
White	0.77	0	1	1
Political Identification[c]	3.74	1	4	7
Militant Assertiveness	3.40	1	4	5
Religiosity	2.44	1	2	6
News Engagement	3.11	1	3	4
Climate Change Belief	3.68	1	4	5

a. 1 = Some high school or less; 2 = High school graduate; 3 = Post-high school vocational training; 4 = Some college; 5 = Associate's degree; 6 = Bachelor's degree; 7 = Master's or professional degree; 8 = Doctoral degree

b. 1 = 0-15k; 2 = 15-20k; 3 = 20-25k; 4 = 25-30k; 5 = 30-35k; 6 = 35-40k; 7 = 40-45k; 8 = 45-50k; 9 = 50-55k; 10 = 55-60k; 11 = 60-65k; 12 = 65-70k; 13 = 70-75k; 14 = 75-80k; 15 = 80-85k; 16 = 85-90k; 17 = 90-95k; 18 = 95-100k; 19 = 100-125k; 20 = 125-150k; 21 = 150-175k; 22 = 175-200k; 23 = 200-250k; 24 = 250k+

c. 1 = Strong Democrat; 7 = Strong Republican

Study 3: External Validity to Citizens of India

Robustness

Figures S.15 and S.16 show that the results are robust to using the full 6-point measure of approval or including all respondents in the analysis.

Figure S.15: 6-Point Measure of Approval

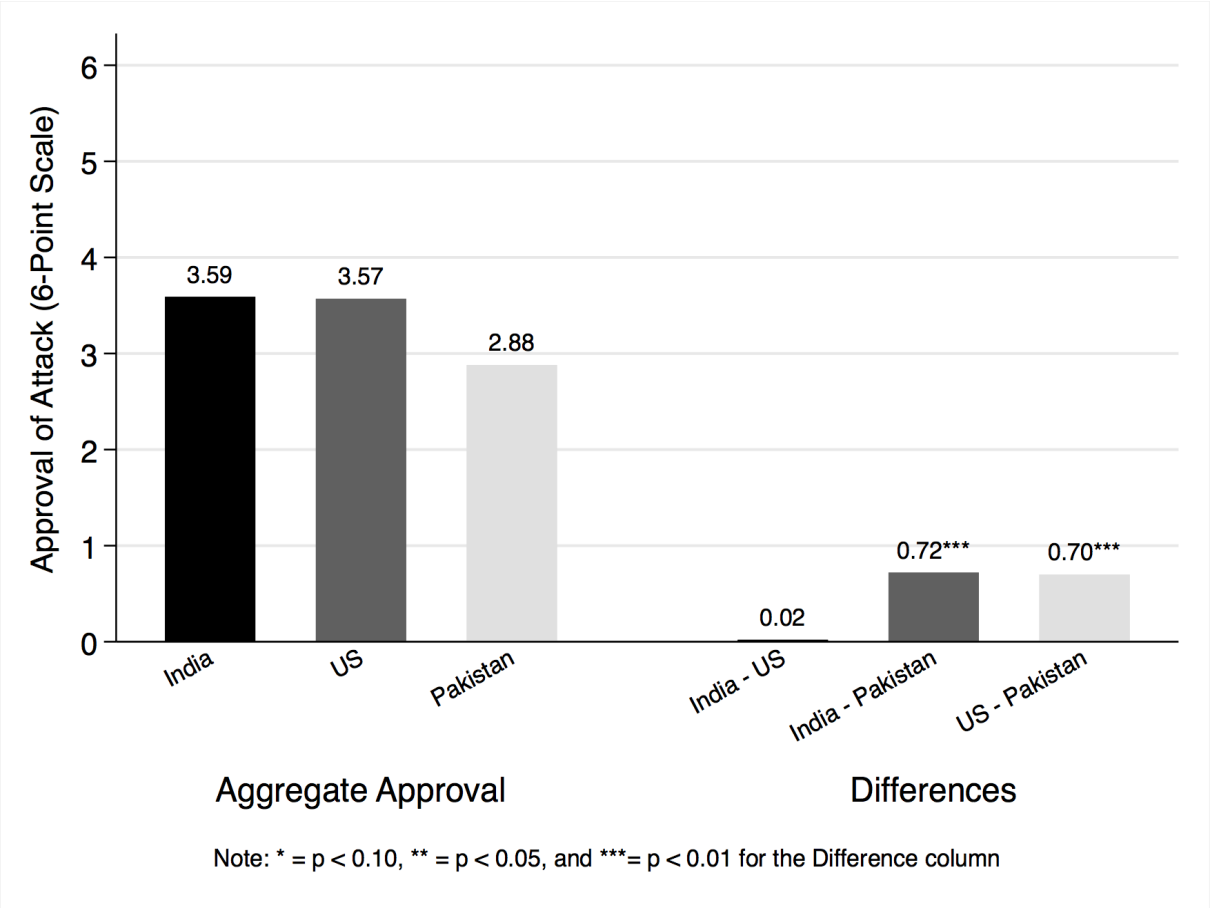


Figure S.16: 6-Point Measure of Approval for All Respondents

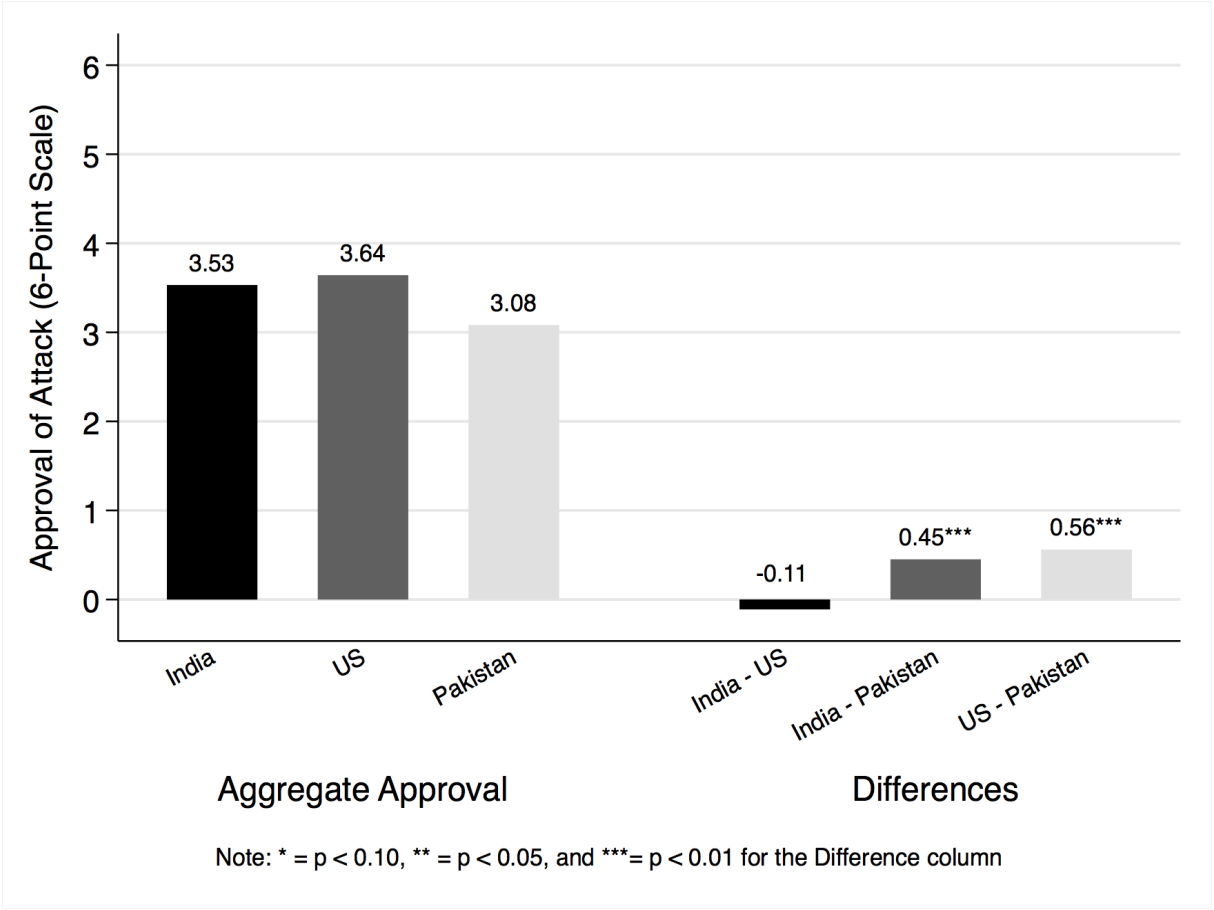


Table S.10 demonstrates the robustness of the main results in Study 3 to a regression that controls for a range of factors. Again, the principal quantities of interest—which compare approval between different countries—are located at the bottom of the table. There is no significant difference in approval for India and the U.S., but approval for a nuclear strike is greater for India and the U.S. than it is for Pakistan.[24] As in Studies 1 and 2, militant assertiveness is a significant predictor of whether a respondent approves of nuclear use. I also find some evidence that Indian citizens that identify with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or the Indian National Congress (INC) are more likely to support nuclear use than respondents that identify with a different Indian political party or no party at all. No other factors are significant predictors of approval.

[24] Note that the sample sizes are relatively low in these analyses due to missing demographic data.

Table S.10: Controlling for Other Factors

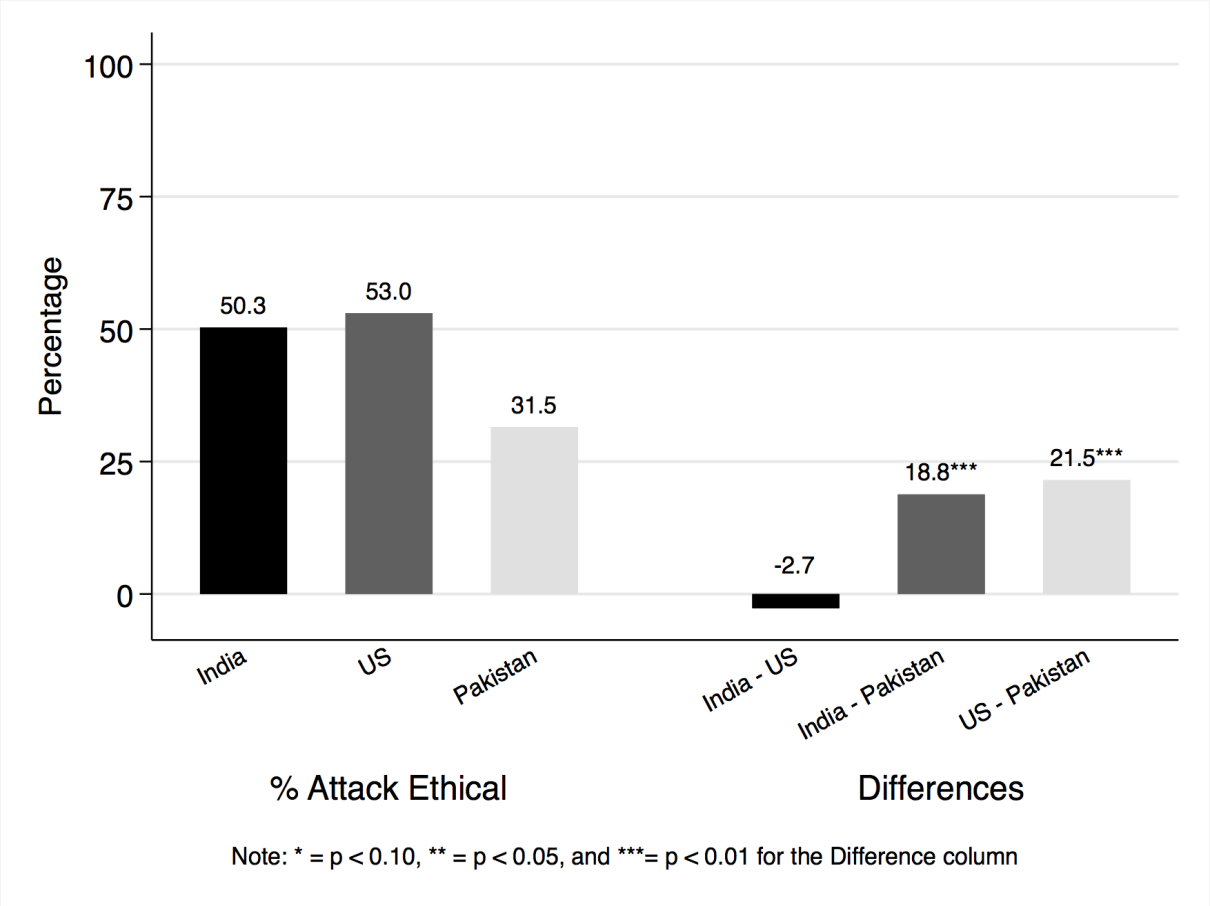
	Approval Binary (Passed Attention)	Approval Full (Passed Attention)	Approval Full (All Respondents)
	(1)	(2)	(3)
India Treatment	0.1437	1.5946**	1.5739**
	(0.2277)	(0.7066)	(0.6240)
US Treatment	0.0990	1.4605**	1.5420**
	(0.2286)	(0.7222)	(0.6310)
Pakistan Treatment	-0.0687	0.8501	1.0149
	(0.2208)	(0.7033)	(0.6239)
Political Identification	0.0639**	0.2242***	0.1718**
	(0.0260)	(0.0782)	(0.0703)
Militant Assertiveness	0.0727***	0.2796***	0.2802***
	(0.0185)	(0.0615)	(0.0550)
Female	-0.0385	-0.1866	-0.0124
	(0.0551)	(0.1741)	(0.1500)
Education	0.0043	0.0029	0.0279
	(0.0283)	(0.0880)	(0.0755)
Income	-0.0021	0.0011	-0.0056
	(0.0142)	(0.0441)	(0.0389)
Age	0.0014	0.0107	0.0087
	(0.0026)	(0.0080)	(0.0072)
Religiosity	0.0108	0.0928	0.0961
	(0.0254)	(0.0928)	(0.0815)
News Engagement	-0.0238	0.0005	0.0612
	(0.0372)	(0.1112)	(0.0966)
Climate Change Belief	0.0022	-0.0322	-0.0584
	(0.0372)	(0.1241)	(0.1075)
Observations	361	361	468
Difference Between	India/US: 0.045	India/US: 0.134	India/US: 0.032
	India/Pakistan: 0.212***	India/Pakistan: 0.744***	India/Pakistan: 0.559***
	US/Pakistan: 0.168***	US/Pakistan: 0.610***	US/Pakistan: 0.527***

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.10; **p< 0.05; ***p<0.01.

Perceived Morality

Figure S.17 illustrates that in accordance with my theoretical expectations, an Indian or American nuclear strikes is perceived as much more ethical than an identical Pakistani strike.

Figure S.17: Perceived Morality of a Nuclear Strike By Country



Probing External Validity to Political Elites

Table S.11 shows that the main results from Study 3 generally do not vary significantly based on elite-like traits. The one exception is age, though I find that in-group bias is *greater* for Indian citizens of prime age, which only bolsters the likelihood the results in this study are generalizable to elites. More importantly, Table S.11 shows that the gap in approval for India and the U.S. compared to Pakistan holds when the sample is most elite-like.

Table S.11: Do the Results Vary Based on Elite-Like Traits?

	Approval Binary (Passed Attention)	Approval Full (Passed Attention)	Approval Full (All Respondents)
	(1)	(2)	(3)
India/US Compared to Pakistan	0.2929**	1.8358***	1.5562***
	(0.1288)	(0.4454)	(0.3970)
India/US Compared to Pakistan × Female Respondent	-0.0474	-0.4321	-0.4037
	(0.1185)	(0.3676)	(0.3152)
India/US Compared to Pakistan × Low Education	-0.0407	-0.3104	-0.1418
	(0.1283)	(0.4002)	(0.3460)
India/US Compared to Pakistan × Low Income	-0.0434	-0.1716	-0.0643
	(0.1152)	(0.3745)	(0.3208)
India/US Compared to Pakistan × Non-Prime Age	-0.0852	-0.9779**	-0.8934**
	(0.1370)	(0.4554)	(0.3984)
India/US Compared to Pakistan × Low Political Interest	0.1309	0.1205	0.0804
	(0.1974)	(0.5431)	(0.4612)
Female Respondent	-0.0077	0.1223	0.2722
	(0.0974)	(0.3023)	(0.2524)
Low Education	0.0305	0.1652	-0.0390
	(0.1045)	(0.3243)	(0.2753)
Low Income	0.0024	0.1210	0.0720
	(0.0908)	(0.2989)	(0.2525)
Non-Prime Age	0.0340	0.4623	0.4620
	(0.1122)	(0.3654)	(0.3031)
Low Political Interest	-0.0502	-0.2625	-0.2742
	(0.1382)	(0.3825)	(0.3282)
Political Identification	0.0571**	0.2546***	0.2124***
	(0.0254)	(0.0743)	(0.0680)
Militant Assertiveness	0.0722***	0.2894***	0.3032***
	(0.0187)	(0.0607)	(0.0546)
Religiosity	0.0073	0.1297	0.1439*
	(0.0244)	(0.0889)	(0.0762)
Climate Change Belief	-0.0205	0.0438	0.0883
	(0.0293)	(0.0946)	(0.0820)
Observations	361	361	468

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.10; **p< 0.05; ***p<0.01.

Representativeness

In terms of political identification, about 55% of the sample identifies with the BJP, 16% with the INC, and the remaining respondents with a different party or no party. This tracks relatively well with actual political identification in India. According to a large-scale Pew poll (30,000 respondents) conducted between November 2019 and March 2020, about 39% of the Indian general population felt closest to the BJP and 14% to the INC.[25] The relatively small differences between this Pew poll and political identification in Study 3 could be a result of two factors. First, there is some evidence that Indian citizens may have drifted towards the BJP since 2019/2020. Second, a large percentage of respondents in the Pew poll (23%) refused to answer the political identification question, an option I did not provide respondents in Study 3. Presumably, at least some of these respondents would identify with the BJP or INC. Moreover, if we assume the distribution of political identification among these respondents roughly mirrors that of respondents that did answer the question, then 48% of Indian citizens would identify with the BJP and 17% with the INC, which is much closer to the breakdown in Study 3.

The sample utilized in Study 3 is highly skewed when it comes to education relative to the general population of India. Specifically, the percentage of college graduates in Study 3 is significantly higher than the general Indian population. However, approval for a nuclear strike does not significantly vary by education level, and approval for an Indian or U.S. nuclear strike is greater than approval for a Pakistani nuclear strike for all education levels in Study 3. These results suggest that the education skew is not significantly biasing the results.

Similar to education, the sample also has higher levels of income compared to the general population of India and over-represents men. Nevertheless, approval for a nuclear strike also does not significantly vary by income level or gender, and approval for an Indian or U.S. nuclear strike is greater than approval for a Pakistani nuclear strike for all income levels and genders in Study 3.[26]

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[25] See page 105 of the Pew report.

[26] Aggregate approval is somewhat lower for the highest income group in our sample.

Questionnaire

All pre-treatment questions are the same as in Study 1 save two exceptions.[27] First, Indian citizens are not asked about their ideology. Second, the following question replaces the political identification questions asked in Study 1:

- Which political party, if any, do you feel closest to?
  - Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
  - Indian National Congress (INC)
  - A different party
  - None of the above

Outcome Variable Questions

The outcome variable questions for Study 3 are the same as in Study 1, except the questions about minimizing the loss of life, whether the military operation was an act of self-defense, whether it was a violation of international law, disarmament, and proliferation are not asked in Study 3.

Manipulation Check

- What country conducted the military operation in Yemen described in the article you read?
  - United States
  - Pakistan
  - India

[27] Study 3 was not specifically pre-registered, but the hypotheses are the same as in Study 1, which was pre-registered.

Treatment Conditions[28]

We are now going to describe a situation the world could face in the future, in 2027. Please read carefully and imagine how you would feel if these events were actually happening.[29]

Figure S.18: India Treatment

Red Cross Estimates 1,000 Dead in Indian Nuclear Strike against Islamic State Atomic Bomb Lab in Yemen

India used nuclear weapons to ensure destruction of deeply buried facility

The Associated Press

A new International Red Cross report estimates that the total death toll from the Indian nuclear strike against an Islamic State atomic bomb lab in Yemen will eventually reach 1,000 civilians, including long term deaths due to the strike. An additional 1,200 people are still being treated in local hospitals for non-life-threatening injuries, primarily burns suffered during the attack.

Two Indian nuclear-tipped missiles struck targets in Yemen yesterday in what Indian officials have called an act of self-defense against an imminent terrorist nuclear attack.

Since the strike, high ranking government sources from India have confirmed that the Indian military operation destroyed an underground Islamic State weapons facility in which the components for at least two nuclear weapons were being assembled. Last week, Indian intelligence agents intercepted a shipment of approximately 70 pounds of nuclear weapons-grade uranium being smuggled from India to the Islamic State camp. The seized uranium would have been sufficient to fuel a crude nuclear bomb.

"We decided to use nuclear weapons to destroy the Islamic Sate's nuclear weapons before they could use them against us."

Indian officials determined that the suspects in the smuggling operation were employed at an Indian nuclear facility, and that an additional 150 pounds of weapons-grade uranium were missing from the site. The suspects confirmed under questioning that an earlier shipment of uranium was successfully delivered to the Islamic State weapons lab, where two nuclear weapons were being assembled.

The Islamic State facility was compromised of a series of deeply buried caves and tunnels, which made destruction of the facility difficult. Speaking to reporters, an Indian government spokesman said, "We did everything possible to minimize the loss of life in Yemen, but we decided to use nuclear weapons to destroy the Islamic State's nuclear weapons before they could use them against us."

According to Dr. David Wright, an expert on military operations and weapons at the Union of Concerned Scientists, an independent think-tank based in Washington, D.C., India had few other options. "It would have been very difficult to destroy the deeply buried bunkers without using nuclear weapons," he said. Wright also warned that the Islamic State bombs, while crude, would have caused catastrophic damage if used in a crowded urban area. "If a bomb of this size exploded in Mumbai, it could easily kill 50,000-70,000 people," he said.

[28] Respondents are randomly assigned to treatment conditions.

[29] The U.S. and Pakistan treatments for Study 3 are the same as in Study 1.

Sample Composition

Table S.12: Study 3 Sample Composition

Variable	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Female	0.36	0	0	1
Education[a]	2.86	1	3	4
Age	31.19	18	29	72
Income[b]	3.72	1	4	7
BJP Party	0.55	0	1	1
INC Party	0.16	0	0	1
Militant Assertiveness	3.20	1	4	5
Religiosity	2.82	1	3	6
News Engagement	3.35	1	3	4
Climate Change Belief	4.49	1	5	5

a. 1 = High school graduate or less; 2 = Some college, Post-high school vocational training, or Associate's degree; 3 = Bachelor's degree; 4 = Graduate degree

b. 1 = 300,000 Rupees or less; 2 = 300,000 Rupees – 400,000 Rupees; 3 = 400,000 Rupees – 500,000 Rupees; 4 = 500,000 Rupees – 700,000 Rupees; 5 = 700,000 Rupees – 1 million Rupees; 6 = 1 million Rupees – More than 1.5 million Rupees; 7 = 1.5 million Rupees

Study 4: Nuclear vs. Conventional Attacks

Robustness

Table S.13 demonstrates that the main results are robust to using the full 6-point measure of approval instead of a binary measure of approval as used in the main text. For example, column 5 shows that approval for a U.S. nuclear strike is 0.54 points greater than for a Russian nuclear strike, and column 6 shows that approval for a U.S. conventional strike is 0.81 points greater than for a Russian conventional strike.

Table S.13: 6-Point Measure of Approval

-	**Approval**	**US (N)**	**US (C)**	**Russia (N)**	**Russia (C)**
US (N)	3.81	-	-0.38***	**0.54*** **	0.43***
US (C)	4.20	0.38***	-	0.92***	**0.81*** **
Russia (N)	3.28	-0.54***	-0.92***	-	-0.11
Russia (C)	3.38	-0.43***	-0.81***	0.11	-

Note: Results are calculated from 2,000 bootstraps. * = p<0.10, ** = p<0.05, and *** = p<0.01. Values in columns 3-6 correspond to differences in attack approval for the countries listed on the left-hand side of the table minus the countries listed on the top of the table. N = Nuclear and C = Conventional.

Table S.14 demonstrates that the main results are also robust to using the full 6-point measure of approval and including all respondents in the analysis. For example, column 5 shows that approval for a U.S. nuclear strike is 0.22 points greater than for a Russian nuclear strike, and column 6 shows that approval for a U.S. conventional strike is 0.45 points greater than for a Russian conventional strike.

Table S.14: 6-Point Measure of Approval for All Respondents

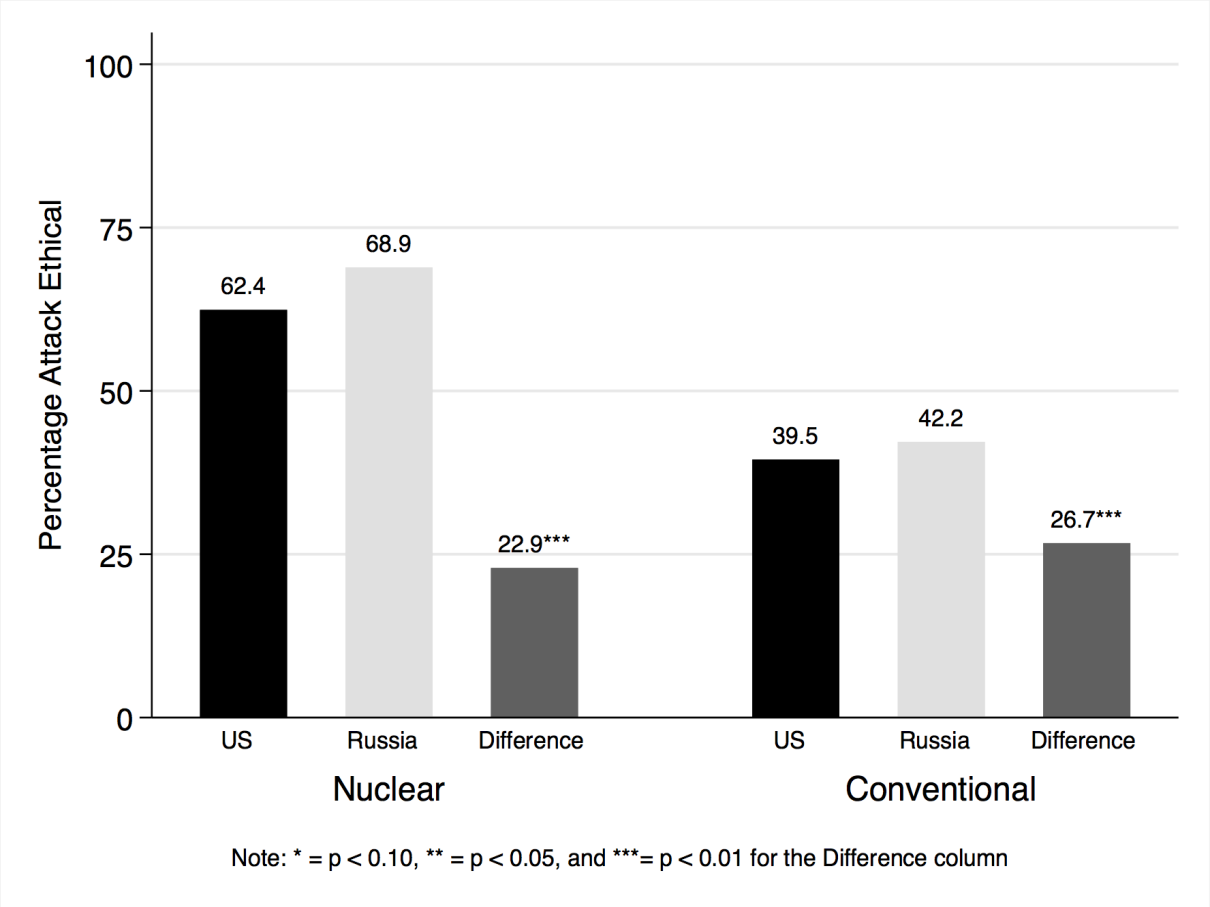
-	**Approval**	**US (N)**	**US (C)**	**Russia (N)**	**Russia (C)**
US (N)	3.75	-	-0.28**	**0.22****	0.17*
US (C)	4.02	0.28**	-	0.50***	**0.45*****
Russia (N)	3.52	-0.22**	-0.50***	-	-0.05
Russia (C)	3.57	-0.17*	-0.45***	0.05	-

Note: Results are calculated from 2,000 bootstraps. * = p<0.10, ** = p<0.05, and *** = p<0.01. Values in columns 3-6 correspond to differences in attack approval for the countries listed on the left-hand side of the table minus the countries listed on the top of the table. N = Nuclear and C = Conventional.

Perceived Morality

Figure S.19 shows that the perceived morality of U.S. nuclear strikes are greater than Russian nuclear strikes, and the same holds when comparing conventional strikes.

Figure S.19: Binary Measure of Percieved Morality



Questionnaire

All pre-treatment questions are the same as in Study 1. The outcome variable questions for Study 4 are the same as in Study 1, except the questions about minimizing the loss of life, whether the military operation was an act of self-defense, whether it was a violation of international law, disarmament, and proliferation are not asked in Study 4. The manipulation check question asks whether the military operation was conducted by the United States, Russia, France, or Pakistan.

The nuclear treatment conditions for the U.S. and Russia are identical to the ones included in Study 1. The conventional treatment conditions are included below.

Figure S.20: U.S. Conventional Treatment

Red Cross Estimates 1,000 Dead in U.S. Air Strike against Islamic State Atomic Bomb Lab in Yemen

United States launched a massive air strike to ensure destruction of deeply buried facility

The Associated Press

A new International Red Cross report estimates that the total death toll from the U.S. air strike against an Islamic State atomic bomb lab in Yemen will eventually reach 1,000 civilians, including long term deaths due to the strike. An additional 1,200 people are still being treated in local hospitals for non-life-threatening injuries, primarily burns suffered during the attack.

Nearly 100 American conventionally armed cruise missiles struck targets in Yemen yesterday in what U.S. officials have called an act of self-defense against an imminent terrorist nuclear attack.

Since the strike, high ranking government sources from the United States have confirmed that the U.S. military operation destroyed an underground Islamic State weapons facility in which the components for at least two nuclear weapons were being assembled. Last week, U.S. intelligence agents intercepted a shipment of approximately 70 pounds of nuclear weapons-grade uranium being smuggled from America to the Islamic State camp. The seized uranium would have been sufficient to fuel a crude nuclear bomb.

"We decided to use conventionally-armed missiles to destroy the Islamic Sate's nuclear weapons before they could use them against us."

U.S. officials determined that the suspects in the smuggling operation were employed at a U.S. nuclear facility, and that an additional 150 pounds of weapons-grade uranium were missing from the site. The suspects confirmed under questioning that an earlier shipment of uranium was successfully delivered to the Islamic State weapons lab, where two nuclear weapons were being assembled.

The Islamic State facility was compromised of a series of deeply buried caves and tunnels, which made destruction of the facility difficult. Speaking to reporters, a U.S. government spokesman said, "We did everything possible to minimize the loss of life in Yemen, but we decided to use nuclear weapons to destroy the Islamic State's nuclear weapons before they could use them against us."

According to Dr. David Wright, an expert on military operations and weapons at the Union of Concerned Scientists, an independent think-tank based in Washington, D.C., the U.S. had few other options. "It would have been very difficult to destroy the deeply buried bunkers with fewer weapons," he said. Wright also warned that the Islamic State bombs, while crude, would have caused catastrophic damage if used in a crowded urban area. "If a bomb of this size exploded in New York City, it could easily kill 50,000-70,000 people," he said.

Figure S.21: Russia Conventional Treatment

Red Cross Estimates 1,000 Dead in Russian Air Strike against Islamic State Atomic Bomb Lab in Yemen

Russia launched a massive air strike to ensure destruction of deeply buried facility

The Associated Press

A new International Red Cross report estimates that the total death toll from the Russian air strike against an Islamic State atomic bomb lab in Yemen will eventually reach 1,000 civilians, including long term deaths due to the strike. An additional 1,200 people are still being treated in local hospitals for non-life-threatening injuries, primarily burns suffered during the attack.

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Sample Composition

Table S.15: Study 4 Sample Composition

Variable	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Female	0.54	0	1	1
Education[a]	4.72	1	5	8
Age	48.22	18	47	91
Income[b]	9.16	1	6	24
White	0.76	0	1	1
Political Identification[c]	3.68	1	4	7
Militant Assertiveness	3.33	1	4	5
Religiosity	2.54	1	2	6
News Engagement	3.08	1	3	4
Climate Change Belief	3.69	1	4	5

a. 1 = Some high school or less; 2 = High school graduate; 3 = Post-high school vocational training; 4 = Some college; 5 = Associate's degree; 6 = Bachelor's degree; 7 = Master's or professional degree; 8 = Doctoral degree

b. 1 = 0-15k; 2 = 15-20k; 3 = 20-25k; 4 = 25-30k; 5 = 30-35k; 6 = 35-40k; 7 = 40-45k; 8 = 45-50k; 9 = 50-55k; 10 = 55-60k; 11 = 60-65k; 12 = 65-70k; 13 = 70-75k; 14 = 75-80k; 15 = 80-85k; 16 = 85-90k; 17 = 90-95k; 18 = 95-100k; 19 = 100-125k; 20 = 125-150k; 21 = 150-175k; 22 = 175-200k; 23 = 200-250k; 24 = 250k+

c. 1 = Strong Democrat; 7 = Strong Republican

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