Supplementary Online Materials

Can China Back Down?
Crisis Deescalation in the Shadow of Popular Opposition

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Appendix 1: Experimental Instrument

This appendix reproduces the text used in the experiment (translated into English).

[Introduction]

[For all respondents]

The following questions are about international affairs. We will describe an international crisis scenario that may occur in the future, and ask for your opinion of the way the crisis is handled.

[Experimental Stimuli]

[Control Group]

China and Japan have a long-standing dispute over the sovereignty of a piece of territory. In a recent turn of events, Japan started to install structures on the disputed territory.

The Chinese leader said that if the installation continued, China would take military action. Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory. In the end, the Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan.

[For Treatment 1]

China and Japan have a long-standing dispute over the sovereignty of a piece of territory. In a recent turn of events, Japan started to install structures on the disputed territory.

The Chinese leader said that if the installation continued, China would take military action. Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory. The UN Secretary-General called

for peace and offered UN mediation. In the end, the Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan.

[For Treatment 2]

China and Japan have a long-standing dispute over the sovereignty of a piece of territory. In a recent turn of events, Japan started to install structures on the disputed territory.

The Chinese leader said that if the installation continued, China would take military action. Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory. The United States warned that it would intervene militarily if Japan is attacked. In the end, the Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan.

[For Treatment 3]

China and Japan have a long-standing dispute over the sovereignty of a piece of territory. In a recent turn of events, Japan started to install structures on the disputed territory.

The Chinese leader said that if the installation continued, China would take military action. Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory. In the end, the Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan. The leader declared that the Chinese people are a peaceful people that will put utmost effort into resolving the conflict without the use of force.

[For Treatment 4]

China and Japan have a long-standing dispute over the sovereignty of a piece of territory. In a recent turn of events, Japan started to install structures on the disputed territory.

The Chinese leader said that if the installation continued, China would take military action. Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory. In the end, the Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan. The leader explained that a military conflict will derail China's economic development and prosperity.

[For Treatment 5]

China and Japan have a long-standing dispute over the sovereignty of a piece of territory. In a recent turn of events, Japan started to install structures on the disputed territory.

The Chinese leader said that if the installation continued, China would take military action. Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory. In the end, the Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan, but imposed a series of sanctions and boycotts to punish the Japanese economy.

[For Treatment 6]

China and Japan have a long-standing dispute over the sovereignty of a piece of territory. In a recent turn of events, Japan started to install structures on the disputed territory.

The Chinese leader warned that the Japanese Government must be held fully responsible for the consequences arising there from if Japan failed to remove its structures on the territory. Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory. In the end, the Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan.

[Summary]

To summarize, China and Japan have a long-standing dispute over the sovereignty of a piece of territory.

- Japan started to install structures on the disputed territory

[Respondents received additional bullet points based on their assigned condition]

[Control Group]

- The Chinese leader said that if the installation continued, China would take military action
- Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory
- The Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan

[For Treatment 1]

- The Chinese leader said that if the installation continued, China would take military action
- Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory
- The UN Secretary-General called for peace and offered UN mediation
- The Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan

[For Treatment 2]

- The Chinese leader said that if the installation continued, China would take military action

- Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory
- The United States warned that it would intervene militarily if Japan is attacked
- The Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan

[For Treatment 3]

- The Chinese leader said that if the installation continued, China would take military action
- Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory
- The Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan
- The leader declared that the Chinese people are a peaceful people that will put utmost effort into resolving the conflict without the use of force

[For Treatment 4]

- The Chinese leader said that if the installation continued, China would take military action
- Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory
- The Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan
- The leader explained that a military conflict will derail China's economic development and prosperity

[For Treatment 5]

- The Chinese leader said that if the installation continued, China would take military action
- Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory

- The Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan, but imposed sanctions and boycotts to punish the Japanese economy

[For Treatment 6]

- The Chinese leader warned that Japan must be held fully responsible for the consequences arising there from if Japan failed to remove the structures
- Japan continued to install structures on the disputed territory
- The Chinese leader decided not to take military action against Japan

[Dependent Variable]

[For all respondents] Do you approve, disapprove, or neither approve nor disapprove of the way the Chinese leader handled the situation?

[If approve]: Do you approve very strongly, or only somewhat?

[If disapprove]: Do you disapprove very strongly, or only somewhat?

[If neither]: Do you lean toward approving of the way the Chinese leader handled the situation, lean toward disapproving, or don't you lean either way?

Appendix 2: Supplementary Tables

Table A1.
Ordered Logit Estimates: Determinants of Public Approval for Backing Down
(Control and Treatment Groups 1 [UN Mediation Offer])

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
UN_mediation	0.3928***	0.3487**	0.3742**	0.3885**	0.3612**
	(0.1160)	(0.1233)	(0.1244)	(0.1253)	(0.1260)
gender			-0.0272	-0.0235	-0.0630
			(0.1263)	(0.1275)	(0.1337)
race			-0.1377	-0.0875	-0.1255
			(0.3169)	(0.3290)	(0.3369)
age		-0.0039	-0.0065	-0.0100	-0.0104
		(0.0054)	(0.0057)	(0.0068)	(0.0070)
edu		0.0209	-0.0160	-0.0198	-0.0177
		(0.0573)	(0.0632)	(0.0654)	(0.0721)
income			0.0141	0.0135	0.0121
			(0.0121)	(0.0124)	(0.0129)
partymember				0.0084	-0.0453
				(0.1585)	(0.1626)
unmarried				-0.0976	-0.1356
				(0.1579)	(0.1593)
knowledge					-0.0940
					(0.0824)
interest					0.1776*
					(0.0809)
globalize					0.0123
					(0.0769)
Observations	934	825	815	802	793
Pseudo-r2	0.00336	0.00286	0.00400	0.00449	0.00656
log likelihood	-1707	-1509	-1489	-1466	-1446
chi-square	11.51	8.653	11.96	13.22	19.08

Standard errors in parentheses. Constant cuts omitted. *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Table A2.
Ordered Logit Estimates: Determinants of Public Approval for Backing Down
(Control and Treatment Group 2 [U.S. deterrent warning])

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
US_threat	-0.1699	-0.1635	-0.1382	-0.1445	-0.1805
	(0.1141)	(0.1216)	(0.1226)	(0.1238)	(0.1246)
gender			-0.1066	-0.0931	-0.1138
			(0.1254)	(0.1273)	(0.1330)
race			0.4301	0.3637	0.3767
			(0.3603)	(0.3614)	(0.3652)
age		-0.0126*	-0.0110+	-0.0154*	-0.0151*
		(0.0055)	(0.0058)	(0.0066)	(0.0069)
edu		-0.0325	-0.0033	-0.0220	-0.0210
		(0.0565)	(0.0613)	(0.0643)	(0.0704)
income			-0.0108	-0.0103	-0.0121
			(0.0119)	(0.0122)	(0.0129)
partymember				0.2424	0.2021
				(0.1585)	(0.1608)
unmarried				-0.1391	-0.1777
				(0.1534)	(0.1554)
knowledge					-0.2063*
					(0.0864)
interest					0.2039**
					(0.0781)
globalize					0.0085
					(0.0746)
Observations	951	838	832	817	811
Pseudo-r2	0.000623	0.00267	0.00340	0.00447	0.00877
log likelihood	-1780	-1562	-1551	-1520	-1502
chi-square	2.220	8.357	10.58	13.65	26.58

Standard errors in parentheses. Constant cuts omitted. *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Table A3.
Ordered Logit Estimates: Determinants of Public Approval for Backing Down
(Control and Treatment Group 3 [Peaceful identity rhetoric])

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
peaceful_id	0.3174**	0.3230**	0.3308**	0.3417**	0.3328**
	(0.1149)	(0.1209)	(0.1217)	(0.1229)	(0.1237)
gender			0.0213	0.0167	-0.0437
			(0.1242)	(0.1254)	(0.1303)
race			0.2984	0.3129	0.2662
			(0.3254)	(0.3326)	(0.3362)
age		-0.0053	-0.0053	-0.0079	-0.0101
		(0.0052)	(0.0054)	(0.0063)	(0.0065)
edu		-0.0628	-0.0654	-0.0711	-0.0626
		(0.0550)	(0.0610)	(0.0632)	(0.0708)
income			-0.0041	-0.0030	-0.0034
			(0.0120)	(0.0121)	(0.0127)
partymember				0.0623	-0.0067
				(0.1541)	(0.1568)
unmarried				-0.0711	-0.0997
				(0.1524)	(0.1533)
knowledge					0.0259
					(0.0822)
interest					0.1612*
					(0.0795)
globalize					-0.0493
					(0.0751)
Observations	946	856	845	830	820
Pseudo-r2	0.00218	0.00318	0.00369	0.00408	0.00510
log likelihood	-1751	-1577	-1557	-1529	-1509
chi-square	7.654	10.08	11.54	12.52	15.48

Standard errors in parentheses. Constant cuts omitted. *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Table A4.
Ordered Logit Estimates: Determinants of Public Approval for Backing Down
(Control and Treatment Group 4 [Economic costs rhetoric])

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
econ_cost	0.3277**	0.2740*	0.2670*	0.2545*	0.2455+
	(0.1157)	(0.1223)	(0.1230)	(0.1245)	(0.1255)
gender			-0.0276	-0.0289	-0.0459
			(0.1250)	(0.1272)	(0.1336)
race			-0.1318	-0.1484	-0.1435
			(0.3314)	(0.3403)	(0.3432)
age		-0.0131*	-0.0146**	-0.0187**	-0.0184**
		(0.0053)	(0.0056)	(0.0066)	(0.0068)
edu		0.0776	0.0415	0.0301	0.0249
		(0.0534)	(0.0582)	(0.0611)	(0.0684)
income			0.0163	0.0185	0.0154
			(0.0118)	(0.0121)	(0.0128)
partymember				0.1401	0.0695
				(0.1639)	(0.1671)
unmarried				-0.1370	-0.1722
				(0.1609)	(0.1626)
knowledge					-0.1368
					(0.0839)
interest					0.1713*
					(0.0811)
globalize					0.0438
					(0.0797)
Observations	933	833	827	811	801
Pseudo-r2	0.00233	0.00399	0.00469	0.00570	0.00864
log likelihood	-1722	-1536	-1524	-1496	-1472
chi-square	8.049	12.31	14.35	17.14	25.66

Standard errors in parentheses. Constant cuts omitted. *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Table A5.
Ordered Logit Estimates: Determinants of Public Approval for Backing Down
(Control and Treatment Group 5 [Economic sanctions])

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
sanction	0.7813***	0.7450***	0.7378***	0.7559***	0.7554***
	(0.1179)	(0.1242)	(0.1252)	(0.1266)	(0.1274)
gender			0.0099	-0.0090	-0.0358
			(0.1248)	(0.1269)	(0.1340)
race			-0.3949	-0.4041	-0.4953
			(0.3187)	(0.3209)	(0.3270)
age		-0.0027	-0.0050	-0.0057	-0.0045
		(0.0053)	(0.0056)	(0.0066)	(0.0067)
edu		0.0021	-0.0372	-0.0225	-0.0494
		(0.0551)	(0.0608)	(0.0628)	(0.0688)
income			0.0193	0.0179	0.0123
			(0.0123)	(0.0126)	(0.0132)
partymember				0.1005	0.0727
				(0.1611)	(0.1626)
unmarried				-0.0376	-0.0767
				(0.1588)	(0.1607)
knowledge					-0.1754*
					(0.0842)
interest					0.1951*
					(0.0811)
globalize					0.0642
					(0.0766)
Observations	938	844	835	819	810
Pseudo-r2	0.0132	0.0122	0.0138	0.0145	0.0184
log likelihood	-1668	-1495	-1477	-1450	-1426
chi-square	44.61	36.82	41.33	42.80	53.41

Standard errors in parentheses. Constant cuts omitted. *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Table A6.
Ordered Logit Estimates: Determinants of Public Approval for Backing Down
(Control and Treatment Group 6 [Ambiguous threat])

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
ambiguous_threat	-0.0221	-0.0658	-0.0634	-0.0364	-0.0614
	(0.1148)	(0.1215)	(0.1222)	(0.1234)	(0.1241)
gender			-0.1820	-0.2089	-0.3052*
			(0.1243)	(0.1270)	(0.1332)
race			-0.1180	-0.1201	-0.1535
			(0.3295)	(0.3307)	(0.3301)
age		-0.0064	-0.0046	-0.0046	-0.0061
		(0.0053)	(0.0055)	(0.0064)	(0.0066)
edu		0.0206	0.0272	0.0220	0.0045
		(0.0536)	(0.0594)	(0.0615)	(0.0675)
income			-0.0009	-0.0006	-0.0040
			(0.0120)	(0.0122)	(0.0127)
partymember				0.1476	0.0804
				(0.1645)	(0.1670)
unmarried				0.0114	0.0084
				(0.1517)	(0.1527)
knowledge					-0.0075
					(0.0828)
interest					0.2143**
					(0.0766)
globalize					0.0074
					(0.0741)
Observations	939	839	833	821	813
Pseudo-r2	1.06e-05	0.000570	0.00131	0.00171	0.00489
log likelihood	-1749	-1558	-1547	-1524	-1505
chi-square	0.0370	1.776	4.050	5.217	14.78

Standard errors in parentheses. Constant cuts omitted. *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1.

Table A7.
2010 China National Census and 2015 Sample Characteristics

		2015 Sample	2010 National Census (Adults) [1]
Gender	Male	53.7%	50.5%
Region [2]	Northern	18.6%	12.7%
	Northeastern	7.3%	8.8%
	Eastern	33.2%	30.2%
	Central & Southern	27.2%	27.0%
	Southwestern	8.9%	14.2%
	Northwestern	4.6%	7.2%
	N.A.	0.3%	N.A.
Race	Han	96.3%	92.3%
Income [3]	Mean Income Per Capita	¥38,252	¥44,489

Notes: [1] Adults are aged 18 or above. [2] Data excluding non-adults unavailable for Region and Income. [3] Income figure is estimated based on the 2014 mean disposable income in Beijing.