

When Backing Down is the Right Decision: Partisanship, New Information, and the Domestic Political Logic of Audience Costs

Supplemental Appendix

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Table of Contents:

<u>Appendix 1: Original survey experiment wording</u>	1-3
<u>Appendix 2: Follow-up survey experiment wording</u>	4-6
<u>Appendix 3: Additional results from initial surveys</u>	7-11
<u>Appendix 4: Follow-up survey results</u>	12-29
<u>Appendix 5: Evolution of attitudes towards China in the 1950s</u>	30-31

Appendix 1: Knowledge Networks Survey Instrument

The survey items used in the paper come from a survey conducted with Knowledge Networks between 17 and 30 December 2008. 3281 respondents were invited to participate in the study, with 2098 actually completing the study, for a completion rate of 63.9%. Below, we present the actual survey items used in our study. Note that respondents saw each item separately.

The following questions are about U.S. relations with other countries around the world.

Q1. Some people believe the United States should solve international problems by using diplomacy and other forms of international pressure and use military force only if absolutely necessary. Suppose we put such people at 1 on this scale. Others believe diplomacy and pressure often fail and the US must be ready to use military force. Suppose we put them at number 7. And of course others fall at positions in between, at points 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

What about you: where would you place yourself on this scale?

1. U.S. should solve with diplomacy and international pressure
2. U.S. should be willing to solve with diplomacy and international pressure

3. U.S. should not rule out solving with diplomacy and international pressure.
4. U.S. should equally consider diplomacy and military force
5. US. should not rule out the use of military force
6. U.S. must be willing to consider using military force
7. U.S. must be ready to use military force

You will now read about a situation our country has faced many times in the past and will probably face again. Different leaders have handled the situation in different ways. We will describe one approach U.S. leaders have taken, and ask whether you approve or disapprove.

<< STAY OUT CONDITION: >>

A country sent its military to take over a neighboring country. The U.S. president announced that the U.S. military would stay out of the conflict. The attacking country continued to invade, and then took over its neighbor.

<< BACK DOWN CONDITION: >>

A country sent its military to take over a neighboring country. The [(BLANK)/Democratic/Republican] President of the United States said that if the attack continued, the U.S. military would push out the invaders. He sent troops to the region and prepared them for war.

The attacking country continued to invade. The [(BLANK)/DEMOCRATIC/REPUBLICAN]] U.S. President then [(BLANK)/received new intelligence suggesting involvement is not in America's interests. Military experts agreed that the U.S. should not become involved in this crisis. The President then] withdrew U.S. troops without sending them into battle. The attacking country then took over its neighbor.

[(BLANK)/Leaders of both parties have rallied to the president's defense, saying he made the right call in a difficult situation. /Leaders of the President's Party have rallied to his defense, saying he made the right call in a difficult situation, while leaders of the opposition party have criticized the president's decision, saying he made a strategic mistake.]

Q2. Do you approve, disapprove, or neither approve nor disapprove of the way the U.S. president handled this situation? [Options: Strongly Approve/Somewhat approve/Neither Approve nor Disapprove/Somewhat Disapprove/Strongly Disapprove]

Q3. In the scenario you just read about, how would you describe the reaction of other political leaders to the President's decision? [Leaders from both parties supported the president's decision/Only leaders from the president's party supported his decision/I don't recall]

Q4. In the scenario you just read about, did the President change his policy as the result of obtaining new information? [Yes/No/I don't recall]

Appendix 2: Follow-Up Experiments

Partisanship Follow-Up (Student Sample Experiment):

You will now read about a situation our country has faced many times in the past and will probably face again. Different leaders have handled the situation in different ways. We will describe one approach U.S. leaders have taken.

After describing this scenario, we will ask whether you agree or disagree with their decision. Please answer the questions in the order given.

Q1: A country sent its military to take over a neighboring country. The [(BLANK)/DEMOCRATIC/REPUBLICAN] President of the United States said that if the attack continued, the U.S. military would push out the invaders. He sent troops to the region and prepared them for war.

The attacking country continued to invade. The [(BLANK)/DEMOCRATIC/REPUBLICAN] U.S. President then withdrew U.S. troops without sending them into battle. The attacking country then took over its neighbor.

Do you approve, disapprove, or neither approve nor disapprove of the way the U.S. president handled this situation? [Strongly Approve/Somewhat Approve/Neither Approve nor Disapprove/Somewhat disapprove/Strongly disapprove]

Q2: Now we'd like to know *why* you approve or disapprove of the president's decision. Please explain your decision in the space below, listing whatever factors affected your decision.

Below are a list of some common reasons people have for approving or disapproving of the President's decision. We'd like you to rank these using a 1 through 6 scale (where 1 is most important and 6 is least important). [Reasons subjects were asked to rank: "Maintaining the International Reputation of the United States", "The Moral Obligation of the U.S. to help the oppressed", "Protecting the Safety and Security of U.S. Troops", "The Partisanship of the President", "Other" (subjects were asked to offer their own rationales if they selected this option)]

Q3: Generally speaking, I think of myself as (select the most appropriate answer from the list below): [Strong Democrat/Weak Democrat/ Independent, Lean Democrat/Independent/ Independent, Lean Republican/ Weak Republican/ Strong Republican]

Q4: Some people believe the United States should solve international problems by using diplomacy and other forms of international pressure and use military force only if absolutely necessary. Suppose we put such people at 1 on this scale. Others believe diplomacy and pressure often fail and the US must be ready to use military force.

Suppose we put them at number 7. And of course others fall at positions in between, at points 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

What about you: where would you place yourself on this scale?

1. U.S. should solve with diplomacy and international pressure
2. US should be willing to solve with diplomacy and international pressure
3. U.S. should not rule out solving with diplomacy and international pressure
4. U.S. should equally consider diplomacy and military force
5. U.S. should not rule out the use of military force
6. U.S. must be willing to consider using military force
7. U.S. must be ready to use military force

Competence Follow-Up Items:

The study was conducted on subjects recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk Service (mturk.amazon.com; see appendix 4 for additional details on the Mechanical Turk service). The sample is 63% female, 44% are between the ages of 18 and 29 while 27% are older than 40, 83% are Caucasian, and 56% have a college degree. Including partisan leaners (Keith et al. 1992), 58% of subjects are Democrats, and 30% are Republicans (excluding leaners, the figures are 44% and 21%, respectively). The data was collected 29-31 July 2010; subjects were paid \$0.50 to answer a 3-4 minute survey.

Subjects were asked the same pre-test items as in the original Knowledge Networks study. Subjects were then randomly assigned to two different experimental factors: (1) whether the president stays out or backs down (see above for specific wording), and (2) whether the president reveals his decision to back down/stay out was driven by new information or not (again, see above for specific wording). Subjects were not given any information about the congressional response or presidential partisanship. Subjects were then once again asked for their approval on the 5-point "strongly approve" to "strongly disapprove" scale. After registering their approval or disapproval of the

president's decision, subjects were asked:

In the scenario we described earlier, how would you describe the president's competence? [Very Competent/ Competent/Neither Competent nor Incompetent/Incompetent/Very Incompetent]

Other Follow-Up Surveys:

The relevant items for the other follow-up surveys are described in footnotes below.

Appendix 3: Additional Results From Main Experiment

Randomization Check:

Variable	Estimate
Age	0.001 (0.003)
Education	-0.03 (0.02)
Gender	-0.02 (0.08)
Household Size	0.03 (0.03)
Income	0.002 (0.01)
Marital Status	-0.02 (0.02)
Military Service	0.06 (0.05)
Ideological Self- Identification	-0.01 (0.02)
Partisanship	-0.02 (0.02)

Table A1: Ordered logit model predicting treatment assignment as a function of control variables. Threshold terms are omitted in the interest of space. Note that treatment assignment is not predictable based on demographics, partisanship, and ideology.

Experimental Conditions:

Treatment Factors	President Gets New Information	President's Party	Congressional Response	Support, 1-5 Scale (% Approve)
1 (No Action)	-	-	-	3.03 (33) [114 / 61]
2	Yes	Not given	Not Given	3.22 (42) [107 / 53]
3	No	Democrat	Not Given	2.12 (8) [111 / 54]
4	Yes	Republican	Not Given	3.08 (35) [120 / 54]
5	No	Not given	Not Given	2.23 (11) [111 / 51]
6	Yes	Democrat	Not Given	2.96 (33) [108 / 53]
7	No	Republican	Not Given	2.47 (17) [108 / 44]
8	No	None	Both Support	2.39 (12) [107 / 50]
9	No	None	Only His Party Supports	2.49 (11) [115 / 50]
10	Yes	None	Both Support	3.24 (44) [111 / 49]
11	Yes	None	Only His Party Supports	3.05 (35) [110 / 57]
12	No	Democrat	Both Support	2.67 (24) [117 / 54]
13	No	Democrat	Only His Party Supports	2.33 (13) [111 / 53]
14	Yes	Democrat	Both Support	3.01 (35) [109 / 59]
15	Yes	Democrat	Only His Party Supports	2.97 (33) [105 / 58]
16	No	Republican	Both Support	2.58 (15) [117 / 56]
17	No	Republican	Only His Party Supports	2.51 (13) [106 / 50]
18	Yes	Republican	Both Support	3.35 (50) [104 / 57]
19	Yes	Republican	Only His Party Supports	3.17 (39) [107 / 59]

Table A2: Support by experimental condition. The first number is support for the president's decision on the 1-5 strongly disapprove to strongly approve scale. (with higher numbers indicating more support), the number in parentheses is the percent approving with the president's decision. Numbers in brackets are the total number of subjects per condition (before the slash), and the percentage of subjects in the condition who are Democrats, including leaners. For reference, 54% of the sample is composed of Democrats (again, including leaners).

Interaction Effects, Main Experiment

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Same-Party President	-0.05 (0.10)	-0.01 (0.06)	0.13 (0.08)
Opposite-Party President	-0.06 (0.10)	0.05 (0.06)	0.18 (0.08)
Only the President's Party Supports Him	0.07 (0.10)	0.36 (0.08)	0.16 (0.06)
Both Parties Support the President	0.12 (0.11)	0.30 (0.08)	0.20 (0.06)
President Justified His Decision	0.62 (0.05)	0.81 (0.08)	0.78 (0.08)
Same-Party President* Only the President's Party Supports Him	0.16 (0.15)		
Same-Party President* Both Parties Support the President	0.16 (0.14)		
Opposite-Party President* Only the President's Party Supports Him	0.03 (0.15)		
Opposite-Party President* Both Parties Support the President	0.22 (0.14)		
Only the President's Party Supports Him* President Justifies His Decision		-0.44 (0.12)	
Both Parties Support the President* President Justifies His Decision		-0.18 (0.12)	
Same-Party President* President Justifies His Decision			-0.25 (0.12)
Opposite-Party President* President Justifies His Decision			-0.25 (0.12)
τ_1	-0.72 (0.08)	-0.58 (0.07)	-0.58 (0.07)
τ_2	0.14 (0.08)	0.29 (0.07)	0.23 (0.08)
τ_3	1.02 (0.08)	1.17 (0.07)	1.16 (0.07)
τ_4	1.93 (0.09)	2.08 (0.08)	2.07 (0.08)
N	1895	1895	1895

Table A3: Interactive Effects between Treatments

Note that in table A3 above, the interaction effects are either insignificant, or somewhat negative when the updating variable is involved. The insignificant effects aren't interesting, but the negative ones seem to be, but this is just an illusion. The negative effects for the updating effects simply show that updating has its largest effect when respondents know nothing else. Giving subjects other information, such as the president's party, or the reaction of other elites, gives them another basis for their decision, so the presidential justification matters somewhat less. But not that in all cases, the net effect of offering a justification would remain large and positive, so offering a justification always increases approval (consistent with our theory). Its largest effect simply comes when subjects have no additional information. Seen from this light, these interaction effects are not terribly substantively interesting.

Issue Ownership Results

Another possibility in our data is that there is an “issue ownership” dynamic (Petrocik 1996). Because Republicans are seen as more competent in foreign affairs (e.g., they have a reputation for “toughness” on the global stage), subjects may punish them less harshly for backing down. That is, when a Republican backs down, it might reflect good sense, but when a Democrat does it, it reflects craven weakness.¹ To test for this possibility, we re-analyzed the data, looking at how respondents react to Democratic and Republican presidents, rather than same-party or opposite-party presidents. Table A4

¹ While the original Petrocik article is over a decade old, more recent work suggests Republicans continue to “own” foreign policy issues (Pope and Woon 2009).

gives the results.

	Model 1	Model 2
Democratic President	-0.10 (0.06)	-0.18 (0.08)
Republican President	0.19 (0.05)	0.21 (0.08)
Democratic Respondent	0.21 (0.05)	0.17 (0.08)
Democratic Respondent* Democratic President		0.15 (0.12)
Democratic Respondent* Republican President		-0.04 (0.12)
President Justified His Decision	0.64 (0.05)	0.64 (0.05)
Both Parties Support the President	0.18 (0.06)	0.18 (0.06)
Only the President's Party Supports Him	0.19 (0.06)	0.19 (0.06)
τ_1	-0.56 (0.07)	-0.58 (0.08)
τ_2	0.31 (0.07)	0.29 (0.08)
τ_3	1.28 (0.07)	1.21 (0.08)
τ_4	2.13 (0.08)	2.12 (0.09)

Table A4: Issue Ownership Results

Table A4 illustrates that there are some modest issue ownership effects: Republicans do better, and Democrats do worse, than the unlabeled party. But note that these are constant effects across respondents from both parties, and there are no interactive effects. Given these, we stick to our original same-party/opposite-party analysis presented in the body of the paper.

Appendix 4: Follow-Up Survey Results

Why Do Subjects Disapprove of Backing Down?

The results from our initial experiment raise the question of *why* subjects disapprove of the President backing down in a crisis situation. Our information condition demonstrates that one potential reason is that they assume, absent evidence, that backing down is the wrong decision. Here, we further explore the reasoning behind public disapproval through an open response convenience sample. We designed this survey in part to prime partisanship in the imposition of audience costs, if possible, and also to find out, in an open ended response, the specific reasoning why subjects approved or disapproved of the president's decision.

The follow up study was administered to 143 subjects, all of whom were subjects in a large introductory political science class at a private university. This study measures whether subjects use president partisanship to evaluate the behavior of the president in an international crisis situation. The follow-up study presented subjects with a simplified version of our experiment above: they were told the president sent troops to protect the invaded nation, but then backed down and did not send troops into battle. To keep the experiment simple, we only manipulated the partisanship of the president (control (no party given)/same-party/opposite-party) and omitted information about presidential updating or congressional reactions (see the supplemental appendix for specific scenario wording). We focused solely on the president's partisanship because this is the factor that should most directly prime citizens to use their partisanship when judging the president.

After having respondents read the scenario and state whether they approved or disapproved of the president's decision, we asked them to list all factors relevant to their

decision (for a similar design, Tomz 2007). Our goal was to see why subjects impose audience costs in general and to specifically test whether or not subjects list partisanship as a factor—does partisanship enter their decision calculus? The answer is striking: only one subject in our experiment lists partisan factors in his decision, and even here, partisanship factors in a more peripheral manner. The respondent wrote “The Republican president should know better than to make such a bold assertion and then back down. It demonstrates American weakness, which, despite being a liberal, I attached more to the Democratic party.”² Instead of partisan factors, a majority of subjects instead selected reputation-based reasons (85% of all subjects who disapprove), consistent with prior work (Tomz 2007). Most subjects reasoned that, as one respondent wrote, the president’s decision would mean “losing face to the rest of the world.”³

The dearth of partisanship in these open-ended rationales is potentially due to a social desirability bias: subjects may not want to admit that they used partisan criteria. Given the popular discourse in American politics that privileges independence over partisanship (Muirhead 2006), subjects may not be willing to voluntarily express partisan sentiments. To avoid this limitation, we asked respondents in a follow-up question to rate five potential rationales—the effect on the U.S.’s international reputation, moral obligation, risk to U.S. troops, risks to U.S. national security, presidential partisanship—for their evaluation of the president’s decision from most to least important. Seeing partisanship in a closed-ended list signals to respondents that the researchers consider this to be a legitimate rationale (Schuman and Presser 1981), and hence should make them

² The mention of partisanship comes in a condition where the president’s party is labeled, and the subject is a strong partisan criticizing a president of the opposite party. However, the rarity of this finding (combined with other findings below) leads us to conclude this type of thinking is extremely rare.

³ For a discussion of the other rationales offered, see the supplemental appendix.

more likely to select this option if it in fact is relevant.⁴ In table A5, we give, for each rationale, the average rating on the 1-5 scale, the percent rating this to be the most important rationale, and the percent rating this to be the least important rationale.

Rationale	Average Rating (1=most important, 5=least important)	Percent Rating as Most Important	Percent Rating as Least Important
Effect on international reputation	2.4	29.5	3.8
Moral Obligation	3.2	9.8	8.3
Risk to U.S. troops	2.8	6.8	3.0
President's Partisanship	4.99	0.8	88.6
Effect on U.S. National Security	1.8	57.6	4.5

Table A5: Importance respondents attach to various rationales used for judging the president's decision (N=143).

The results are unambiguous: even when we explicitly signal to subjects that partisanship is an acceptable rationale for imposing audience costs, almost all subjects are unanimous that partisanship is an irrelevant variable. Nearly 9 in 10 respondents rate partisanship as the least important factor in their decision, and less than 1% (only 1 respondent) rate it as their most important factor. For most voters, factors like international reputation and the effects on U.S. national security drive audience costs, not partisan considerations. Unlike nearly all of the literature on American political behavior, partisanship barely has any effect at all here, consistent with our argument above about the unique scenario posed by audience costs.

⁴ We acknowledge that subjects want to seem non-partisan and hence not select this option, even if it is relevant. It is unclear, however, how to design a study that would completely eliminate this objection.

We also asked respondents why they disapproved of the president's decision to back down in general. As we indicated in the text of the paper on page 18, most respondents argued that they felt the U.S. would lose credibility on the world stage as a result of their actions (85% of respondents who disapproved of the president's decision). In contrast, only 1 respondent used a partisan logic (for more discussion of these rationales, see the main text).

How did the remaining subjects justify their disapproval of the president? Some argued that they disapproved of the president's decision because it could have negative ramifications for U.S. national security (15% of subjects), for U.S. troops (6% of subjects), or for the U.S. economy, due to the prohibitive expense of sending U.S. troops that eventually didn't do anything (18% of subjects). Others worried about the invading country and its violation of the sovereignty of the target (8% of subjects), and still others linked these concerns to international law and even human rights issues. The last major group of subjects argued that failing to stop the aggressor state would result in future aggression by other rogue states: by failing to deter a bellicose state now, we would encourage even more aggressive behavior in the future (13% of subjects); note the similarity here to arguments made by some politicians and analysts about aggressive rogue states like Iran and North Korea (for more on credibility and appeasement, see Paige 1968; Jervis 1976; Powell 1996).

The remaining respondents argued that they did not have enough information to make a decision about the president's policy.⁵ While some of these answers simply represent satisficing by our respondents (e.g., a desire to quickly dispatch with our

⁵ A separate group of subjects did argue that the U.S. should not have withdrawn because we have a moral obligation to protect the oppressed, but less than 2% of subjects fell into this category.

survey, see Krosnick 1999), many of them reveal a deeper meaning consistent with our argument about information and presidential updating: subjects wanted to know why the president chose to withdraw at the last moment. One subject wrote that they somewhat disagreed rather than strongly disagreed because “we do not know the reasons why he took the troops out,” while another wrote “It may have been a risk not worth taking. The circumstances may have changed since the promise. I don’t have enough information to judge.” This significantly bolsters our arguments about how the president justifies his decision: they punish the president less if they know he had a good reason for backing down from a threat.

China Scenario Results

One concern with the experimental approach used in the paper is that our scenario is very “bare bones.” Our experiment attempts to create a baseline or generalized notion of the relationship among presidential behavior, domestic political conditions, and public support for the president’s decision. To do so, we avoid giving additional details about the conflict, the nations involved, etc. Doing so allows us to establish some baseline results before considering the complicating factors of more specific scenarios (Hermann et al. 1999; McDermott 2002).

We build on the analysis in the paper by considering how several different scenarios might alter the basic logic of our results. In particular, we focus on two more “real world” scenarios involving specific nations. We consider a case of Chinese aggression against either Taiwan (a nation with a long record of political, economic, and military ties to the U.S.) or Cambodia (a nation with far fewer such connections to the

U.S.; the scenario comes from Hermann et al. 1999).⁶ This allows us to vary the target nation (Taiwan/Cambodia) while holding the aggressor fixed (China), allowing us to examine how the target state's identity affects audience costs. For example, perhaps voters punish the president more harshly when he backs down in the face of aggression toward Taiwan, given its extensive ties to the U.S. To aid in interpretability, we focus on only two experimental manipulations here: we vary the target nation (Taiwan or Cambodia), and the partisanship of the president (no party given/same-party/opposite-party). Doing so allows us to investigate the robustness of our non-partisan logic finding in the presence of a more specific scenario.

These two scenarios should help us ensure that our results are not simply limited to the baseline case examined in the paper, but rather extend broadly to a host of other, more realistic settings. We conducted the experiment online using online convenience samples (gathered via Amazon's Mechanical Turk service; details about the samples and setup are available upon request).⁷ While these are not random sample of the U.S. (unlike our main Knowledge Networks survey), this is not a serious impediment in this case: our goal is not to generalize here to the broader population, but rather to test the robustness of

⁶ Here is the text of the relevant survey item: Imagine that China were to begin massing troops and threatening to invade [Taiwan/Cambodia]. The people of [Taiwan/Cambodia] ask the United States for assistance. The [(Blank)/Democratic/Republican] President of the United States said that if the attack continued, the U.S. military would push out the Chinese troops. He sent troops to the region and prepared them for war.

The [(Blank)/Democratic/Republican] U.S. President then withdrew U.S. troops without sending them into battle. China's military then defeated [Taiwan's/Cambodia's] military.

Do you approve, disapprove, or neither approve nor disapprove of the way the U.S. president handled this situation?

⁷ For details about the Mechanical Turk subject pool and its use in social science research, see Paolacci, Chandler, and Ipeirotis (2010). They find that Turk samples are of equal or better quality than volunteer convenience and student samples.

our findings to variations in the scenario presented to respondents. As such, non-representative samples are sufficient.

We are particularly interested in whether the specific scenario factors (here, the target state) interact with the other experimental factors (here, the president's partisanship). Table A6 gives the results.

Variable	Estimates	Estimates	Estimates
Same-Party President	-0.19 (0.18)	-0.15 (0.18)	-0.21 (0.27)
Opposite-Party President	-0.17 (0.17)	-0.15 (0.17)	-0.28 (0.24)
Target is Taiwan	0.09 (0.15)	0.21 (0.20)	-0.001 (0.23)
Perceive China to be a Threat	-0.13 (0.08)	0.10 (0.21)	-0.13 (0.07)
Target is Taiwan*Perceive China to be a Threat		-0.23 (0.29)	
Same-Party President*Target is Taiwan			0.05 (0.37)
Opposite-Party President*Target is Taiwan			0.23 (0.34)
τ_1	-0.83 (0.28)	-0.34 (0.18)	-0.89 (0.30)
τ_2	0.17 (0.28)	0.66 (0.18)	0.12 (0.30)
τ_3	0.64 (0.28)	1.12 (0.19)	0.60 (0.30)
τ_4	1.35 (0.30)	1.81 (0.22)	1.30 (0.32)
N	226	226	226

Table A6: China, Taiwan, Cambodia and Audience Costs. Note: cell entries are ordered probit regression coefficients with associated standard errors underneath. Coefficients that can be distinguished from 0 at conventional levels are given in **bold**.

Table A6 shows that the specific scenario does not seem to change the findings reported in the paper: audience costs are still non-partisan.⁸ What's arguably more surprising is that the specific details don't seem to matter much either. In particular, note that the target state never has an effect on the outcome—voters punish the president to the same extent when he backs down supporting Taiwan as they do when he's supporting Cambodia. Further, note that there is no interactive effect with the presidential partisanship factor either. The only significant effect is threat perception: voters who perceive China to be a serious threat to the U.S. are less likely to approve across all conditions. The important finding from our perspective, however, is that we replicate a main finding from the paper (the non-partisan nature of audience costs) in a specific setting.

Priming Partisanship

To ensure that the design of our experiment did not overly influence our non-partisan findings, we conducted a follow-up experiment where we tried to subtly prime subject's partisanship. The experiment was conducted online using the Mechanical Turk service on 5-6 October 2010; the sample is 56% Democratic, 60% female, 40% under age 30, 55% are college graduates, and 84% Caucasian.

To prime subject's partisanship, we ask one-half of the sample to give us their retrospective opinion about whether (considering the costs) it was worth it to go to war in

⁸ To simplify matters, in the China experiment all respondents were told the President backed down. The analysis therefore explores variations in approval (based on the factors in the scenario) conditional on backing down.

Iraq and Afghanistan.⁹ The other half is asked a retrospective probe about the last time they ate out at a restaurant (and serves as the control group). Because subjects are randomly assigned to the treatment (Iraq/Afghanistan probes) or the control (restaurant probe), we can examine how the treatment affects the subsequent response to the audience cost scenario. Asking about Iraq and Afghanistan is an excellent way to prime partisanship, given their deep connection (Jacobson 2010).

After answering the primes, subjects then saw the standard audience cost scenario (the president either backed down or stayed out of the conflict), with no additional information provided. We therefore have a 2x2 factorial design (partisan prime/not x back down/stay out). Table A7 gives the results.

	No Prime	Prime
President Backs Down	-1.02 (0.21)	-1.07 (0.21)
Democratic Respondent	0.35 (0.20)	0.89 (0.20)
τ_1	-1.79 (0.22)	-1.26 (0.21)
τ_2	-0.34 (0.18)	0.05 (0.18)
τ_3	0.50 (0.18)	1.04 (0.20)
τ_4	1.78 (0.27)	2.06 (0.26)

⁹ Here is the text of the relevant survey item: All in all, considering the costs and benefits, do you think the situation in Iraq was worth going to war over, or not? [Definitely worth going to war/ Probably worth going to war/ Unsure/ Probably not worth going to war/ Definitely worth going to war]

What about the war in Afghanistan? All in all, considering the costs and benefits, do you think the situation in Afghanistan was worth going to war over, or not? [Definitely worth going to war/ Probably worth going to war/ Unsure/ Probably not worth going to war/ Definitely worth going to war]

N	123	129
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Table A7: Effects of Partisan Prime on Support for Conflict

Note: Cell entries are ordered probit coefficients; coefficients that can be distinguished from 0 at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level (two-tailed) are given in **bold**.

The findings here show that the effect of partisanship in the primed condition is much larger, nearly 1.5 times larger. The unprimed subjects do not have a partisan effect, but the primed subjects do. If we pool the data and included an interaction effect to see if the effect of partisanship was larger in the primed condition, the effect would be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This is the first indication that partisanship can matter, under the right circumstances. The president can suppress the influence of partisanship by invoking national interest considerations in the typical audience cost scenario. But here, by cueing subjects with a subtle prime, partisan considerations can intervene.

One limitation of the prime used above is that it is rather subtle, asking subjects about their partisanship indirectly. What happens when we more directly prime partisanship? We conducted an additional supplemental experiment where we directly named the president in the scenario to more directly prime partisanship (subjects were shown either “the President”, as in the scenario used in the experiments in the body of the paper, “President Obama”, or “President George W. Bush”; we thank an anonymous referee for making this suggestion to us). All subjects saw the president back down, the manipulation here concerns differential responsiveness to the party cue (so this is 1 x 3 factorial experiment). The experiment took place on 18 – 20 April 2011; the sample was 52% Democratic, 55% female, 50% were under 30 years or age, 45% were college graduates, and 82% were Caucasian. Table A8 gives the results.

Same-Party President	0.33 (0.18)
Opposite-Party President	0.11 (0.18)
τ_1	-0.85 (0.15)
τ_1	0.68 (0.15)
τ_1	1.23 (0.16)
τ_1	2.16 (0.22)
N	218

Table A8: Effects of Explicit Party Names on Approval

Note: Cell entries are ordered probit regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses.

Table A8 shows that subjects do respond in a more partisan manner when the president is directly named: when seeing the same party-president (e.g., when a Democrat is told President Obama backs down), they punish him less, consistent with our theory. There is no effect for opposite-party presidents (same-party presidents are punished less than opposite-party ones, though the difference is only marginally significant). So given a more direct partisan prime, subjects respond in a more partisan prime.

Yet we would also point out, however, that even here, the partisan response is far from overwhelming, consistent with our argument about that the non-partisan logic of audience costs. For example, a number of previous studies have asked subjects to evaluate candidates or policies either unlabeled or with party labels present (i.e., candidates are not given party labels or are labeled Democrat and Republican; policies are attributed to “some people” vs. “Democrat” or “Republican,” etc.). In these experiments, they typically find large and pronounced party effects (see, among others,

Rahn 1993, Van Houweling and Sniderman 2007; for a cogent review of this literature, see Bullock Forthcoming 2011). But here, even with a very explicit party label (and other factors, see the discussion below), we still only find relatively modest party effects. This underlines our argument about the unique nature of the audience cost scenario.

One limitation of this sort of design, however, is that these results will be based not only on partisanship (our key variable) but also on affect toward these leaders. While this inevitably colors how subjects respond in the real world, it also makes it very difficult to disentangle the role of partisanship qua partisanship in our experiments. This point directly parallels the point we made above in the discussion of the China scenario: we want to understand the general baseline dynamics of our audience costs scenario, rather than the dynamics facing President Obama in some particular situation. Our interest as social scientists is in explaining the general patterns of behavior, not the idiosyncrasies of a particular case (see Hermann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999 for more on this point). Given this, we present these results here as a robustness check, but still prefer our more direct results given in the body of the paper.

Together, these results show that it is possible to get respondents to respond in a partisan manner in our experiments, by either indirectly or directly priming their partisanship. The overall effect is modest, however, compared to the relative impact of partisanship in general in other contexts. So our non-partisan results cannot simply be attributed to subjects never wanting to respond in a partisan manner in this sort of experiment.

Moving forward, another important point of investigation is to examine the role of political context in priming partisanship. As we discussed in the paper, this may well be

an important source of variation in the influence of partisanship on audience costs. While we suspect our theory holds across a wide variety of circumstances, the political context (as we explained in the paper) likely impacts how non-partisan subjects will be.¹⁰ This would be broadly consistent with our contextual theory of partisan effects, though we leave testing this sort of proposition for future work.

The Role of Iraq/Afghanistan Attitudes

One might naturally wonder what role attitudes toward Iraq and Afghanistan play in shaping respondents' approval of the president's decision. Given the salience of both conflicts, perhaps some respondents see our scenarios through the lens of these ongoing military operations, which could affect our results. Using the data described above in the priming partisanship experiment (see table A7), we can see if the ongoing Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts colored how subjects saw the war.

Table A9 shows how attitudes toward the Iraq/Afghanistan conflicts shape audience costs.

Variables	Estimates	Estimates
President Backs Down	-1.02 (0.20)	-0.74 (0.44)
Support Iraq/Afghanistan Wars	-0.26 (0.08)	-0.21 (0.11)
President Backs Down*Support Iraq/Afghanistan Wars		-0.11 (0.15)
τ_1	-2.39	-2.25

¹⁰ We suspect that, for example, that asking about this sort of scenario during a pitched election battle, like a presidential or congressional election, might cause citizens to respond in a more partisan manner. This is a likely explanation for why Trager and Vavreck (Forthcoming) find a more partisan response in a similar scenario administered during the 2006 and 2008 CCES surveys.

	(0.31)	(0.37)
τ_2	-1.13 (0.26)	-0.99 (0.33)
τ_3	-0.18 (0.25)	-0.04 (0.32)
τ_4	0.79 (0.28)	0.93 (0.35)
N	129	129

Table A9: Attitudes about Iraq and Afghanistan and Audience Costs. Note: See table A3 above for additional details.

Table A9 reveals that while there is a direct effect war support on audience costs, there is no interactive effect with the decision to back down. This parallels our findings in the body of the paper about hawkishness: there is a main effect, but not an interactive one. Subjects who support the Iraq/Afghanistan wars are less supportive overall, but there is no difference in how they feel about backing down or staying out of conflicts, they see both as weak. This suggests that Iraq/Afghanistan attitudes are not a primary driver of audience costs.

Differentiating the Effects of Presidential Justification and Military Intelligence

One concern readers might have with our presidential justification treatment point is that it contains two different ideas: (1) the president justifying his decision on the basis of national interest, and (2) backing up that assertion with military intelligence (see the above for the specific item wording). So part of the effect we find in our original experiment might therefore be due to the intelligence, rather than just the presidential justification (we thank an anonymous reviewer for making this point to us).

We initially included the line about military intelligence in our presidential justification scenario because we wanted to be as realistic as possible. When president justify these sorts of decisions, they inevitably turn to their military leaders and the

intelligence offered to them.¹¹ This is the logic underlying the “elasticity of reality” that explains why presidents have a first-mover advantage in foreign policy in Baum and Potter (2008) and Baum and Groeling (2011): because the president has access to information not available to other actors or the general public, he has a unique ability to drive how the public understands and responds to the crisis in its early days. Given this, we felt it was more realistic to have the president offer intelligence-based justification for his decision in our original experiment.¹²

But we also recognize that this decision contaminates our results, so we ran an additional supplemental experiment where we could disentangle the effects of justification and military intelligence. The experiment was conducted on 7 April 2011 via Amazon’s Mechanical Turk; the sample is 56% female, 65% are ages 18-40, and 49% have at least a bachelor’s degree. In all conditions, subjects were exposed to the standard audience cost scenario where the president backs down (so making a threat and then backing down are held constant in this experiment). Subjects were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (1) the president offers no justification for his decision to back down (control), (2) the president offers the justification including military intelligence (as in the original experiment in the body of the paper), and (3) the president justifies his decision in terms of national interest, but does not reference military intelligence.¹³ The

¹¹ For example, President Bush referenced military intelligence (and classified CIA documents) to justify his actions in Iraq, see CNN (2003).

¹² Further, our original intent was to test the hypothesis originally offered by Gowa (1999): does the public give the president credit when backing down is the correct decision? We only know if it is the correct decision when the intelligence indicates that.

¹³ The relevant part of the scenario reads: A country sent its military to take over a neighboring country. The President of the United States said that if the attack continued, the U.S. military would push out the invaders. He sent troops to the region and prepared them for war.

key contrast is therefore between conditions (2) and (3): is there less of an effect of offering the reduced justification. Table A10 offers the results.

	Estimate
Justification plus Intelligence	0.85 (0.17)
Justification Alone	0.44 (0.17)
τ_1	-0.81 (0.13)
τ_2	0.43 (0.13)
τ_3	1.03 (0.14)
τ_4	2.45 (0.21)
N	249

Table A10: Effects of Different Presidential Justifications on Approval

Note: Cell entries are ordered probit regression coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses, coefficients that can be distinguished from 0 are given in bold.

Note that both the original justification and the reduced justification increase presidential approval, relative to the control (no justification) condition. This suggests that our original findings are driven at least in part by the president's justification, rather than just the intelligence itself. But note that the effect of the justification with the

The attacking country continued to invade. [(Blank)/ The U.S. President then received new intelligence suggesting involvement is not in America's interests. Military experts agreed that the U.S. should not become involved in this crisis/ The U.S. President then announced that upon further review and consultation with his advisers, he decided that involvement was not in America's national interest]. The President then withdrew U.S. troops without sending them into battle. The attacking country then took over its neighbor.

Do you approve, disapprove, or neither approve nor disapprove of the way the U.S. president handled this situation?

military intelligence is larger than the effect of the justification without it ($p < 0.05$). In the raw data, while only 16% approve or strongly approve of the president's decision in the no justification condition, 30% approve with the justification without intelligence, and 40% approve when the justification references military intelligence. So both the decision to offer a justification for backing down, and the evidentiary support for that decision, drive public support for the president's decision.

This offers indirect support for the arguments Baum and Potter (2008) and Baum and Groeling (2011) make: the president can increase support for his decision by appealing to the sorts of evidence to which only he has access (here, military intelligence). This is highly consistent with our theoretical argument that the president can affect how citizens perceive the crisis in the early days in light of his decisions.

The Electoral Dimension of Audience Costs

One concern with our main dependent variable (as indicated in a footnote) is that we measure changes in popularity, rather than looking at survival in office. As we explained in the body of the paper, there are good reasons for using popularity to evaluate the audience costs argument, and that even short-term changes in presidential approval are likely to be quite consequential. But that said, one might wonder if subjects would be willing to *electorally* punish leaders (as the original theory suggests they will).

We investigated this possibility in an additional supplemental experiment (conducted via Mechanical Turk on 14-15 April 2011). 253 subjects agreed to take part in the study; the sample is 54% female, 47% under 30 years of age, 45% are college graduates, and 78% are Caucasian. In this study, subjects were shown the standard

audience cost scenario described above (where the president either announces the U.S. will stay out of the crisis (control) or mobilizes troops, but then backs down). In lieu of asking for their approval, they are asked whether this decision would affect the likelihood they would vote for the president.¹⁴ Table A11 gives the results.

President Backs Down	-0.85 (0.14)
τ_1	-1.66 (0.14)
τ_2	-0.51 (0.11)
τ_3	0.39 (0.11)
τ_4	1.14 (0.13)
N	253

Table A11: Electoral Audience Costs

Note: Cell entries are ordered probit coefficients with associated standard errors in parentheses.

Note that when the president backs down, subjects become markedly less likely to vote for him in the next election: the coefficient in table A11 is both statistically significant and substantively large. Just looking at the raw data, 26% of subjects are less likely to vote for the president when he stays out of the conflict. But this figure increases by a factor of 2.5 to 66% when the president backs down. Backing down carries electoral consequences for the president, which is consistent with our argument in the paper, as well as previous work on the topic.

We would emphasize, however, that these electoral findings have some limits in

¹⁴ The specific item is “If a president who had made this decision were running for re-election, would this make you more or less likely to vote for him?” The response options were “much more likely to vote for him”, “more likely to vote for him”, “no effect on vote choice”, “less likely to vote for him”, “much less likely to vote for him”.

terms of external validity. Asking subjects about a hypothetical leader, running against an unknown challenger presents a controlled but highly unrealistic scenario. In the real world, factors like partisanship, issue positions, economic performance, etc. largely drive vote choice (see Miller and Shanks 1996). So in the real world, the effects of a given foreign policy decision would be quite small; the large effects seen in table A10 above are likely a consequence of the artificiality of the scenario. That said, however, the results above show that our findings in the body of the paper are simply the product of the choice of a particular dependent variable.

Appendix 5: Evolution of Attitudes Toward China in the 1940s-1950s

In the paper, we discussed the evolution of U.S. attitudes toward China and Taiwan over the course of the late 1940s and 1950s. The data used in this example comes from three studies archived in the Roper Center for Public Opinion research. The 1948 and 1951 data come from foreign affairs conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), and the 1958 data comes from the Gallup organization.

In 1948, respondents were asked: “In China there is a serious civil war now going on between the Communists and the Chinese government. Do you approve or disapprove of our sending military supplies to help the Chinese government against the Communists?” We use this as our measure of support for intervention in China. Because the standard NES 7-point party ID scale was in use in 1948, we use a vote intention item to gauge party support: “At the present time, which party do you favor in the election for President next Fall—the Democrats, the Republicans, or the Wallace Third Party?” and analyzing those who respond either Democrat or Republican.

In 1951, respondents were asked: “Would you approve or disapprove of the United States giving the Chinese Nationalist government under Chiang Kai-shek all the help it needs to attack the Communists on the mainland of China?” To assess partisanship, we use: “In politics today, do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, or do you favor some other party?”

In 1958, respondents were asked: “Should the United States go to war for Formosa?” (The question was preceded by a screener item about whether the respondent

followed the news about the potential for war with China over the islands of Quemoy, Matsu, and Taiwan; only those who responded that they knew about the risk of war were asked the question about Formosa we analyzed in the paper). We assess party ID using two items: “In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?,” with Independents asked a follow-up item: “As of today, do you lean a little more to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?”

We acknowledge that the wording of these items is not identical, so we cannot draw strong inferences about the evolution of support for Taiwan over time. That said, we can draw a suggestive inference about the evolution of support over time, both in the aftermath of a decision to stay out (in the late 1940s) and then later after the emergence of an elite partisan division (in the 1950s).

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