

# **Analytic Confidence and Political Decision Making**

## ***Supporting Information***

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## 1. Full text of vignettes and experimental manipulations

Below we present the full text of each scenario, with experimental manipulations embedded. In addition, we randomized the ordering of the three conceptions of confidence.

### *Hostage rescue scenario*

The U.S. military is searching for five American citizens held hostage by a rebel group overseas. They receive information suggesting that the hostages are being held in a rural compound. Analysts can tell that the compound is being used by the rebel group, but they have difficulty confirming that the hostages are present. Special forces officers expect that a raid on the compound will meet armed resistance. They do not want to put their soldiers in harm's way if the hostages are not present, but if they delay action too long, the rebels might move the hostages to a different location.

After careful deliberation, a group of intelligence analysts assesses that there is a [60 / 75] percent chance that the hostages are being held inside this compound. The analysts explain that they have [little / a large amount of] reliable evidence on which to base their judgment; that there is [minimal / significant] disagreement among them about the chances that the hostages are present; and that they [do not believe their assessment would substantially change / believe their assessment could substantially change] if they continue to investigate the compound.

### *Drone strike scenario*

U.S. intelligence officials are attempting to locate a high-ranking terrorist. Drone operators say that they have found a man who meets their target's description. He is driving alone, in a deserted area. However, it is always difficult to confirm a target's identity using remote surveillance. U.S. officials worry that the man could be an innocent civilian, and analysts cannot rule out this possibility. At the

same time, if the target is indeed a high-ranking terrorist, then delaying a strike could give him a chance to escape.

After careful deliberation, a group of intelligence analysts assesses that there is a [80 / 95] percent chance that this man is a high-ranking terrorist. The analysts explain that they have [little / a large amount of] reliable evidence on which to base their judgment; that there is [minimal / significant] disagreement among them about the chances that the target is a civilian; and that they [do not believe their assessment would substantially change / believe their assessment could substantially change] if they continue to track this suspect.

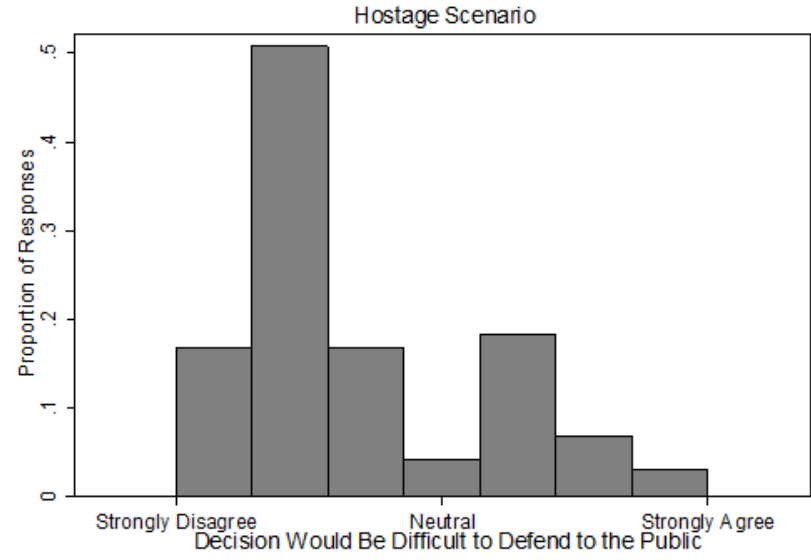
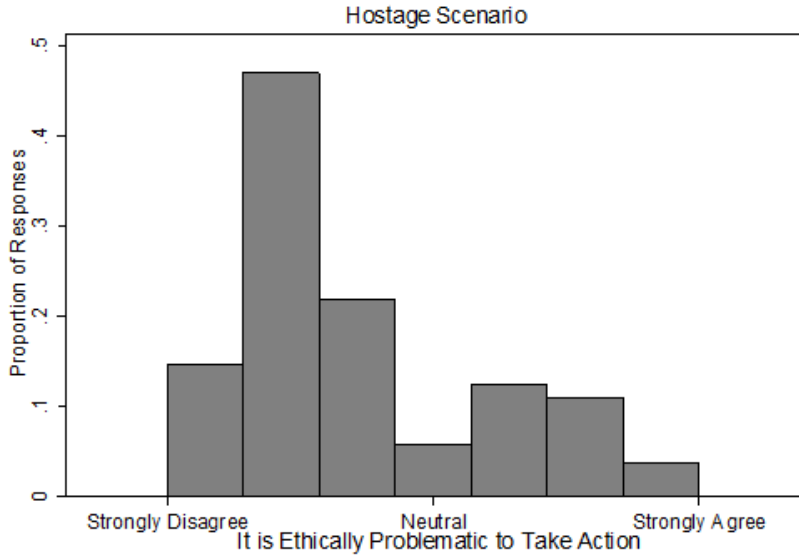
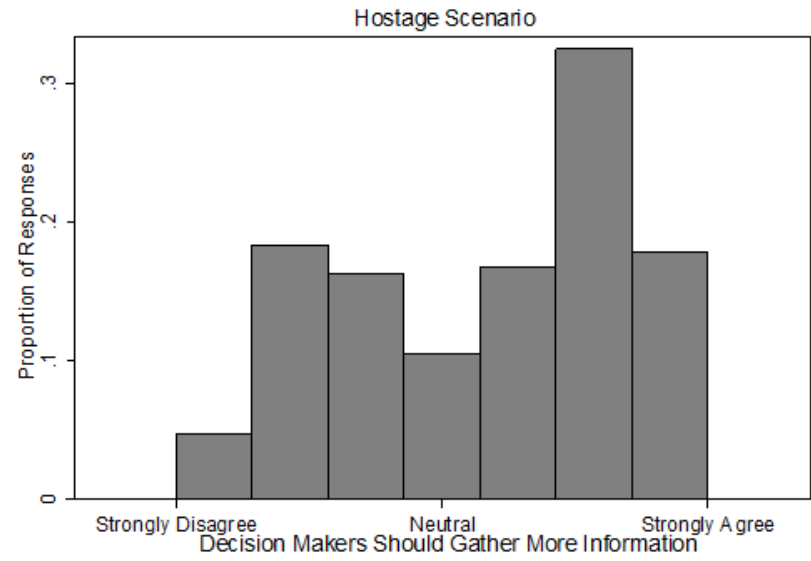
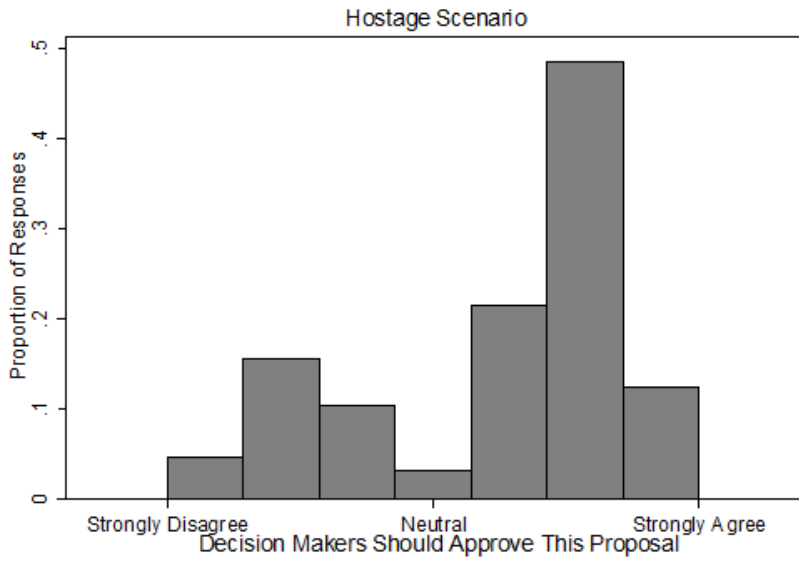
### *Terrorism scenario*

U.S. intelligence analysts receive information about a potential terrorist attack. Informants warn that terrorists plan to use a new form of explosive that is extremely difficult to detect against several flights departing from California. They say that the plotters are already inside the United States and that they could strike at any time. Yet analysts have reasons to doubt that the plot is real. In particular, terrorists may be planting false information to trick the U.S. government into restricting air travel, which would cause panic and economic damage.

After careful deliberation, a group of intelligence analysts assesses that there is a [10 / 25] percent chance that the plot is real. The analysts explain that they have [little / a large amount of] reliable evidence on which to base their judgment; that there is [minimal / significant] disagreement among them about the chances that the plot is real; and that they [do not believe their assessment would substantially change / believe their assessment could substantially change] if they continue to investigate the plot.

## 2. Distribution of responses to scenarios

Figures S1a-S1c present the distribution of responses for the four evaluations we elicited on each scenario.



**Figure S1a. Responses to hostage rescue scenario**

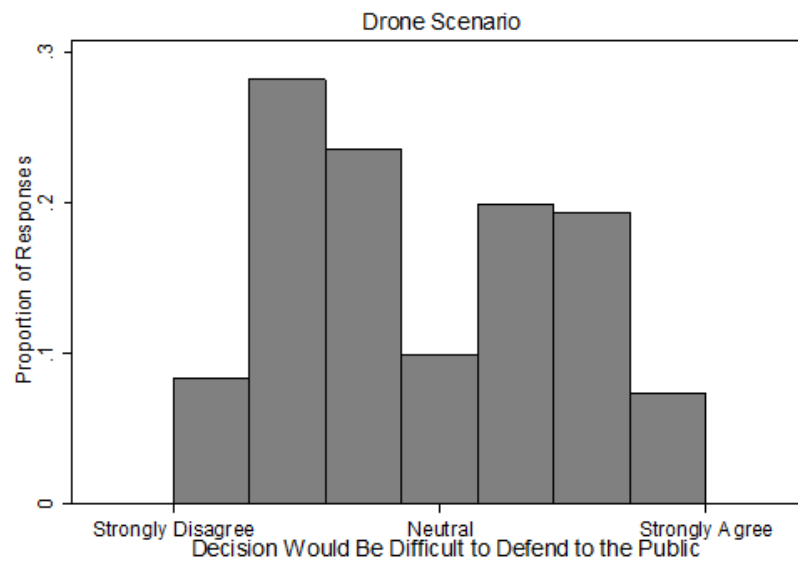
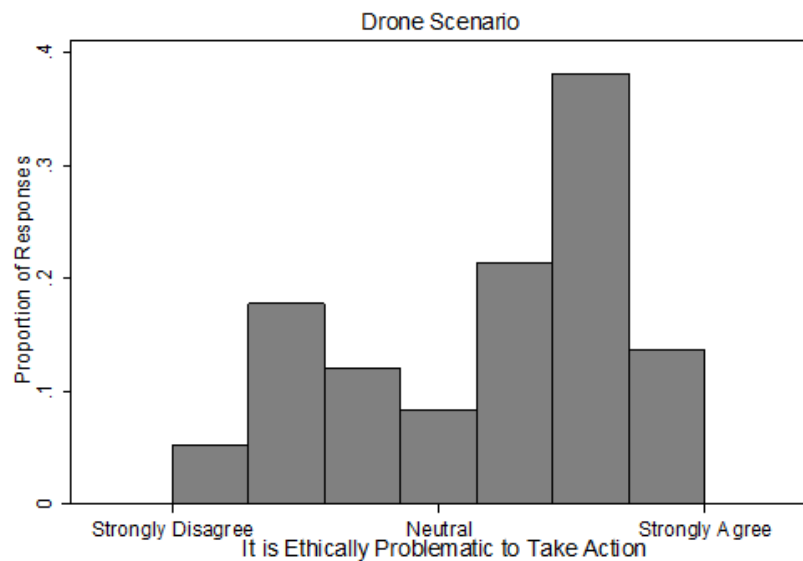
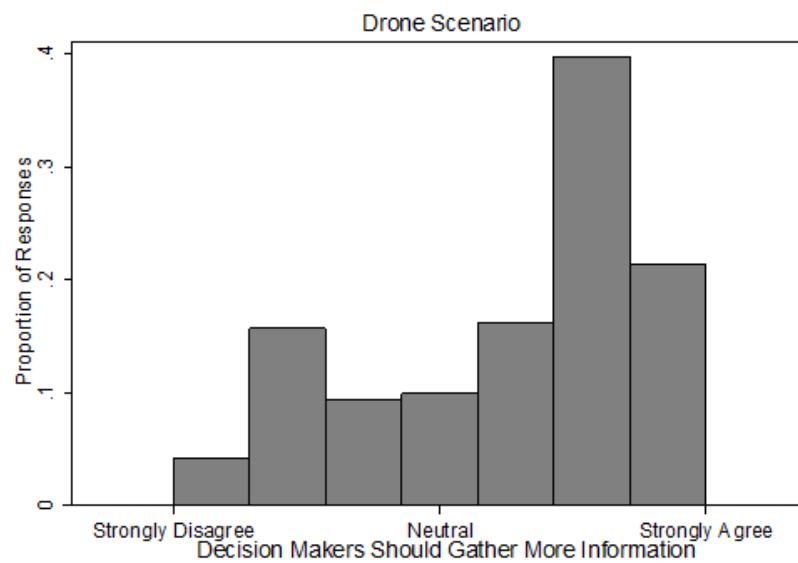
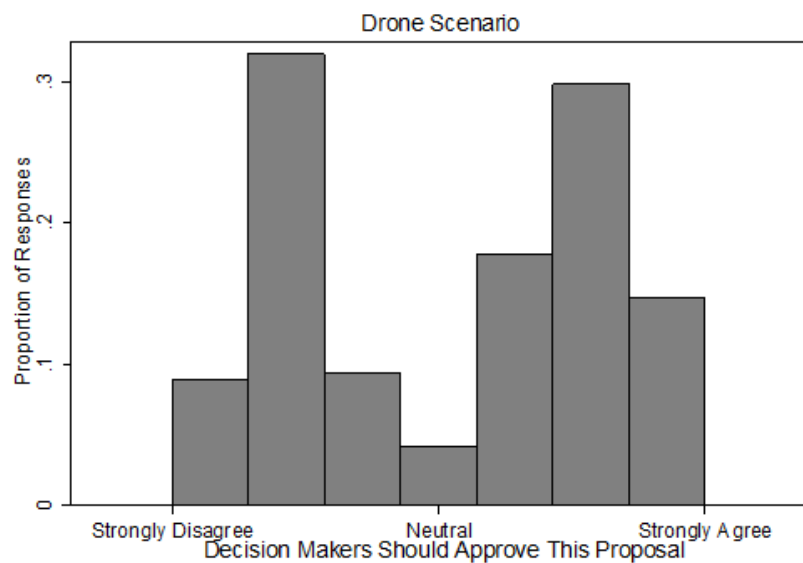


Figure S1b. Responses to drone strike scenario

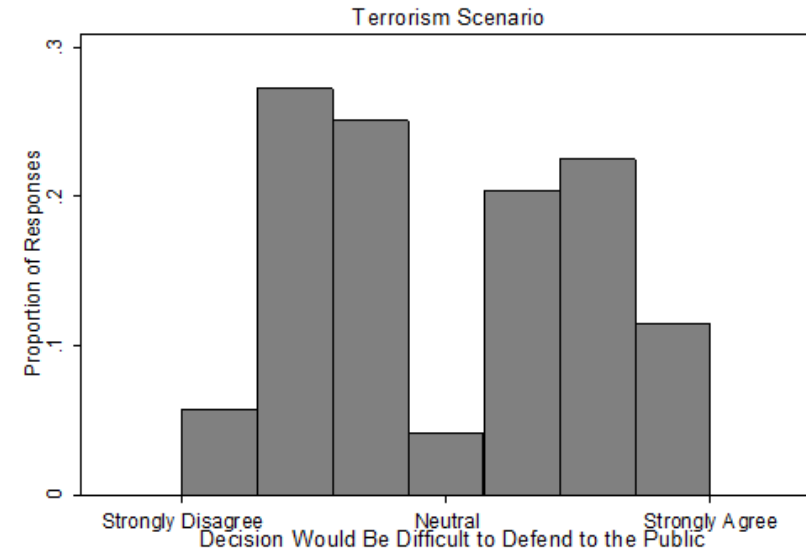
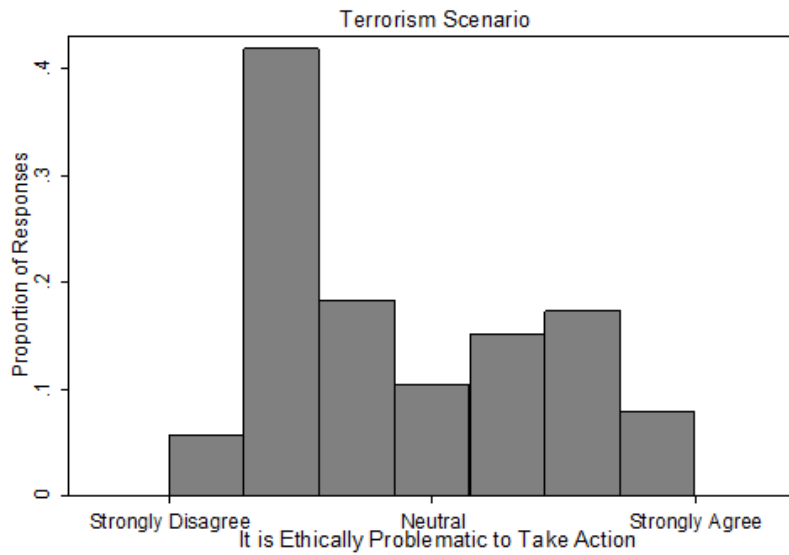
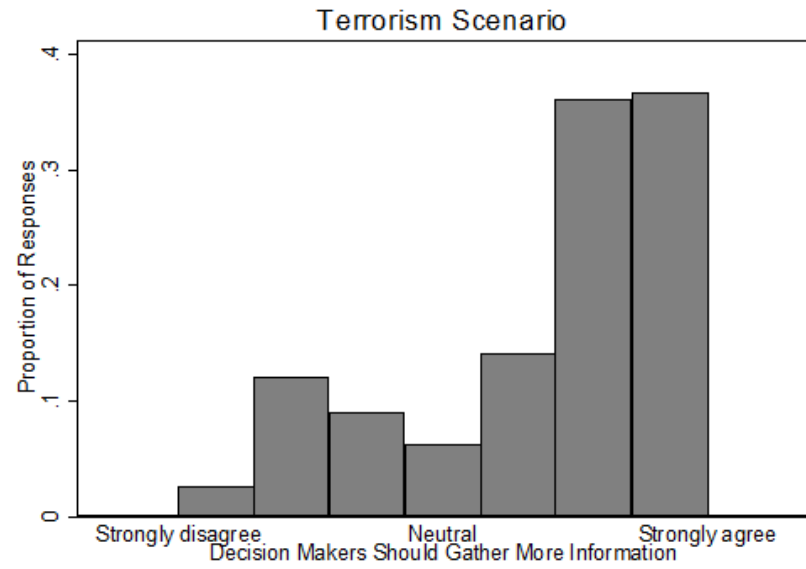
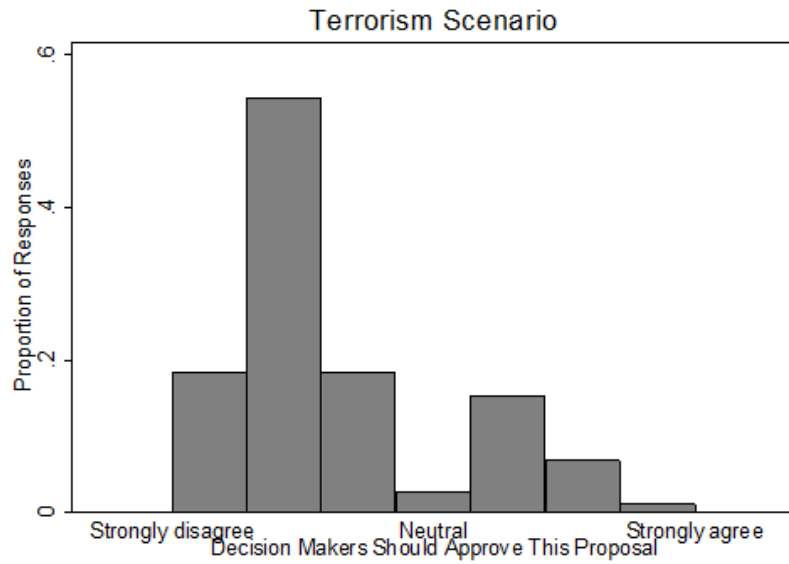


Figure S1c. Responses to terrorism scenario

### 3. Full results for survey experiment 2

The main text of the paper summarized ordinary least squares regressions predicting responses to our first survey experiment. Here are the full results for that analysis. We include respondent fixed effects (not shown) and cluster standard errors by respondent.

	<i>Model 1</i> DV: Support for taking action	<i>Model 2</i> DV: Willingness to delay action	<i>Model 3</i> DV: Decision is ethically problematic	<i>Model 4</i> DV: Decision is politically problematic
Probability	0.82 (.13)***	-0.53 (.13)***	-0.38 (.13)**	-0.51 (.13)***
Reliability	0.25 (.13)	-0.28 (.13)*	-0.28 (.14)*	-0.46 (.13)***
Disagreement	0.39 (.13)**	-0.46 (.13)***	-0.30 (.13)*	-0.38 (.12)**
Responsiveness	0.27 (.13)*	-0.59 (.15)***	-0.05 (.14)	-0.14 (.13)
Hostage	2.19 (.15)***	-0.79 (.15)***	-0.60 (.13)***	-1.14 (.14)***
Drone	1.53 (.17)***	-0.48 (.16)**	1.01 (.17)***	-0.28 (.16)
Constant	1.79 (.16)***	6.31 (.18)***	4.13 (.18)***	4.82 (.18)***
N	669	669	669	669
R <sup>2</sup> (overall)	0.27	0.09	0.15	0.12

Table S1 presents ordinary least squares regressions predicting reactions to national security decisions. All dependent variables are measured on 7-point scales. Respondent fixed effects not shown. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Standard errors clustered by respondent.

**Table S1. Responses to national security scenarios (OLS)**



#### 4. Alternative specifications for survey experiment 1

The following tables present alternative specifications for survey experiment 1. We begin by estimating treatment effects using ordered logit. Compared to the results shown in Table S1, the only two substantial changes are that the coefficient for *Responsiveness* loses statistical significance in Model 1 ( $p=0.09$ ), and the coefficient for *Reliability* loses statistical significance in Model 2 ( $p=0.06$ ), but neither of these changes would influence our main conclusions, and in both cases  $p$ -values still fall close to standard significance thresholds.

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
	DV: Support for taking action	DV: Willingness to delay action	DV: Decision is ethically problematic	DV: Decision is politically problematic
Probability	0.94 (.15) <sup>***</sup>	-0.67 (.16) <sup>***</sup>	-0.46 (.15) <sup>**</sup>	-0.62 (.15) <sup>***</sup>
Reliability	0.25 (.14)	-0.32 (.15) <sup>*</sup>	-0.29 (.16)	-0.54 (.15) <sup>***</sup>
Disagreement	0.46 (.13) <sup>***</sup>	-0.49 (.17) <sup>**</sup>	-0.35 (.15) <sup>*</sup>	-0.47 (.14) <sup>***</sup>
Responsiveness	0.24 (.14)	-0.80 (.17) <sup>***</sup>	-0.08 (.16)	-0.15 (.16)
Hostage	2.20 (.16) <sup>***</sup>	-1.03 (.18) <sup>***</sup>	-0.73 (.16) <sup>***</sup>	-1.41 (.17) <sup>***</sup>
Drone	1.55 (.20) <sup>***</sup>	-0.73 (.20) <sup>***</sup>	1.07 (.20) <sup>***</sup>	-0.31 (.18)
Cut points	-0.54, 1.59, 2.16, 2.31, 3.14, 5.10	-5.80, -3.82, -3.11, -2.65, -1.92, -0.14	-3.58, -1.16, -0.37, 0.00, 0.83, 2.63	-4.36, -2.03, -1.06, -0.78, 0.25, 1.77
N	669	669	669	669

Table S2 presents ordered logit models predicting reactions to national security decisions. All dependent variables are measured on 7-point scales. Respondent fixed effects not shown. \*  $p<0.05$ , \*\*  $p<0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p<0.001$ . Standard errors clustered by respondent.

**Table S2. Responses to national security scenarios (ordered logit)**

Next, we estimate experimental treatments using simple two-way t-tests. This is a less credible way to estimate quantities of interest: since our central claim is that respondents will process conceptions of confidence simultaneously, we believe that the most appropriate way to test this hypothesis is to use multivariate regression. As all experimental treatments were randomized, however, we can plausibly examine these results in isolation. As with Table S2, these results sustain the same conclusions presented in the paper.

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
	DV: Support for taking action	DV: Willingness to delay action	DV: Decision is ethically problematic	DV: Decision is politically problematic
Reliability	0.27 ( $p=0.08$ )	-0.28 ( $p=0.05$ )	-0.28 ( $p=0.06$ )	-0.46 ( $p=0.001$ )
Disagreement	0.38 ( $p=0.01$ )	-0.44 ( $p=0.002$ )	-0.33 ( $p=0.02$ )	-0.43 ( $p=0.002$ )
Responsiveness	0.27 ( $p=0.08$ )	-0.61 ( $p<0.001$ )	-0.05 ( $p=0.71$ )	-0.15 ( $p=0.29$ )

Table S3 presents treatment effects estimated using two-way t-tests, describing how varying each conception of confidence changed response measures, on average.

**Table S3. Responses to national security scenarios (two-way t-tests)**

Table S4 replicates our previous multivariate findings without respondent fixed effects. All coefficients and standard errors are substantively similar, though this causes the  $p$ -values for *Reliability* ( $p=0.041$  to  $p=0.053$ ) and *Disagreement* ( $p=0.027$  to  $p=0.064$ ) to fall just over the standard threshold for statistical significance in Model 3.

	<i>Model 1</i> DV: Support for taking action	<i>Model 2</i> DV: Willingness to delay action	<i>Model 3</i> DV: Decision is ethically problematic	<i>Model 4</i> DV: Decision is politically problematic
Probability	0.82 (.13)***	-0.50 (.14)***	-0.34 (.13)*	-0.53 (.13)***
Reliability	0.25 (.13)	-0.28 (.14)*	-0.27 (.14)	-0.46 (.13)***
Disagreement	0.38 (.13)**	-0.43 (.14)**	-0.26 (.14)	-0.41 (.13)**
Responsiveness	0.27 (.13)*	-0.60 (.15)***	-0.03 (.14)	-0.14 (.13)
Hostage	2.20 (.15)***	-0.79 (.15)***	-0.60 (.13)***	-1.14 (.14)***
Drone	1.53 (.17)***	-0.48 (.16)**	1.01 (.17)***	-0.29 (.16)
Constant	1.79 (.16)***	6.29 (.18)***	4.08 (.19)***	4.83 (.18)***
N	669	669	669	669
R <sup>2</sup> (overall)	0.27	0.09	0.15	0.12

Table S4 presents ordinary least squares regressions predicting reactions to national security decisions. All dependent variables are measured on 7-point scales. \*  $p<0.05$ , \*\*  $p<0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p<0.001$ . Standard errors clustered by respondent.

**Table S4. Responses to national security scenarios (OLS, no respondent fixed effects)**

## 5. Complete wording of questions for survey experiment 2

Below we present the wording and formatting of each question as they appeared to respondents in our survey. There are 20 questions in total. Each respondents answered a randomly-selected subset of 10 questions, presented in random order.

We also posed an attention check question asking what are the chances that two plus two equals four, and instructing respondents to answer 100 percent. Ninety-seven percent of respondents passed this attention check. Our results are robust to excluding the remaining respondents from the data set.

1. In your opinion, what are the chances that **Hillary Clinton will win the 2016 presidential election?** A recent RealClearPolitics poll puts Clinton five points ahead of Donald Trump, but polls have previously underestimated Trump's performance.
2. In your opinion, what are the chances that **the U.S. Senate will approve President Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland to the U.S. Supreme Court by the end of 2016?** Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has vowed not to hold a vote on this issue, but some Republican Senators have said that they are willing to consider his nomination.
3. In your opinion, what are the chances that **President Barack Obama's approval rating will be above 50% at the end of 2016?** Obama's approval rating is currently at 51% according to Gallup.
4. In your opinion, what are the chances that **the U.S. unemployment rate will be below 5% at the end of 2016?** The U.S. unemployment rate is roughly 5.5% today, down from a high of roughly 10% in 2009.

5. In your opinion, what are the chances that **a federal court will restore the Washington Redskins trademark by the end of 2016?** The U.S. Patent Office canceled the Redskins' trademark on the grounds that the name is offensive. The football team appealed this ruling, arguing that many other controversial brand names currently receive trademark protection.
6. In your opinion, what are the chances that **a third party candidate will win more than 10% of the popular vote in the 2016 presidential election?** The last third-party presidential candidate to achieve this feat was Ross Perot, who won 19% of the popular vote in 1992.
7. In your opinion, what are the chances that **the U.S. Congress will pass any restriction on access to firearms by the end of 2016?** Pressure has been building for such measures in recent years, but the Senate recently voted against several gun control proposals.
8. In your opinion, what are the chances that **the average price of a gallon of regular, unleaded gasoline in the United States will still be below \$2.50 at the end of 2016?** That price is currently about \$2.30.
9. In your opinion, what are the chances that **a military court will sentence U.S. Army Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl to more than five years of imprisonment?** Bergdahl is currently facing courtmartial for leaving his post in Afghanistan and he is subject to a potential life sentence.
10. In your opinion, what are the chances that **the global average temperature will be warmer in 2016 than it was in 2015?** 2015 was the hottest year on record, but climate skeptics say this was an exception rather than a trend.
11. In your opinion, what are the chances that **Britain will formally exit the European Union by the end of 2016?** Britain's voters approved a referendum in favor of leaving the EU, but that referendum is nonbinding and the country has no explicit timetable for carrying it out.

12. In your opinion, what are the chances that **Bashar al-Assad will no longer be Syria's president by the end of 2016?** Rebels have sought to oust al-Assad for the past four years, and President Obama has called for him to step down, but the war has recently come to a standstill.

13. In your opinion, what are the chances that **the United States will accept more than 7,500 Syrian refugees by the end of 2016?** President Obama committed to accepting 10,000 Syrian refugees this year, but his administration has only taken about 2,500 Syrian refugees so far, and many voters oppose admitting more.

14. In your opinion, what are the chances that **the United States will close the Guantanamo Bay prison camp by the end of 2016?** President Obama has repeatedly promised to close the prison, but 79 detainees currently remain at the site.

15. In your opinion, what are the chances that **the next United Nations Secretary General (who will be elected in 2016) will be a woman?** The United Nations has never had a female Secretary General and several member states are pushing to consider female nominees in this election.

16. In your opinion, what are the chances that **a terrorist event will kill more than 100 people in the United States by the end of 2016?** No terrorist attack has killed this many people in the United States since 9/11. The Orlando nightclub shooting in June killed 49.

17. In your opinion, what are the chances that **Russia's economy will shrink in 2016?** Russia's economy contracted by 5% in 2015 as a result of falling oil prices and international sanctions for the country's actions in Ukraine.

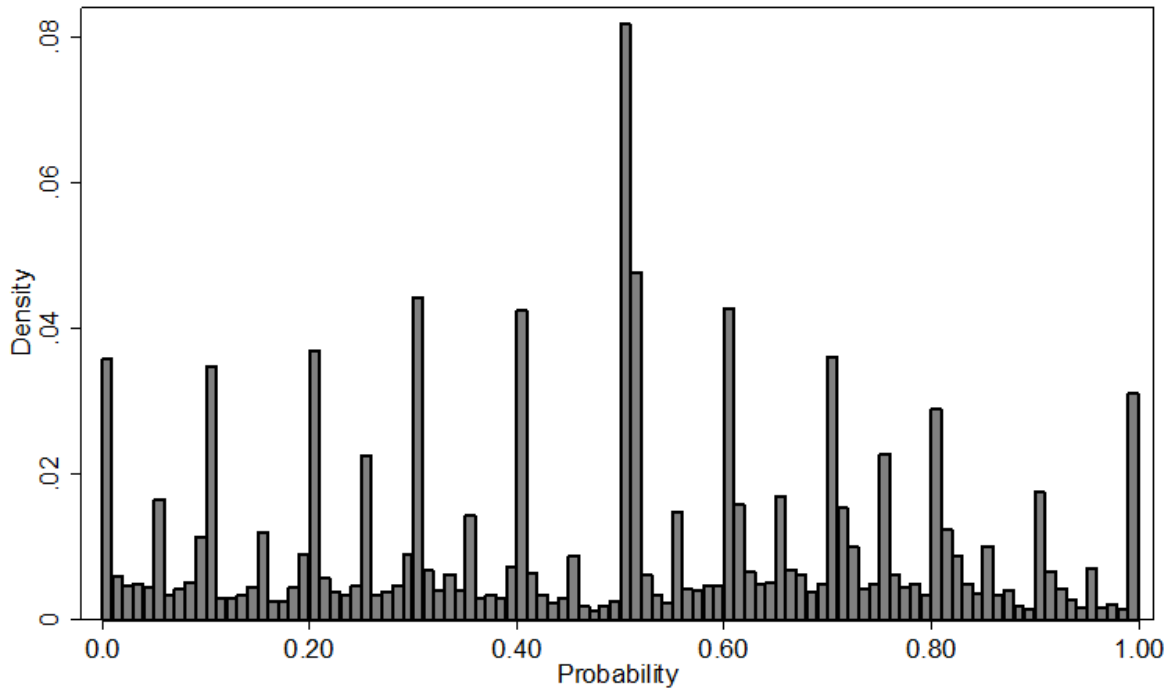
18. In your opinion, what are the chances that **U.S. forces will capture or kill the current head of Al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, by the end of 2016?** The United States killed Al Qaeda's previous leader, Osama bin Laden, in 2011.

19. In your opinion, what are the chances that **Edward Snowden will return to the United States by the end of 2016?** In October 2015, Snowden stated that he would plead guilty to leaking classified documents if the United States government offered him a limited prison sentence.

20. In your opinion, what are the chances that **more than 10 U.S. soldiers will be killed in Iraq in 2016?** The United States currently has roughly 3,500 soldiers stationed in Iraq. Their current mission does not include direct combat, but some critics are pushing the White House to expand that mission.

## 6. Distribution of probability assessments from survey experiment 2

Figure S2 presents a histogram of probability assessments that respondents provided for survey experiment 2. Respondents generally provided probability estimates in intervals of ten or five percentage points, but unlike when eliciting “feeling thermometers” in other areas of survey research, we see no indication that responses cluster at two or three areas of the spectrum.



**Figure S2. Distribution of probability assessments provided by respondents**

Note that, since our method for eliciting probability assessments involved using sliders, respondents often gave values “near” round numbers, and it is likely that some of these responses suggest minor operator error instead of an attempt to offer highly-granular probabilities.

### 7. Additional descriptive statistics from survey experiment 2

In the paper, we briefly presented descriptive statistics indicating the extent to which confidence assessments varied within and across questions. Here, we present those data in more detail.



Range of reasonable opinion

		1	2	3	4	5
Reliability of available evidence	1	4.6%	2.3%	0.8%	0.3%	0.3%
	2	4.8%	8.6%	1.8%	1.1%	0.1%
	3	3.6%	8.3%	7.0%	0.9%	0.1%
	4	7.8%	7.8%	18.9%	5.8%	0.7%
	5	4.1%	4.2%	1.6%	4.5%	2.9%

Correl: 0.27, N=10,000

Responsiveness to new information

		1	2	3	4	5
Reliability of available evidence	1	5.4%	1.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%
	2	6.9%	6.6%	1.4%	1.3%	0.1%
	3	4.7%	7.3%	6.4%	1.2%	0.2%
	4	8.8%	16.3%	5.0%	6.9%	1.2%
	5	3.2%	3.4%	1.6%	4.6%	4.3%

Correl: 0.34, N=10,000

Responsiveness to new information

		1	2	3	4	5
Range of reasonable opinion	1	15.0%	6.0%	1.5%	1.5%	0.8%
	2	11.0%	12.0%	4.7%	4.4%	1.0%
	3	2.1%	5.0%	6.9%	2.2%	0.4%
	4	0.9%	2.9%	1.8%	5.7%	1.5%
	5	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.8%	2.7%

Correl: 0.53, N=10,000

**Figure S3. Correlations between pairs of attributes**

	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Reliability of available evidence</i>	<i>Range of reasonable opinion</i>	<i>Responsiveness to new information</i>	<i>N</i>
1. Hillary Clinton elected President	64.41	3.87	2.24	2.88	517
2. Garland confirmed to Supreme Court	41.88	3.31	2.35	2.39	491
3. Obama approval rating over 50%	57.26	3.63	2.15	2.55	485
4. U.S. unemployment under 5%	40.53	3.56	2.25	2.24	528
5. Washington Redskins trademark restored	40.63	3.16	2.26	2.37	497
6. Third-party nominee wins 10% popular vote	38.98	3.64	2.44	2.54	487
7. Congress passes gun control measure	34.24	3.85	2.47	2.71	512
8. Avg. gasoline price under \$2.50/gallon	58.98	3.48	2.18	2.08	495
9. Bergdahl sentenced to more than five years	56.31	3.00	2.14	1.98	498
10. Avg. global temp. higher in 2016 than in 2015	66.92	4.03	2.77	2.72	533
11. Britain formally exits European Union	59.62	3.82	2.42	2.50	484
12. Assad no longer Syria's president	40.52	2.98	2.15	2.03	516
13. U.S. takes more than 7,500 Syrian refugees	49.83	3.35	2.18	2.16	491
14. U.S. closes Guantanamo Bay prison	34.84	3.42	2.38	2.33	502
15. UN elects female Secretary General	47.37	3.01	2.02	2.04	472
16. Terrorist attack kills >100 Americans	38.12	3.23	2.30	2.57	511
17. Russia's economy contracts in 2016	58.14	3.13	2.19	1.91	465
18. Ayman al-Zawahiri captured or killed	37.44	2.73	2.07	2.06	511
19. Snowden returns to United States	26.34	3.20	2.37	2.33	494
20. More than 10 U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq in 2016	68.26	3.49	2.47	2.34	511
<i>Mean</i>	<i>48.03</i>	<i>3.40</i>	<i>2.29</i>	<i>2.34</i>	<i>10,000</i>
<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>27.29</i>	<i>1.19</i>	<i>1.10</i>	<i>1.22</i>	<i>10,000</i>

Table S5 presents mean assessments of uncertainty for each question that our survey posed. Full question wordings are provided earlier in this supplement. Confidence levels were elicited on 5-point scales. Shading in Table S5 reflects the nearest integer to which mean confidence assessments would be rounded.

**Table S5. Assessments of uncertainty across questions**

8. Full analysis of results from survey experiment 2 (ordinary least squares)

Table S6 presents full results for the analysts of Survey Experiment 2.

	<i>Model 1:</i> Reliability of Available Evidence	<i>Model 2:</i> Range of Reasonable Opinion	<i>Model 3:</i> Responsiveness to New Information
1. Hillary Clinton elected president	0.36 (.05) <sup>***</sup>	-0.47 (.06) <sup>***</sup>	0.63 (.06) <sup>***</sup>
2. Garland confirmed to Supreme Court <sup>†</sup>	-0.09 (.06)	-0.09 (.05)	0.17 (.05) <sup>**</sup>
3. Obama approval rating over 50% <sup>†</sup>	0.20 (.05) <sup>***</sup>	-0.42 (.06) <sup>***</sup>	0.37 (.06) <sup>***</sup>
4. Unemployment rate under 5% <sup>†</sup>	0.16 (.05) <sup>**</sup>	-0.14 (.05) <sup>**</sup>	0.01 (.05)
5. Washington Redskins trademark restored <sup>†</sup>	-0.28 (.06) <sup>***</sup>	-0.16 (.05) <sup>**</sup>	0.21 (.06) <sup>***</sup>
6. Third-party wins 10% presidential vote <sup>†</sup>	0.08 (.06)	-0.16 (.06) <sup>**</sup>	0.14 (.06) <sup>*</sup>
7. Congress passes any gun control measure <sup>†</sup>	0.27 (.05) <sup>***</sup>	-0.20 (.06) <sup>***</sup>	0.29 (.06) <sup>***</sup>
8. Avg. gasoline price under \$2.50/gal <sup>†</sup>	0.18 (.05) <sup>***</sup>	-0.13 (.05) <sup>*</sup>	-0.09 (.05)
9. Bergdahl sentenced to ≥5 years prison	-0.25 (.06) <sup>***</sup>	-0.06 (.05)	-0.07 (.05)
10. Avg. temp. higher in 2016 than 2015	0.44 (.05) <sup>***</sup>	0.10 (.06)	0.16 (.06) <sup>**</sup>
11. Britain formally exits European Union <sup>†</sup>	0.24 (.05) <sup>***</sup>	-0.14 (.06) <sup>*</sup>	0.10 (.06)
12. Bashar al-Assad no longer in power <sup>†</sup>	-0.32 (.06) <sup>***</sup>	-0.11 (.05) <sup>*</sup>	-0.03 (.05)
13. U.S. admits ≥7,500 Syrian refugees <sup>†</sup>	0.00 (.06)	-0.17 (.05) <sup>**</sup>	0.03 (.05)
14. Guantanamo Bay prison camp closed <sup>†</sup>	-0.07 (.05)	-0.08 (.05)	0.03 (.05)
15. UN elects a female Secy. General	-0.15 (.06) <sup>**</sup>	-0.20 (.05) <sup>***</sup>	0.11 (.05) <sup>**</sup>
16. A single terrorist event kills ≥100 in U.S. <sup>†</sup>	-0.30 (.06) <sup>***</sup>	-0.23 (.05) <sup>***</sup>	0.35 (.05) <sup>***</sup>
17. Russia's economy contracts in 2016	-0.08 (.06)	0.01 (.05)	-0.12 (.05) <sup>*</sup>
18. Ayman al-Zawahiri captured or killed <sup>†</sup>	-0.58 (.06) <sup>***</sup>	-0.19 (.05) <sup>***</sup>	0.09 (.05)
19. Edward Snowden returns to United States <sup>†</sup>	-0.34 (.06) <sup>***</sup>	-0.09 (.05)	0.03 (.05)
20. ≥10 U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq in 2016	-	-	-
<i>Certainty (0.0-0.5)</i>	2.09 (.07) <sup>***</sup>	0.65 (.07) <sup>***</sup>	1.15 (.08) <sup>***</sup>
<i>Reliability of available evidence (1-5)</i>	-	0.08 (.01) <sup>***</sup>	0.16 (.01) <sup>***</sup>
<i>Range of reasonable opinion (1-5)</i>	0.10 (.01) <sup>***</sup>	-	0.45 (.01) <sup>***</sup>
<i>Responsiveness to new information (1-5)</i>	0.17 (.01) <sup>***</sup>	0.41 (.01) <sup>***</sup>	-
<i>Female (0,1)</i>	-0.08 (.04) <sup>*</sup>	-0.01 (.03)	0.06 (.03)
<i>White (0,1)</i>	0.04 (.04)	-0.14 (.04) <sup>***</sup>	-0.06 (.04)
<i>College-educated (0,1)</i>	0.01 (.04)	-0.02 (.03)	-0.02 (.03)
<i>Liberalism (1-7)</i>	-0.02 (.01)	0.00 (.01)	-0.05 (.01) <sup>***</sup>
<i>Age (integer)</i>	5.8e <sup>-4</sup> (1.7e <sup>-3</sup> )	3.6e <sup>-3</sup> (1.3e <sup>-3</sup> ) <sup>**</sup>	3.6e <sup>-3</sup> (1.5e <sup>-3</sup> ) <sup>***</sup>
<i>Political engagement (integer)</i>	0.02 (2.7e <sup>-3</sup> ) <sup>***</sup>	4.9e <sup>-3</sup> (2.2e <sup>-3</sup> ) <sup>*</sup>	5.3e <sup>-3</sup> (3.0e <sup>-3</sup> )
<i>Constant</i>	2.27 (.11) <sup>***</sup>	1.31 (.09) <sup>***</sup>	0.45 (.10)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.27	0.31	0.37
N	9,870	9,870	9,870

Table S6 presents ordinary least squares regressions modeling variation in how respondents assigned confidence levels across survey questions. All models include respondent fixed effects and standard errors clustered by respondent. See supplementary material for full question wordings, alternative specifications, and robustness checks. \*: p<0.05, \*\*: p<0.01, \*\*\*: p<0.001. †: "... by [or at] the end of 2016."

**Table S6. Exploring independent variation across confidence levels**

## 9. Full analysis of results from survey experiment 2 (ordered logit)

Table S7 replicates our analysis of results from survey experiment 2 using ordered logit. The only substantive changes from what we present in the main text of the paper are that (i) the coefficient for Question 12 in Model 2 loses statistical significance (its  $p$ -value is now 0.10), and (ii) the coefficient for Question 18 in Model 3 becomes statistically significant.

	<i>Model 1: Reliability of Available Evidence</i>	<i>Model 2: Range of Reasonable Opinion</i>	<i>Model 3: Responsiveness to New Information</i>
1. Hillary Clinton elected president	0.84 (.13) <sup>***</sup>	-1.16 (.06) <sup>***</sup>	1.42 (.13) <sup>***</sup>
2. Garland confirmed to Supreme Court	-0.16 (.13)	-0.18 (.12)	0.45 (.13) <sup>**</sup>
3. Obama approval rating over 50%	0.42 (.12) <sup>***</sup>	-1.00 (.14) <sup>***</sup>	0.91 (.13) <sup>***</sup>
4. Unemployment rate under 5%	0.37 (.12) <sup>**</sup>	-0.32 (.13) <sup>**</sup>	0.04 (.13)
5. Washington Redskins trademark restored	-0.60 (.13) <sup>***</sup>	-0.34 (.12) <sup>**</sup>	0.57 (.13) <sup>***</sup>
6. Third-party wins 10% presidential vote	0.17 (.13)	-0.39 (.12) <sup>**</sup>	0.38 (.13) <sup>**</sup>
7. Congress passes any gun control measure	0.69 (.12) <sup>***</sup>	-0.48 (.13) <sup>***</sup>	0.67 (.12) <sup>***</sup>
8. Avg. gasoline price under \$2.50/gal	0.41 (.12) <sup>***</sup>	-0.29 (.13) <sup>*</sup>	-0.14 (.13)
9. Bowe Bergdahl sentenced to ≥5 years prison	-0.55 (.12) <sup>***</sup>	-0.10 (.12)	-0.13 (.13)
10. Avg. global temp. higher in 2016 than 2015	1.17 (.13) <sup>***</sup>	0.23 (.13)	0.36 (.13) <sup>**</sup>
11. Britain formally exits European Union	0.64 (.13) <sup>***</sup>	-0.33 (.13) <sup>*</sup>	0.18 (.13)
12. Bashar al-Assad no longer in power	-0.64 (.12) <sup>***</sup>	-0.20 (.12)	-0.04 (.12)
13. U.S. admits ≥7,500 Syrian refugees	-0.02 (.13)	-0.38 (.13) <sup>**</sup>	0.12 (.13)
14. Guantanamo Bay prison camp closed	-0.19 (.12)	-0.17 (.13)	0.15 (.12)
15. UN elects a female Secy. General	-0.31 (.12) <sup>*</sup>	-0.47 (.13) <sup>***</sup>	0.33 (.13) <sup>*</sup>
16. A single terrorist event kills ≥100 in U.S.	-0.61 (.13) <sup>***</sup>	-0.52 (.13) <sup>***</sup>	0.86 (.13) <sup>***</sup>
17. Russia's economy contracts in 2016	-0.15 (.13)	0.05 (.12)	-0.36 (.13) <sup>**</sup>
18. Ayman al-Zawahiri captured or killed	-1.24 (.13) <sup>***</sup>	-0.42 (.12) <sup>***</sup>	0.27 (.13) <sup>*</sup>
19. Edward Snowden returns to United States	-0.73 (.13) <sup>***</sup>	-0.20 (.13)	0.12 (.12)
20. ≥10 U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq in 2016	-	-	-
<i>Certainty (0.0-0.5)</i>	5.33 (.18) <sup>***</sup>	1.35 (.18) <sup>***</sup>	2.32 (.19) <sup>***</sup>
<i>Reliability of available evidence (1-5)</i>	-	0.22 (.03) <sup>***</sup>	0.43 (.03) <sup>***</sup>
<i>Range of reasonable opinion (1-5)</i>	0.30 (.03) <sup>***</sup>	-	1.07 (.04) <sup>***</sup>
<i>Responsiveness to new information (1-5)</i>	0.47 (.03) <sup>***</sup>	1.00 (.04) <sup>***</sup>	-
<i>Female (0,1)</i>	-0.23 (.10) <sup>*</sup>	-0.02 (.08)	0.14 (.09)
<i>White (0,1)</i>	0.13 (.12)	-0.35 (.10) <sup>***</sup>	-0.19 (.11)
<i>College-educated (0,1)</i>	0.04 (.10)	-0.07 (.08)	-0.05 (.09)
<i>Liberalism (1-7)</i>	-0.03 (.03)	0.01 (.02)	-0.14 (.03) <sup>***</sup>
<i>Age (integer)</i>	1.4e <sup>-3</sup> (4.2e <sup>-3</sup> )	-0.01 (3.6e <sup>-3</sup> ) <sup>*</sup>	8.2e <sup>-3</sup> (3.9e <sup>-3</sup> ) <sup>*</sup>
<i>Political engagement (integer)</i>	0.04 (.01) <sup>***</sup>	1.2e <sup>-2</sup> (6.1e <sup>-3</sup> ) <sup>*</sup>	0.01 (.01)
<i>Cut points</i>	-0.48, 1.36, 2.75, 5.73	0.51, 3.28, 4.67, 6.85	2.86, 5.34, 6.59, 8.71
N	9,870	9,870	9,870

Table S7 presents ordered logit models predicting variation in how respondents assigned confidence levels across survey questions. All models include respondent fixed effects and standard errors clustered by respondent. \*: p<0.05, \*\*: p<0.01, \*\*\*: p<0.001. Full question wordings are provided earlier in this supplement.

**Table S7. Exploring independent variation across confidence levels (ordered logit)**

## 10. Relationships between respondent demographics and levels of confidence

Table S8 explores correlations between respondent demographics and levels of confidence, measured on 7-point scales.<sup>1</sup> We ordered each scale so that higher values indicate great confidence (e.g., more reliable evidence, less range of reasonable opinion, less responsiveness to new information). We control for the *Certainty* that respondents assigned to their probability estimates (i.e. the absolute value of the difference between their probability estimates and 0.50) so as to isolate variations in confidence levels as distinct from how respondents assessed probability. We also include a model showing relationships between demographic variables and *Certainty* itself. All models are ordinary least squares with standard errors clustered by respondent. Since respondents for this survey experiment were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk, the results of this analysis are purely exploratory.

The most consistent finding across these models is that respondents who were more liberal (with liberalism measured on the standard 7-point scale used by the American National Election Survey) tended to place less confidence in their assessments of uncertainty. This finding is statistically significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level for all three conceptions of confidence. We also found that respondents who reported consuming more political news believed that they possessed more reliable evidence and that their views were less likely to change in response to new information.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that these models differ from those presented in Table S7 because they do not control for other kinds of confidence that analysts assessed. Thus if one category of respondents systematically assigned greater levels to all three kinds of confidence at once, this would *not* lead to statistically significant coefficients in Table S7, but it *would* lead to statistically significant coefficients in Table S8.

White respondents tended to place less confidence in their judgments than other respondents, but they also attached greater levels of certainty to their probability estimates. Gender, age, and college education bore no consistent relationships to any of the three kinds of confidence that we asked respondents to assess.

	<i>Model 1:</i>	<i>Model 2:</i>	<i>Model 3:</i>	<i>Model 4:</i>
	Reliability of available evidence	Range of reasonable opinion	Responsiveness to new information	Certainty
Female	-0.08 (.04)	0.00 (.04)	0.05 (.04)	-3.6e <sup>-3</sup> (4.7e <sup>-3</sup> )
White	-0.02 (.05)	-0.20 (.05) <sup>***</sup>	-0.16 (.05) <sup>**</sup>	0.02 (.01) <sup>**</sup>
Age	8.5e <sup>-4</sup> (1.8e <sup>-3</sup> )	-2.4e <sup>-3</sup> (1.6e <sup>-3</sup> )	-2.6e <sup>-3</sup> (1.9e <sup>-3</sup> )	3.7e <sup>-4</sup> (1.9e <sup>-4</sup> ) <sup>*</sup>
College education	0.01 (.04)	-0.03 (.04)	-0.03 (.04)	6.7e <sup>-3</sup> (4.6e <sup>-3</sup> )
Hours per week of news consumed	0.02 (.00) <sup>***</sup>	2.2e <sup>-4</sup> (2.7e <sup>-3</sup> )	8.3e <sup>-3</sup> (3.5e <sup>-3</sup> ) <sup>*</sup>	1.3e <sup>-3</sup> (3.4e <sup>-4</sup> ) <sup>***</sup>
Liberalism	-0.03 (.01) <sup>**</sup>	-0.02 (.01) <sup>*</sup>	-0.06 (.01) <sup>***</sup>	6.1e <sup>-4</sup> (1.3e <sup>-3</sup> )
Certainty	2.93 (.09) <sup>**</sup>	1.91 (.10) <sup>***</sup>	2.60 (.10) <sup>***</sup>	-
Constant	2.77 (.10) <sup>***</sup>	2.24 (.10) <sup>***</sup>	2.01 (.11) <sup>***</sup>	0.19 (.01) <sup>***</sup>
N	9,870	9,870	9,870	9,870
R <sup>2</sup>	0.17	0.08	0.12	0.15

Table S8 presents ordinary least squares regressions exploring relationships between respondent demographics and assessments of uncertainty. Standard errors clustered by respondent. \*: p<0.05, \*\*: p<0.01, \*\*\*: p<0.001.

**Table S8. Respondent demographics and analytic confidence**