

Supplementary Material

“Issues, Images, and the Politics of Foreign Policy:

How Leaders Use Foreign Policy Positions to Shape their Personal Images”

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When replicating observational results, note that some coefficients will not replicate exactly due to the fact that the “hawk” is randomly assigned in cases where voters perceive two presidential candidates to take equal positions on defense spending. Since mediation results are based on simulations, those results will also generate minor noise.

S1. Perceptions of candidate positions on defense spending

Figure S1 shows that voters' perceptions of where presidential candidates stand on defense spending are generally quite accurate. For instance, voters generally believe that Republicans are willing to spend more money on defense than Democrats. Voters understood that Ronald Reagan and John McCain were significantly more hawkish on defense spending than more moderate Republicans such as Mitt Romney or George H. W. Bush. Voters similarly understood that Michael Dukakis and Walter Mondale were significantly more dovish on defense spending than centrist Democrats such as Al Gore and Jimmy Carter.

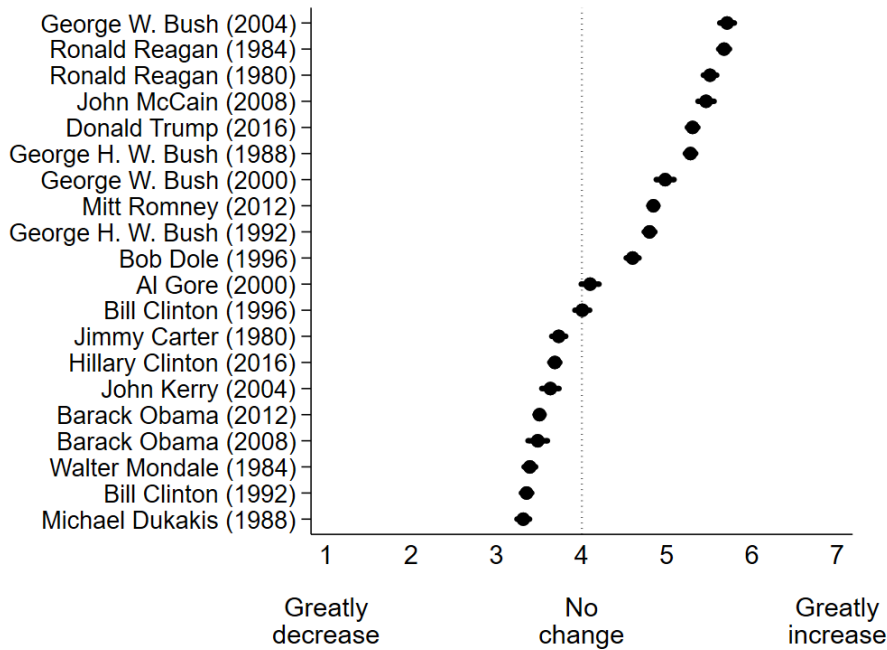


Figure S1. *Voter perceptions of candidate positions on defense spending.* Average values with 95% intervals. Source: ANES, 1980-2016.

ANES respondents even draw sensible distinctions between the same presidential candidate's position on defense spending across election years. Thus, voters understood that George W. Bush was less hawkish on defense spending in 2000 than when he ran for reelection during the Iraq War in 2004, and that Bill Clinton was less supportive of cutting the defense budget in 1996, as by that time he had already implemented the "bottom-up review" of military expenditures that he promised when running for president in 1992.

S2. Full analysis of observational data

Table S1 presents full results for the three statistical models described in Section 2. As noted above, some estimates will not replicate exactly due to the way that the "hawk" is randomly assigned in cases where respondents perceive both candidates as taking identical positions on defense spending.

	Model 1: OLS DV: Leadership Strength Differential	Model 2: Logit DV: Vote Share
Defense spending differential	0.051 (0.011)***	0.125 (0.045)**
Preference alignment	0.193 (0.007)***	0.529 (0.031)***
Hawk is a Republican	0.311 (0.053)***	-0.194 (0.199)
Hawk is Incumbent	0.043 (0.039)	0.237 (0.154)
Partisanship	0.242 (0.008)***	0.787 (0.029)***
Ideology	0.055 (0.011)***	0.473 (0.044)***
Female respondent	0.060 (0.060)	-0.553 (0.229)*
Black respondent	0.312 (0.074)***	2.275 (0.698)***
Female respondent x Hawk is Rep.	-0.073 (0.066)	0.639 (0.253)**
Black respondent x Hawk is Rep.	-0.533 (0.092)***	-3.900 (0.757)***
Candidates equally hawkish	-0.003 (0.046)	0.159 (0.178)
Constant	-1.069 (0.075)***	-4.709 (0.296)***
<i>N</i>	8,480	5,529
<i>R</i> ²	0.43	0.50

Table S1. Full results for analysis of ANES data, 1980-2008. Election year fixed effects not shown.

*: $p < 0.05$, **: $p < 0.01$, ***: $p < 0.001$.

*R*² values in logit estimated using McKelvey and Zavoina's method.

S3. Candidate-level analysis of leadership strength

Figure S2 replicates the finding that voters associate hawkish positions on defense spending with leadership strength, having respecified the data such that the unit of analysis is how each ANES respondent, i , rates each presidential candidate, c . The model is ordinary least squares, with standard errors clustered by respondent. The variables are essentially the same as in Equation [1], except that they now reflect ratings on absolute scales. Thus, Equation [2] captures the degree to which respondent i 's perception of candidate c 's position on defense spending predicts how i rates c 's leadership strength. Additionally, the model captures candidates' perceived positions on defense spending with a vector of indicators, each of which corresponds to one of the seven possible levels on the ANES scale that ranges from 1 ("greatly decrease") to 7 ("greatly increase").

$$\begin{aligned} [Eq. 2:] \text{ Leadership Strength}_{i,c} &= \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Defense Spending Position}_{i,c} \\ &+ \gamma_2 \text{Preference Alignment}_{i,c} + \gamma_3 \text{Partisanship}_{i,c} + \gamma_4 \text{Ideology}_{i,c} + \gamma_5 \text{Female}_i \\ &+ \gamma_6 \text{Black}_i + \gamma_7 \text{Candidate is a Republican}_c + \gamma_7 \text{Candidate is an Incumbent}_c \\ &+ \gamma_9 \text{Female}_i * \text{Candidate is a Republican}_{i,c} + \gamma_{10} \text{Black}_i \\ &* \text{Candidate is a Republican}_{i,c} + \beta_2 \text{Year} + \varepsilon_i \end{aligned}$$

This method is not ideal for analyzing ANES data, because a voter's perceptions of one presidential candidate is likely to be endogenous to the voter's perceptions of that candidate's opponent. That is why the paper follows standard practice in treating each voter's perceptions of

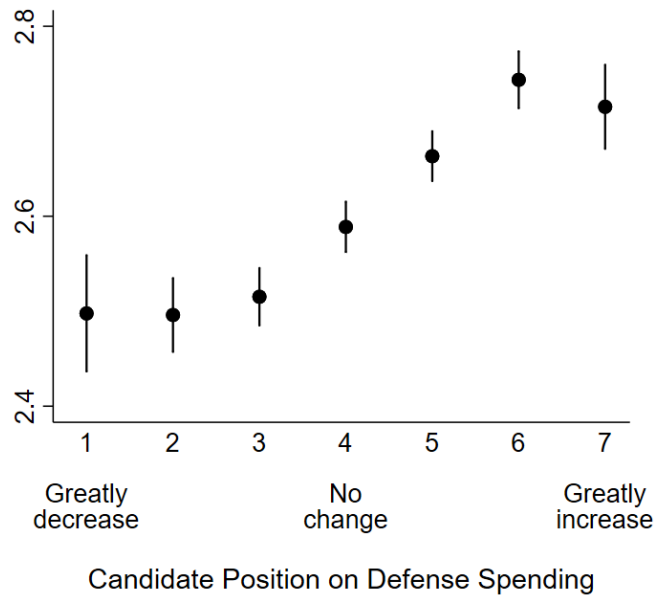


Figure S2. *Defense spending and perceptions of leadership strength.* Source: ANES, 1980-2008.

the Democratic and Republican candidates in each given election year as a single observation. However, treating those perceptions as a single observation makes it impossible to know whether the relationship that the paper documents between defense spending and perceptions of leadership strength reflects voters thinking highly of candidates who seem likely to raise military expenditures, or thinking worse of candidates who seem likely to cut military expenditures, or both. Figure S2 shows that that the answer to this question is “both.”

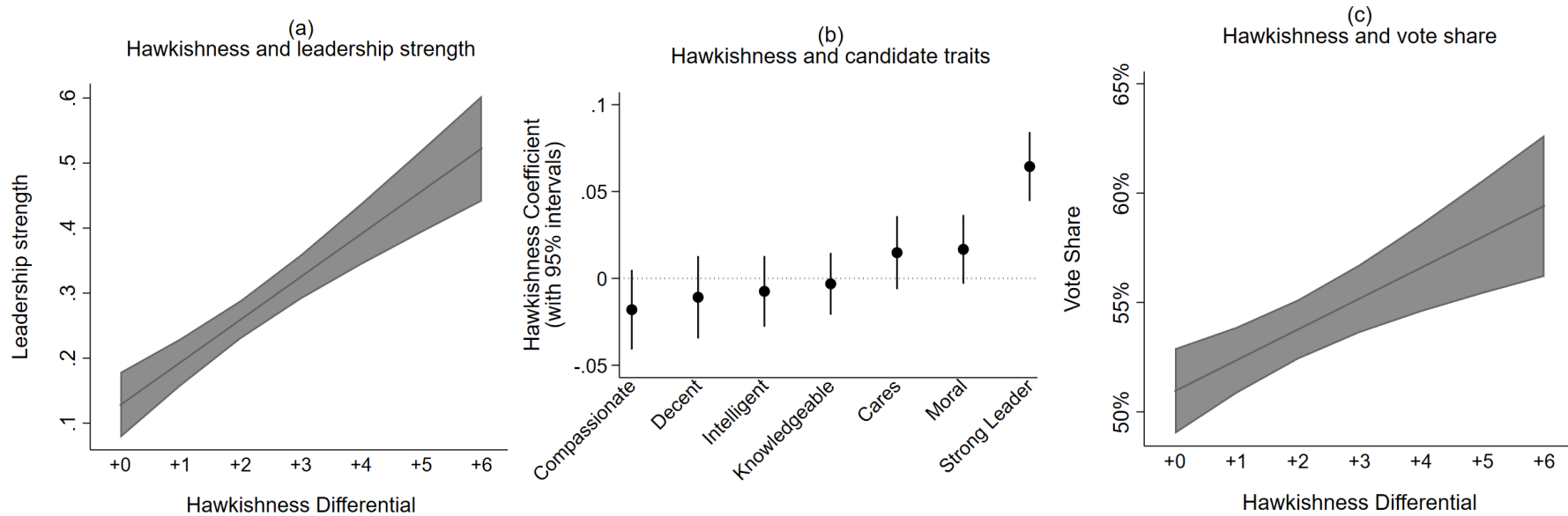


Figure S3. *The “hawk’s advantage.”* The Hawkishness Differential in these figures represents an index that captures voter attitudes toward defense spending, U.S.-Soviet relations, intervention in Central America, and willingness to use military force. All models control for partisanship, ideology, gender, race, preference alignment, and election year fixed effects. Source: ANES, 1980-2008.

S4. Testing the paper's argument with a broader index of leader hawkishness

Section 2 examined the relationship between defense spending, leadership strength, and voting behavior. Focusing this analysis on one foreign policy issue made statistical patterns more concrete and easier to explain. Yet, those findings do not hinge on examining defense spending to the exclusion of other foreign policy issues. If anything, these findings get stronger when we expand the scope of the analysis.

In addition to soliciting voters' attitudes toward defense spending, ANES surveys have also asked voters to state their personal preferences and presidential candidates' positions with respect to U.S.-Soviet cooperation (1980-1988), intervention in Central America (1984), and willingness to use military force (2004). ANES surveys elicit these attitudes using the same techniques they use to understand what voters think about defense spending. In each case, voters are asked to state their personal preferences for handling those issues on a 7-point scale, and then to place each presidential candidate's position on that same scale. The main drawback with these data are that, as noted in the previous paragraph, the ANES only gathered them in a few years, which makes data coverage unbalanced.

Following the approach developed by Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida (1989), we can analyze an index, called the *Hawkishness Differential*, which captures the extent to which a voter saw one presidential candidate as being more hawkish than the other across all foreign policy issues that the ANES surveyed in a given election year. A *Foreign Policy Alignment* index similarly

captures the extent to which voters tended to agree with one candidate's foreign policy positions more than the other.¹ All other variables in the analysis are the same as in Equation [1].

Figure S3 confirms that these data replicate the section's prior analyses. Figure S3a shows that voters generally view candidates who take more hawkish foreign policy positions as being stronger leaders ($p < 0.001$). The magnitude of this relationship is slightly larger than the paper's main analysis that examined defense spending alone ($b = 0.063$ vs. $b = 0.051$). Figure S3b shows that hawkishness bears a unique relationship to perceptions of leadership strength. The paper's main showed that voters also associated presidential candidates' positions on defense spending with morality. But Figure S3b shows that leadership strength is the only personal trait that bears a statistically significant relationship with perceptions of candidates' overall hawkishness.

Figure S3c confirms that presidential candidates who are perceived to be more hawkish on foreign policy issues do better at the ballot box ($p < 0.001$). Once again, the magnitude of this relationship is slightly larger than in the paper's analysis that examined defense spending alone ($b = 0.156$ versus $b = 0.127$). Table S2 replicates the paper's causal mediation analysis, showing that (i) perceptions of leadership strength are estimated to mediate roughly half of the hawk's advantage on foreign policy issues; that (ii) the model cannot reject the hypothesis that perceptions of leadership strength explain the entire hawk's advantage; and that (iii) no other personal attribute comes close to explaining as much of that relationship. Once again, the statistical results are slightly stronger than those presented in the main text: the proportion of the hawk's advantage explained by perceptions of leadership strength is 9.4 times larger than the

¹ On average, voters preferred moderate positions across these foreign policy issues. The overall mean for voters' foreign policy preferences in this index is 4.2. Thus, once again, voters show no clear tendency to support hawkish foreign policy positions on their merits.

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Pct. of Total Effect Mediated (95% confidence interval)</i>
Leadership strength	0.47 (0.28, 1.58)
Cares about people like me	0.05 (0.03, 0.09)
Morality	-0.03 (-0.06, -0.02)
Knowledgeable	-0.06 (-0.17, -0.04)
Compassionate	-0.11 (-0.29, -0.07)
Decency	-0.12 (-0.96, 0.40)
Intelligent	-0.13 (-0.34, -0.08)

Table S2. *Estimating the degree to which perceptions of personal traits mediate the “hawk’s advantage” in ANES data.* This figure replicates Table 1 in the main analysis, using a broader index of leaders’ foreign policy positions rather than focusing solely on the issue of defense spending.

next-largest mediation estimate (associated with whether candidates “care about people like me”); when examining data on defense spending alone, that ratio is 8.2:1.

S5. Full list of policy positions for survey experiment

Here is a list of all positions position that appeared in the paper’s survey experiment. These positions are grouped by number (indicating a policy issue) and letter, where *h* indicates the more hawkish position and *d* indicates the more dovish position. Candidates’ policy positions were randomized such that they could only take one position on a policy issue.

1h. "opposes withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan"

1d. "supports withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan"

2h. "opposes withdrawing U.S. troops currently fighting ISIS in Syria and Iraq"

2d. "supports withdrawing U.S. troops currently fighting ISIS in Syria and Iraq"

- 3h. "thinks the United States should maintain its ground troops in South Korea"
 3d. "thinks the United States should reduce its ground troops in South Korea"
- 4h. "would use U.S. troops to defend Taiwan from a Chinese attack"
 4d. "would not use U.S. troops to defend Taiwan from a Chinese attack"
- 5h. "would use U.S. troops to stop Russia from invading NATO allies such as Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia"
 5d. "would not use U.S. troops to stop Russia from invading NATO allies such as Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia"
- 6h. "would use U.S. troops if Pakistan requested assistance in suppressing a radical Islamic insurgency"
 6d. "would not use U.S. troops if Pakistan requested assistance in suppressing a radical Islamic insurgency"
- 7h. "supports maintaining long-term military bases in the Middle East"
 7d. "opposes maintaining long-term military bases in the Middle East"
- 8h. "would increase the frequency of drone strikes targeting suspected terrorists overseas"
 8d. "would reduce the frequency of drone strikes targeting suspected terrorists overseas"
- 9h. "thinks it is generally justifiable to use military force against countries that pose a serious threat to U.S. national security, even if those countries have not attacked us first"
 9d. "thinks it is not generally justifiable to use military force against countries that have not attacked us first, even if those countries pose a serious threat to U.S. national security"
- 10h. "supports a policy of trying to remove Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro from power"
 10d. "opposes a policy of trying to remove Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro from power"
- 11h. "would raise overall levels of military spending"
 11d. "would not raise overall levels of military spending"
- 12h. "thinks the United States should devote more resources to global counterterrorism"
 12d. "thinks the United States should devote fewer resources to global counterterrorism"
- 13h. "would expand existing efforts to modernize America's nuclear arsenal"
 13d. "would scale back existing efforts to modernize America's nuclear arsenal"
- 14h. "thinks it is important for America to remain the world's sole military superpower"
 14d. "does not think it is important for America to remain the world's sole military superpower"
- 15h. "supports expanding the U.S. military presence in space"
 15d. "opposes expanding the U.S. military presence in space"
 16h. "thinks we should publicly criticize European allies who do not meet their obligations to support collective defense"
 16d. "thinks we should avoid publicly criticizing European allies, even if they do not meet their obligations to support collective defense"
- 17h. "thinks the United States should actively work to limit China's rising power, even if that runs the risk of starting a military conflict"

- 17d. "does not think the United States should actively work to limit China's rising power if that runs the risk of starting a military conflict"
- 18h. "thinks threatening military action is the best way to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons"
- 18d. "thinks diplomacy and sanctions are the best way to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons"
- 19h. "thinks negotiating with North Korea would only reward that country's bad behavior"
- 19d. "thinks negotiating with North Korea would raise the chances of convincing that country to give up its nuclear weapons"
- 20h. "thinks the United States should not cooperate more closely with allies if that requires going along with policies that we would not otherwise support"
- 20d. "thinks the United States should cooperate more closely with allies, even if that requires going along with policies that we would not otherwise support"
- 21h. "thinks the United States should generally avoid working with the United Nations to solve global problems in cases where going it alone would allow us to do things faster and more effectively"
- 21d. "thinks the United States should generally work with the United Nations to solve global problems, even in cases where going it alone would allow us to do things faster and more effectively"
- 22h. "would increase economic sanctions on Russia"
- 22d. "would not increase economic sanctions on Russia"
- 23h. "opposes establishing a closer political and economic relationship with Cuba"
- 23d. "supports establishing a closer political and economic relationship with Cuba"
- 24h. "thinks the United States should expand its capabilities to conduct cyberattacks against other countries"
- 24d. "does not think the United States should expand its capabilities to conduct cyberattacks against other countries"
- 25h. "thinks there are circumstances under which it is acceptable to torture captured terrorists"
- 25d. "thinks there are no circumstances under which it is acceptable to torture captured terrorists"
- 26h. "thinks that military strength is a better way to ensure peace in comparison to diplomacy"
- 26d. "thinks that diplomacy is a better way to ensure peace in comparison to military strength"