THE POLITICS OF THREAT:

TERRORISM, MEDIA, AND FOREIGN POLICY OPINION

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Abstract:

Using 9/11 as a starting point, the dissertation offers a theoretical perspective on how individual level psychological reactions to threat as well as the political and media environments fundamentally shape public foreign policy attitudes. Building on scholarship on public opinion and political communication, this project pays close attention not only to the type of information that the public receives but to also to how that information is communicated in times of crisis. This dissertation argues that the mass media's focus on the most threatening news combined with public concern over further terrorism opened a political space for a hawkish policy message to persuade to the public. This crisis period provided a unique circumstance for persuasion since the public was motivated to become informed and there were few messages competing with President George W. Bush's policy message. By considering how threat and fear may motivate citizens to seek information and also provide a space for persuasion, this dissertation offers a new perspective on how emotions may condition citizens' reactions to a threatening environment and affect opinion formation.

Chapter 2 describes how Americans view foreign policy and what types of foreign policies they prefer during both times of peace and in more threatening times. Chapter 3 develops a theoretical perspective to explain the role of a threatening political and media environment on foreign policy attitudes. This theory pays particular attention to the role of emotion in affecting the public's attitudes. Chapter 4 examines the effect of citizens' beliefs about the likelihood of further terrorism on foreign policy attitudes using the NES 2000-2002-2004 panel. The chapter finds that Americans concerned about terrorism were more likely to prefer policies that demanded military force than policies that emphasized

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conciliation compared to citizens unconcerned about the terrorist threat. Chapter 5 explores the origins of citizens' perceptions of threat, particularly, how individual level predispositions and behaviors such as media use influence beliefs about the risk of terrorism. The chapter tests the effect of threatening news on individuals' threat perception using the Threat Experiment, an original media experiment designed for the project. Using the Threat Experiment, Chapter 6 shows that when threatening information is paired with fear cues in news stories that those respondents concerned about terrorism are significantly more likely to support militaristic foreign policy than respondents who only receive the threatening information. Chapter 7 demonstrates that foreign policy attitudes affect voters' decisions and there are strategic incentives for both Democratic and Republican candidates to take hawkish positions in order to gain votes at election time. Chapter 8 focuses on how the same mechanisms that influenced foreign policy may matter for other policy areas such as immigration, public health, and crime.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself - nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.
- *Franklin D. Roosevelt*

Infamy. US Attacked. Terrifying. Acts of War[1] These were just some of the headlines that greeted Americans as they woke up on the morning of September 12, 2001. The previous day, 19 armed men hijacked four planes from airports in Newark, NJ and Boston, MA and flew the planes into three iconic American buildings – the World Trade Center buildings in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. The World Trade Center buildings collapsed approximately 90 minutes after the planes' impact due to the force and heat of the explosions. The fourth plane, on its way to the United States Capitol or the White House, crashed in a field in rural Pennsylvania, taken down by the hijacked passengers. In total, more than 2,900 people died that day – more than 2,600 in New York, including 411 first responders, 125 at the Pentagon, and 256 passengers and crew on the four planes.

Almost overnight, the American landscape went from one of prosperity, safety, and power to one of threat, crisis, and uncertainty. The vast military and wide shores of the United States were no longer enough to protect the people or defend the nation. In short order, the United States military retaliated against Taliban forces in Afghanistan, the clearest perpetrators of the terrorist attacks. A majority of the public expressed support for military action in Afghanistan even if they believed that it would prove costly in terms of money and American lives. In a November 2001 Zogby poll, 68 percent of respondent said that they were very supportive of war in Afghanistan even if it took up to

[1] These headlines come from the *Washington Times,* the *New York Times*, the *Oakland Tribune,* and *The San Jose Mercury News* respectively.

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2 years while another 21 percent said that they felt somewhat supportive of the war. The prospect of American casualties did not damper support either; in a separate November 2001 poll, 74 percent of respondents approved of war in Afghanistan even with substantial American casualties (NBC/Wall Street Journal 2001). The American public not only backed the war in Afghanistan but also supported record levels of spending on defense, border security, and homeland security while simultaneously supporting cuts in foreign aid and other aid programs. Further, the citizenry also backed a long-term "War on Terror," a global effort designed to combat terrorism through surveillance of suspected terrorists as well as offensive military action to "deny terrorists the support and sanctuary of rogue states" (White House 2006, 23). This single event and the new threats that it portended spurred changes in the structure of the United States government, the country's foreign policy paradigm, and the American people. This project offers a theoretical framework for understanding the role of threat in shaping political attitudes and for understanding the consequences of how the mass media and political elites communicate threat to the public.

Using 9/11 as a starting point, the dissertation offers a theory of how individual level psychological reactions to threat as well as the political and media environments fundamentally shaped the types of foreign policy demanded by the public. Ultimately, this dissertation argues that the mass media's focus on the most threatening news combined with public concern over further terrorism opened a political space for President George W. Bush's hawkish policy message to be persuasive to the public. This crisis period provided a unique circumstance for persuasion since the public was

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motivated to become informed and there were few messages competing with the president's policy message.

The public's foreign policy attitudes were significantly more hawkish after the terrorist attack than their opinions before 9/11. In the 1990s and at the turn of the 21st Century, the American public favored internationalism over isolationism but generally wanted an internationalism that emphasized multilateralism over unilateralism and preferred that the United States avoid the role of "world policeman" (Kull and Destler 1999). While terrorism was on the public's radar as a potential threat to the country, few citizens seemed deeply concerned about terrorist attacks or war and few citizens connected concerns about terrorism to broader foreign policy (Rielly 1999). One year prior to the terrorist attacks on the United States, 10 percent of survey respondents in the National Election Studies (NES) answered that they were very worried about conventional war and 8 percent worried about nuclear war. By 2002, more than 83 percent of respondents were somewhat or very worried over the prospect of further war. As the political environment grew more threatening after the terrorist attacks, public support for strong, militaristic foreign policies increased. Forty-five percent of NES respondents favored increasing the defense budget in 2000 but by two years later 59 percent of the same respondents favored a defense budget increase. In contrast, only 10 percent of those people supported increasing the budget for foreign aid, signaling much higher levels of support for foreign policy that emphasized the military over diplomacy.

In the midst of fears of death and destruction at home, the American people wanted a foreign policy focused on sending bombs and brigades abroad rather than a foreign policy based on discussion and diplomacy. Fear did not paralyze the need for

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action, for turning passivity into activity, for advancing against an unseen enemy on foreign shores, as suggested by Franklin Roosevelt's famous quote. In fact, the threat of terrorism and the fear that accompanied it motivated the public to support a set of foreign policies that necessitated sending thousands of fellow citizens into battle against a stateless enemy for an undetermined amount of time. Those individuals most concerned about future terrorism supported the highest level of spending on counterterrorism measures and were the most fervent supporters of military action abroad, particularly if these individuals spent time watching television news. This dissertation explores the dynamics of those preferences – how individual level dispositions interact with a threatening information environment to shape foreign policy attitudes. Fear itself mattered for changing American attitudes but not in the way Franklin Roosevelt suggested.

Although the 9/11 attacks were a catalyst in changing American opinions in the short term, in forming attitudes about foreign policy more generally, Americans did not simply respond to the events of that September morning. Rather, this dissertation argues that the foreign policies preferred by Americans were shaped by an interaction of individual level psychology and a threatening political and media environment. I argue that public attitudes about foreign policy in this era were structured by individuals' sense of perceived threat and that elite cues assisted people in matching their sense of vulnerability to a set of policy options. Individuals' sense of threat structured foreign policy attitudes both directly by increasing demands for strong responses to terrorism and indirectly by increasing the potential for persuasion by elites. In a time of crisis, citizens turned to political leaders and the media in order to makes sense of new and threatening

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events. The contours of the information environment in turn influence how people prefer the government to react to the threat facing the country. I argue that the features of the information environment, particularly the media's emphasis on threatening information and emotional imagery, increased the probability of supporting the policies advocated by political leaders, principally the president. Threat and the anxiety that accompanies feelings of risk increase the support of strong political leaders as well as support for punitive policies (Gordon and Arian 2000; Merolla and Zechmeister nd). To the extent that the media environment increases and reinforces feelings of threat and the political environment provides a dominant set of policies deemed to effectively counter threat, the public is apt to adopt those policies.

The media's acceptance of George W. Bush's War on Terror frame and the lack of alternative frames that challenged the president's hawkish foreign policies created a political environment where citizens were likely to learn and accept hawkish policy as the best way to counter terrorism. How political elites framed the threat of terrorism, how the policies proposed to counter and defeat terrorism were presented, and the distribution of elite cues all influenced whether American attitudes veered toward more cooperative dovish policies or more punitive hawkish policies after 9/11. Building on scholarship on public opinion and political communication, this project pays close attention not only to the type of information that the public receives but to also to how that information is communicated in times of crisis. In the wake of threat, the president's War on Terror frame dominated other alternative frames that may have called for multilateral uses of force or diplomacy and was not strongly countered by either the news media or Democratic opponents (Entman 2003). The frame argued that the attacks on the United

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States commenced a military struggle against al-Qaeda and other "evil" extremist and only military means would defeat terrorism. Additionally, the president consistently referenced the 9/11 attacks and the threat of terrorism in explaining policy choices.

The emotionally compelling War on Terror frame prevailed in media coverage of the initial terrorist attacks and also dominated subsequent foreign policy news (Entman 2003; Boydstun and Glazier 2008). As is historically the case in crisis times, the political environment surrounding foreign policy became more constrained after 9/11, leading to a political environment where the president's views were reflected most frequently (Brody 1991; Entman 2004; Mueller 1973; Zaller 1992). Neither Democratic politicians nor journalists offered strong frames to counter the president's interpretation of the terrorist attacks, meaning that citizens paying attention to politics were most likely to encounter the War on Terror frame and use those considerations in forming their foreign policy views.

The information environment served a conduit for elite cues and information about terrorism but also as a conduit of emotion, and shaped foreign policy views through both channels. Media coverage of terrorism featured emotionally powerful images of terrorism and victimization and those images accompanied the War on Terror frame (Entman 204; Griffin 2004). The repetition of these images with the War on Terror frame helped cement the relationship between feelings of threat and the hawkish policy solutions offered in the frame. As people turned to the mass media to learn about the threat of terrorism, they read and heard about the constant and potentially devastating threat of another terrorist attack and also saw reminders of the destruction wrought by terrorism. Television news coverage of foreign policy in particular spent considerably

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more time and focused more heavily on threatening information about terrorism than on more reassuring information (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2007). Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro (2007) offer one such example of the media's fixation with fear. On May 20, 2003, the Department of Homeland Security raised the terrorism threat level system from yellow to orange, indicating an increased probability of terrorist attack. Each of the three major national news channels dedicated their lead stories to covering this event and spent substantial time outlining the imminent danger to the public. When the government decreased the threat alarm system back down to yellow 10 days later, ABC and CBS spent two sentences each during the newscast on that story while NBC did not mention the change at all. Clearly threatening stories are considered more newsworthy than more reassuring ones; as a consequence, the public receives a disproportionate amount of threatening information. The evocative imagery and the focus on threatening information served to reinforce people's sense of vulnerability (Cohen Silver et al 2002).

Although Americans turned to the news as way to find information about how to react to the threat, for many, the news served to only reinforce feelings of fear for both themselves and the country. Exposure to terrorism news served to strengthen people's sense of threat but also exposed citizens to the dominant hawkish foreign policy message. Since this hawkish message was not effectively countered by opponents within the Democratic party or in the media, threatened citizens were likely to adopt hawkish views (Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2007). However, the mass media affected attitudes through both providing information and also through arousing emotion. While terrorism is inherently newsworthy since it is dramatic and unexpected (Gans 1979), in a competitive media environment, journalists and editors have incentives to use

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emotionally powerful visuals and storylines to gain and maintain ever-shrinking news audiences (Zaller 1999). The survey analysis and experiment in this project will demonstrate that citizens form significantly different foreign policy views when the information environment induces emotions than when it is free of emotion, even when the factual information is exactly the same. Citizens concerned about terrorism are more likely to adopt the hawkish views communicated in threatening news when it is matched with fear-inducing cues than when it is not.

The president's foreign policy message was the prominent message early on after 9/11 in good part because of the reduction of elite criticism that tends to occur after "rally around the flag" events such as a terrorist attack (Brody 1991; Hetherington and Nelson 2003; Mueller 1973). After the terrorist attacks, political leaders, even politicians of the opposite party, had incentives to appear patriotic by standing behind the president. Beside the need to seem patriotic, though, Democratic politicians in the minority also could not easily challenge a president with approval ratings of 90 percent (Hetherington and Nelson 2003) and struggled with appearing weak on national security, a policy area where the Republican party generally holds an advantage (Petrocik 1996). In addition, particularly with the threat of terrorism, the consequences for downplaying the risk or under-preparing for subsequent violence may be more serious than the political consequences for hyping threats, an asymmetry that elites realize. Terrorism expert Jessica Stern noted in an interview on the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks that "Those who publicly underestimate threats are far more vulnerable than those who exaggerate them…" (Stern 2006).

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Due to the lack of opposition from political elites, the president's strong frame was reflected most heavily in news coverage of terrorism or foreign policy. While the threat of terrorism was real, the president's framing of the fight against terrorism as a war to be fought globally, through military means, in Afghanistan and later in Iraq was not the only plausible frame available. In response to 9/11, the president could have portrayed Saudi Arabia as an enemy state rather than Afghanistan since fifteen of the nineteen 9/11 hijackers were Saudis (Entman 2004). Alternatively, the president or Democratic leaders could have called for a broader multilateral force to fight terrorism or framed the fight against terrorism as akin the fight against organized crime – to be won primarily by law enforcement, investigations, and occasionally by force. However, while the Saudi frame gained some traction in the press (Entman 2003), the president's War on Terrorism frame dominated others and little strong opposition arose from Democratic leaders that found its way into media coverage of terrorism (Entman 2004,111).

To the extent that citizens relied on heuristics as an aid in forming their foreign policy views, partisanship proved not to be particularly helpful in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks as both parties lined up behind the president. However, the bipartisan spirit that pervaded Washington after the terrorist attacks did not remain indefinitely; as foreign policy issues became politicized, partisanship and ideology increasingly mattered for attitudes. Additionally, this dissertation demonstrates that as the War on Terror became a political issue, as opposition to the president's framing and policies arose, partisanship began to shape not only opinions but also how people interpreted threatening media messages about terrorism. Democratic citizens became less likely to support hawkish policy over time and the most politically aware were also less swayed by media

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messages that hyped the threat of terrorism. This dissertation demonstrates that partisanship matters less in crisis times than in more tranquil times, but that as elite opposition arises, citizens are able to use their partisanship to structure foreign policy views. However, the experimental evidence offered by this project demonstrates that emotionally powerful messages about terrorism may be able to affect attitudes even among individuals who consciously disagree with the policy message.

To test how a threatening political environment and the mass media influence American foreign policy attitudes, I employ multiple methodologies in this project. Before exploring how threat and media structure foreign policy opinion, I show aggregate trends in foreign policy attitudes from 1945 to 2004 using the Chicago Council of Foreign Relations surveys and the National Election Studies (NES) time series to establish that attitudes differ under threatening conditions and stable conditions. These aggregate studies demonstrate that Americans prefer more aggressive foreign policies in the wake of the 9/11 attacks but cannot elucidate how individual level perceptions of threat influence policy attitudes. In order to establish that individual level threat increases support for foreign policy in line with the president's hawkish policies and that media exposure increases the likelihood of supporting those policies, I turn to the NES 2000-2002-2004 panel. Using a panel allows me to look at the same people both before and after 9/11 and show that whether citizens watched television news or read newspaper after 9/11 significantly mattered for policy attitudes. However, the survey data cannot fully account for whether television primarily influences foreign policy attitudes through emotion and newspaper reading mainly influences attitudes through information since the NES media measures only capture general news consumption, that is, how many days in

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the past week respondents either watch television news or read a daily newspaper. Because my theory argues that the media affect opinion formation through creating and reinforcing fear, I designed an experiment that tightly controlled the content and emotional impact of media treatments that subjects received to demonstrate the causal impact of fear-inducing versus more neutral media. Because emotions are often short-lived, surveys that occur many days or months after the original emotion may not capture the full causal impact of fear on attitudes, making an experiment that induces emotion and then captures the effect of the emotion a better methodological choice. The experiment took place with a student sample in a laboratory over several months and was replicated with a nationally representative sample online, providing evidence that news stories that utilize emotionally powerful imagery influence foreign policy attitudes more than information alone. Because of the replication, we can be more confident that these experimental findings hold over time, experimental mediums, and diverse samples.

In order to establish that the public's reactions to the threatening political environment were hawkish and structured by media messages it is necessary to compare foreign policy attitudes prior to and after the 2001 terrorist attacks. To compare the public's attitudes in a crisis period to a more stable political environment, Chapter 2 describes how Americans view foreign policy and what types of foreign policies that they prefer during both times of peace and in more threatening times. The chapter notes the dramatic increase in support for hawkish foreign policy in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and how the level of support for defense spending reached a 20 year high in 2002. Using data from the Chicago Council of Foreign Relations as well as the NES, this

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chapter provides a comprehensive picture of how media consumption as well as perceptions about further terrorism shaped foreign policy attitudes.

Chapter 3 develops a theoretical perspective to explain the role of a threatening political and media environment on foreign policy attitudes. Building on scholarship in public opinion, political communication, and political psychology, this chapter argues that threat leads citizens to desire more information and to pay closer attention to threatening and frightening information. In the immediate post-9/11 era, the information environment was stacked in favor of the president's message about terrorism and foreign policy and also induced emotion in the citizenry. Thus, those citizens paying closer attention to the information environment were not only more concerned over terrorism but were more likely to be exposed to the president's foreign policy views and to adopt those views. This theory pays particular attention to the role of emotion in affecting the public's attitudes and argues that public opinion theories should consider not only how the informational content of news stories influences attitudes but also how the presentation and tone of news stories affects citizens. By looking at the media holistically – by considering how the media may affect citizen attitudes by both providing information and by evoking emotion – this study reveals that information and emotion influence attitudes separately. News stories that evoke negative emotions such as fear can influence attitudes more powerfully than information on its own, even when the emotional reminders are familiar and the information is identical. By demonstrating that both the content and the presentation of news influence attitudes, this study furthers our understanding of the mechanisms by which the media matter.

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Chapter 4 examines the effect of citizens' beliefs about the likelihood of further terrorism (i.e. threat perception) on foreign policy attitudes using the NES 2000-2002-2004 panel and a 2002 Pew Research Center survey. The chapter explores how people make sense of the political world in times of threat and what role the mass media has in attitude formation. This chapter establishes that individuals more concerned about terrorism were the most willing to adopt hawkish policies and that evocative news coverage on television influenced attitudes more than less emotional coverage in newspapers. The chapter finds that Americans concerned about terrorism were more likely to prefer policies that demanded military force than policies that emphasized conciliation compared to citizens unconcerned about the terrorist threat. The chapter also establishes that support for hawkish policy was especially high among those people watching the nightly television news but that newspaper reading had little to no effect on attitudes, implying that emotionally powerful news coverage leads to different attitudes than less evocative coverage. Additionally, this chapter traces out how partisanship became a larger determinant of policy attitudes as time from 9/11 increased.

People's perceptions of how risky the political world is fundamentally shape foreign policy attitudes, making these perceptions politically relevant. Chapter 5 explores the origins of citizens' perceptions of threat and looks at how individual level predispositions and behaviors such as media use influence beliefs about the risk of terrorism. Using survey data from the NES panel and a 2005 Pew survey, this chapter establishes two major sources of threat perception: partisanship and media use. The survey data demonstrate that while partisanship mattered little for threat perception at the time of the terrorist attacks, citizens began to use their party identification to filter

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threatening information and form their perceptions of threat. The chapter also tests the effect of threatening news on individuals' threat perception using the Threat Experiment, an original media experiment designed for the project run with a student sample in a laboratory and with a nationally representative sample of adults through YouGov/Polimetrix. The experimental treatments manipulated both the amount of threat and the presentation of threat in television stories about recent terrorist attacks. The design provides a way to evaluate whether exposure to threatening media content and presentation affects partisans in the same way. Two major findings emerge from this chapter. The first finding is that among a majority of respondents, media stories about terrorism increased threat perception. This finding is especially striking given that in the years since 9/11, most American citizens were exposed to frequent news stories about terrorism and presumably had stored knowledge and beliefs about terrorism. Thus the experiment shows that threatening information by itself does not explain all the consequences of media coverage of threatening events – the emotional tenor of the information also shapes people's reactions. The other major conclusion of this chapter is that exposure to media coverage of terrorism does not automatically increase threat perception. Because terrorism is now politicized, media coverage of terrorism does not easily "leave a mark" on perceptions. Perceptions are shaped not only by media exposure but also by partisanship.

Chapter 4 demonstrated that people concerned about terrorism were the most responsive to television news in forming their foreign policy attitudes. Chapter 6 further explores how media coverage of crisis affects attitudes and focuses most closely on how information and emotion may influence attitudes together and separately. Using the

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Threat Experiment, this chapter shows that when threatening information is paired with fear cues in news stories those respondents concerned about terrorism are significantly more likely to support militaristic foreign policy than similar respondents who only receive the threatening information. Emotive, threatening news coverage moves threatened citizens to adopt more hawkish policy attitudes, including support for current and future military conflicts. Consistent with findings from previous chapters, this chapter also shows that certain citizens are not moved either by threatening information or by evocative visual reminders of terrorism. People unconcerned about terrorism were unmoved to become more threatened or to adopt foreign policy attitudes in line with the framing of the experimental news story about terrorism. However, among the majority of citizens who accept that terrorism is likely, the emotionally laden news story profoundly affected their attitudes by moving them in a more hawkish direction.

These chapters demonstrate that citizens' views on terrorism and exposure to mass media coverage of terrorism influenced attitudes toward foreign policy. Chapter 7 explores the effect of these foreign policy attitudes on electoral decision-making. This chapter demonstrates that foreign policy attitudes affect voters' decisions and there are strategic incentives for both Democratic and Republican candidates to take hawkish positions in order to gain votes at election time. Using the 2004 NES cross-section and the 2000-2002-2004 NES panel, the findings show that foreign policy attitudes matter in vote choice as well in how citizens evaluate the president and the Republican and Democratic parties. The more hawkish respondents' attitudes are, the more positively they evaluate the Republican party and George W. Bush and the more negatively they evaluate Democrats and John Kerry. Yet, voters weigh the same foreign policy attitudes

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more heavily more in evaluating both Bush and the Republican party than in evaluating Kerry and the Democrats, suggesting that voters rely on different criteria in evaluating the parties. In addition, because foreign policy attitudes lead citizens to prefer certain types of leaders over others, there are strategic incentives for elites trying to get elected to take more hawkish positions during the campaign as well as to persuade citizens to update their own foreign policy views in a more hawkish direction.

The question of how well the information environment serves the citizenry has direct bearing on the functioning of representative democracy. Chapter 8 explores the ways in which the information environment helps or hinders individuals' ability to form opinions about foreign policy and the ways that media exposure may influence and skew attitudes. This concluding chapter focuses on how the same mechanisms that influence foreign policy may matter for other policy areas such as immigration, public health, and crime. The chapter also considers the implications of a threatening political environment for deliberation and representation.

Overall, this project shows that in times of threat and crisis, citizens turn to political leaders and the mass media for guidance and are more open to persuasion than in more peaceful times. As political leaders advocate particularly hawkish policies and the media communicates those policies to the exclusion of others and reinforces citizens' feelings of threat and vulnerability, citizens are apt to adopt those policies. As threat fades and politics intrudes, citizens use partisanship to guide their foreign policy choices but are still significantly influenced by strong emotional cues. This project moves beyond the current public opinion literature by integrating perspectives from political psychology about the role of threat and emotion on perceptions and policy attitudes. By considering

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how perceptions of threat motivate citizens to seek information and also provide a space for persuasion, this dissertation offers a new perspective on how emotions condition citizens' reactions to a threatening political environment and affect opinion formation. In addition, by demonstrating that the media influences public opinion through providing information but also by invoking emotion, this dissertation challenges the current emphasis in the media effects literature on cognitive features of the mass media such as framing, priming, and agenda setting. Threatening information matters for opinion formation but emotion matters as well, suggesting that political communication literature should consider both pathways of influence. Lastly, by looking over time, this work shows that partisanship became a more powerful determinant of citizens' perceptions of threat and citizens' willingness to accept threatening messages as the political parties took more distinct foreign policy stances. The finding that partisanship precludes some citizens from accepting frightening media messages challenges the current literature on emotion and politics that argues that emotion is automatic and influences attitudes by leading people to set aside predispositions such as partisanship. Threat and emotion are not simply psychological phenomena – they are politically consequential for how political leaders communicate to the public and how citizens form their attitudes.

Terrorism shattered America's sense of invulnerability and unparalleled might on a sunny September morning. This project outlines how continual reminders of that moment shaped American views on foreign policy for many mornings after.

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Chapter 2: A Nation Transformed

At 8:46 on the morning of September 11, 2001, the United States became a nation transformed.

- The 9/11 Commission Report

As Americans turned to their television screens and newspapers to make sense of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, they read and saw that 9/11 was the commencement of a war against terrorism that would be won by spending more on defense and sending troops overseas. Americans do not always support an active military – in a majority of surveys of both the National Elections Studies and Chicago Council of Foreign Relations over three decades, most citizens preferred a decrease in defense spending, yet after the 9/11 attacks, the public supported dramatic increases in military spending. This chapter argues that in the wake of the terrorist threat, the American public accepted President George W. Bush's contention that terrorism could be defeated through military rather than diplomatic means and in turn adopted more hawkish foreign policy views. To explore American foreign policy attitudes over five decades and document the upswing in hawkish preferences after 9/11, the chapter uses data from the Chicago Council of Foreign Relations and the National Election Studies. This chapter also argues that those citizens most concerned about terrorism were the most likely to accept the hawkish policy message and adopt hawkish attitudes. In addition, this chapter demonstrates using the National Election Studies 2000-2002-2004 panel study that citizens most attuned to television news were the most likely to pick up the hawkish policy cues and adopt them, particularly if those citizens were concerned about terrorism.

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Reactions to 9/11 and beyond

The events of 9/11 clearly traumatized the public, but how did these events and broader concerns about terrorism influence Americans in long term? Were Americans changed by terrorism? Was the country changed? The United States after 9/11 was in fact a nation transformed. The government changed in both temporary and permanent ways and its citizens changed in both personal and political ways. This chapter demonstrates that the public increasingly supported hawkish foreign policy after 2001 and that threat perception and media consumption are key components of foreign policy attitudes. The chapter also shows that partisanship affected the level of support for hawkish policy but not citizens' reactions to the threat of terrorism in the immediate wake of the 9/11 attacks. Before discussing how Americans changed their foreign policy views after the terrorist attacks, the chapter describes other ways in which the United States changed after 2001.

In the short term, Americans became more involved in their communities and in politics. Although political knowledge generally tends to be relatively low in the American public (Converse 1960; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), knowledge of politics increased immediately after the attacks (Prior 2002). The increase of knowledge was widespread among the public and across topics. Prior (2002) demonstrates that knowledge about 9/11 and the War on Terror was relatively high and knowledge of the Middle East increased after the attacks as did knowledge the U.S. economy. At least some of this knowledge remained over time. While the National Election Studies (NES) interviewers rated only 10 percent of respondents as having "very high" knowledge of political affairs in the 2000 study, the interviewers rated 17.8 percent and 18.2 percent of respondents as highly knowledgeable in 2002 and 2004. In addition to an increase in

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political knowledge, the terrorist attacks also led to a temporary increase in volunteering and civic participation. More people reported working in their community or donating blood or money in 2001 than in 2000 and occasional volunteer work increased, but regular volunteering of at least twice a month did not change as a result of 9/11 (Putnam 2002).

In addition to the ways that citizen behavior changed after the terrorist attacks, the political system changed fundamentally. The upswing in citizen volunteering and trust in government that emerged after 9/11 turned out to be ephemeral - a "comma, a brief pause during which we looked up for a moment and then returned to our solitary pursuits" (Putnam 2002, 20). Yet while American citizens returned to their normal routines relatively quickly, the terrorist attacks prompted a restructuring of the federal government and a new paradigm for foreign policy. On October 20, 2001, President George W. Bush announced the creation of the Office of Homeland Security that would reside in the Executive Office of the President. The office's mission was to prevent future terrorism and coordinate the agencies responsible for this task. A year later in November 2002, the president signed into law the creation of the Department Homeland Security (DHS), a new cabinet department to replace the Office of Homeland Security. Twenty-two separate agencies with 170,000 employees, including the Coast Guard and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, were combined to form the new department. This new department was tasked with responsibilities ranging from disaster relief to immigration and food inspection (Lewis 2005). For fiscal year 2007, the federal budget allocated the DHS $43 billion for programs such as strengthening the border patrol and increasing capabilities for first responders (OMB 2007).

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In addition to adding to the federal government, the Bush administration formulated a new foreign policy strategy based on the principles of neoconservatism and prevention of terrorism through pre-emption (Gordon 2006). The Bush foreign policy doctrine emphasizes the anticipation of terrorism and protection of the United States through intelligence gathering as well as military intervention when deemed necessary. This approach is best explicated in the administration's "Summary of National Security Strategy" from 2006:

> The security environment confronting the United States today is radically different from what we have faced before. Yet the first duty of the United States Government remains what it always has been: to protect the American people and American interests. It is an enduring American principle that this duty obligates the government to anticipate and counter threats, using all elements of national power, before the threats can do grave damage. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction – and *the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves*, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. There are few greater threats than a terrorist attack with WMD.
>
> *To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively in exercising our inherent right of self-defense.* The United States will not resort to force in all cases to preempt emerging threats. Our preference is that nonmilitary actions succeed. And no country should ever use preemption as a pretext for aggression. (16, italics added)

The national security statement emphasizes that the government's obligation to protect the American public through the prevention of terrorist attacks and also emphasizes that prevention may take the form of military force to preempt threats. In other portions of the National Security Statement, the Bush doctrine stresses that the United States must be ready to fight the War on Terror alone in addition to emphasizing the need for spreading democracy and freedom in world. This hawkish and interventionist view of foreign policy, consolidated after 9/11, stood in contrast to George W. Bush's realist foreign

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policy positions during the 2000 presidential election when he called for a "humble" foreign policy that focused on national interests rather than humanitarian goals or the spread of democracy (Gordon 2006). The president not only articulated this new foreign policy soon after the 9/11 attacks but applied the underlying principle of terrorism prevention to establish the DHS and also engage the United States in military action in Afghanistan and later in Iraq. As citizens considered how the United States should react to the threat of terrorism, in the absence of the Bush administration's framing, the public may have supported a wider variety of foreign policy. Yet, the political environment for alternative policies was constrained, meaning that citizens paying close attention to politics read and heard the most about the president's hawkish policies. This chapter traces out the public's strong support for hawkish policy more than a year after 9/11, suggesting that the president's hawkish frame and not simply the events of 9/11 themselves shaped public opinion.

The structure of foreign policy opinions

Clearly the country that emerged after 9/11 bore some striking differences to the America of September 10, 2001, but it is not clear that the attacks had any long lasting effect on the American public. This section demonstrates that American attitudes about foreign policy became more hawkish as the threat of terrorism grew, and that concerns about terrorism greatly influenced these attitudes. Before delving into a discussion of American foreign policy attitudes over time, it is worth a short discussion about the nature of foreign policy attitudes in the United States and the structure of that opinion. The roles of the mass media and individual predispositions in shaping American foreign policy preferences have been mostly ignored in the literature on how people understand

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and form attitudes about foreign policy and conflict (Mueller 1973; Jentelson 1992; Holsti 2004) until recently (Huddy et al 2005; Merolla and Zechmeister nd; Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2007). For example, Hurwitz and Peffley (1987) propose a hierarchical model of foreign policy opinion whereby more general attitudes inform the formation of attitudes on more specific issues. In their model, abstract general values (ethnocentrism and moral beliefs about warfare) inform postures or the general stance that the government would take (internationalism-isolationism, hawkishness-dovishness, anticommunism) to more specific attitudes toward issues like defense spending and trade. This theory leaves little room for either the media or individual level perceptions to affect foreign policy attitudes. Additionally, much of the literature on war support (Mueller 1973; Jentelson 1992) concentrates on the particulars aspect of each conflict such as the number of casualties or the goal of the military action without considering how individuals' perceptions of war may be significantly shaped by how political leaders or the media talk about war (but see Berinsky forthcoming).

In contrast to that literature, this dissertation argues that American foreign policy attitudes are shaped by individuals' perceptions of threat as well as media exposure and partisanship. Just as the threat of communism shaped Americans' views on the wars in Korea and Vietnam as well as opinions on the Soviet Union and Central America (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987), so does the perceived threat of terrorism shape how Americans think about issues ranging from the amount of foreign aid to send abroad to whether or not the Iraq war is worth the cost (Huddy et al 2002; 2003). The Bush administration puts the war on terrorism front and center in discussions of and explanations for action abroad, and the way that individuals think about terrorism shapes

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how they want the government to pursue foreign policy generally.

While previous literature on the structure of foreign policy attitudes demonstrates the nuances in opinion on foreign affairs, focusing on the dimensions of foreign policy such as Wittkopf's (1990) cooperative-internationalism and militant-internationalism[2] or Richman et al's (1997) global altruism or global interests dimensions[3], the discussion in this project will focus on how the public forms attitudes on the *means* of foreign policy rather than goals of foreign policy. Throughout the dissertation, I will refer to citizens' attitudes as hawkish or dovish, which corresponds to what Hurwitz and Peffley (1987) define as stances or general foreign policy postures. My goal is to explain the conditions under which individuals support hawkish foreign policy over dovish policy with the assumption that respondents' foreign policy goals are part of the decision about which type of policy to support. Therefore I define hawkish and dovish policy by its means rather than by the policy intention. Hawkish policy is defined as foreign policy that is aggressive and punitive in nature; however, I make no differentiation if the intent of the aggressive action is to spread democracy or to protect national economic interests. In the public, hawkishness is expressed as support for policies such as higher defense spending,

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[2] Wittkopf (1990) argues that an isolationism-internationalist dimension does not adequately explain foreign policy attitudes and divides opinion into two orthogonal dimensions that represent both the goals and the means of foreign policy – militant-internationalism and cooperative-internationalism. The militant-internationalism dimension is a range of attitudes supporting or opposing military force while cooperative-internationalism constitutes the range of attitudes toward international organizations. The dimensions divide the public into four clusters of people: 1. internationalists who support both militant and cooperative internationalism, 2. isolationists who support neither kind of internationalism, 3. accommodationists who support cooperative ventures but not military ones, and 4. hardliners who support militant policies but not cooperative ones.

[3] In Richman et al's analysis (1997) of opinion from the 1990s, the authors find that opinions were structured into two outwardly looking factors – global altruism and global interest – and two domestic factors – military security and domestic issues. The global interests, global altruism, and the domestic issues factors represent attitudes toward the goals of foreign policy such as promoting democracy abroad, securing energy, and protecting US business and workers. The military security factor represents the means of foreign policy, that is, whether the public is willing to use force in pursuing the above goals.

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armed intervention, and war. Dovish foreign policy is defined as more cooperative than punitive and is expressed by support for policies such as diplomacy, negotiations, and foreign aid.

A majority of the American public supports engagement in the world rather than isolationism, as can be seen in Figure 2.1, discussed in more detail in the next section. Given that most Americans prefer internationalism to isolationism and that the debate around foreign policy since 9/11 has been about the *type* of foreign policy that the United States should pursue rather than whether the country should be involved with foreign policy at all, the analyses in this project will consider with whether the public supports a range of militaristic or more cooperative types of policies. Instead of using the more specific dimensions identified by previous authors, I will designate policies as either dovish or hawkish. I believe that the terms dovish and hawkish are conceptually cleaner and easier to understand than the more specific dimensions for two reasons. First, movement toward one end of the hawkishness-dovishness scale implies movement away from the other end. Secondly, policies seem to fit more neatly into one category or another, which is not the case with dimensions such as Wittkopf's cooperative-internationalism and militant-internationalism. Using this dimension, it is unclear how to categorize a policy such as military action under United Nations auspices, which is both cooperative and militant simultaneously. Using the hawkishness dimension, we can easily characterize this policy as simply hawkish.

American foreign policy trends over time

In forming foreign policy attitudes, individuals have two major decisions to make: first, whether they support internationalism or isolationism and then, if they prefer

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internationalism, whether they prefer dovish/cooperative or hawkish/assertive policies (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987). While the majority of the project focuses on the influence of threat on internationalism attitudes, to establish that the public does in fact support engaging in the world, it is worth a brief review of Americans' isolationism attitudes over time. After the 9/11 attacks, the public may have wanted to turn inward and support isolationism rather than either type of internationalism. Two major reasons would seem to suggest that the public would not seek a return to isolationism after 9/11. Since WWII, the public has generally supported internationalism over isolationism by large margins. This means that a turn to isolationism would engender an inordinately large shift in public opinion in a short amount of time. Secondly, public opinion depends in great part on cues from political elites, and political leaders in the parties, Congress, and the executive branch overwhelmingly support internationalism even though there are disagreements between leaders over the specific policies that the United States should pursue.

While there is some variation over time, in the last decade, support for internationalism varied between 70 and 80 percent with 20-25 percent of respondents preferring isolationism and a very small percentage with no attitude. Figure 2.1 displays the public's preferences for isolationism and internationalism over a 60 year time period. The top panel displays data from the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) and Chicago Council for Foreign Relation's (CCFR) surveys of American citizens and reflects respondents' preference for whether the United States should take "an active role" or "stay out" of world affairs for the years 1945-2004. The bottom panel displays data from the National Election Studies (NES) cumulative file from 1956-2004; the

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question asks respondents to agree or disagree with the statement, “This country would be better off if we just stayed home and did not concern ourselves with problems in other parts of the world.” Agreement with this statement reflects support for isolationism while disagreement reflects support for international engagement. It is clear from both panels that the majority of respondents in both surveys support engagement with the world over isolationism as early as 1945. There are clearly ebbs in the percentage of Americans who prefer that the United States engages with other countries, but the overall trend demonstrates that a majority of citizens, ranging from 55 to 81 percent of respondents want the United States to take an active role in the world. The low point in support for internationalism in these series comes after the Vietnam War and before the defense build-up in the Reagan administration – 1976 in the NES series and 1980 in the CCFR data.

While support for the United States disengaging from world affairs increased after Vietnam and then again at the end of the Cold War, there is a great deal of evidence that the public is overwhelmingly internationalist (Kull and Destler 1999). Even the swings toward isolationism after Vietnam and in the 1990s only moved opinion from 5 to 10 percentage points, and at no time in the NES time series did more than 35 percent of the public support withdrawing from the world. Even after the end of the Cold War, which arguably constituted a larger paradigm shift than the 9/11 terrorist attack, the public did not drastically shift its attitudes toward foreign policy spending and engagement (Bartels 1994). It would then be surprising if the threat of terrorism was able to so move opinion so drastically. In fact, in looking at attitudes after 9/11, support for isolationism actually decreased among panel members in the NES and the CCFR and support for general

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internationalism increased. Between the CCFR's 1998 study and its 2002 wave, support for internationalism increased by 10 percentage points. Of course, the aggregate shift away from isolationism does not preclude individuals from moving toward isolationism, however, the overall trend suggests that in the wake of threatening events, Americans do not wish to turn inward.

Overall, it appears that the American public prefers engagement over isolation, although the popular picture of the public in the recent past is one of an inward looking citizenry. Kull and Destler (1999) argue that the public's isolationism is a myth and that both journalists and political elites seriously misread public sentiment about foreign affairs. They claim that one of the serious misinterpretations comes from construing the public's desire to focus more on domestic issues than foreign policy as evidence as isolationist tendencies. The authors argue that in fact in the 1990s, the public generally supported multilateralist, cooperative types of foreign policy although with some caveats. They find that there was a substantial gap between how policy practitioners perceived public attitudes on foreign affairs and actual public opinion as reflected in public opinion polls, mostly because elites tended to rely on non-systematic signals of the public's sentiments such as letters to Congress and discussions with unrepresentative constituents. In focus groups of American citizens, Kull and Destler (1999) found that no participants called for the United States to really withdrawal from the international spectrum but these participants criticized the specific character of US international engagement in the 1990s as bearing too many burdens and having too large of a share of the work. The authors also argue that some of the public's disapproval of particular foreign policies such as foreign aid comes from being ill informed and thus should not be taken as evidence for a

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preference for isolationism. For example, the public grossly overestimates the amount of the federal budget spent on foreign aid (the median estimate was 20 percent of the national budget), but when they are informed of the actual amount (approximately 1 percent) they generally support maintaining spending or spending *more* (Gilens 2001; Kull and Destler 1999). In Figure 2.1, support for isolationism stayed the same in the CCFR data before and after 9/11 and decreased by 7 percentage points in the NES data. In sum, it is clear that the American public generally prefers internationalism over isolationism and does not turn toward isolationism in large numbers after threatening events.

In the face of the threat from terrorism, it also seems unlikely that Americans in large numbers would support an isolationist turn given that political elites of all stripes support an America engaged in the world (Kull and Destler 1999; Page and Barabas 2000). The quadrennial CCFR surveys poll both an elite and mass sample. The elite sample surveys leaders from Congress, the executive branch, international business leaders, journalists and editors, labor leaders, university faculty in international affairs, religious leaders, special interest groups, and members of policy organizations (Global Views 2004). Over the seven waves of the survey from 1974 to 1998, elites were almost unanimously supportive of the United States taking an active role in foreign affairs (Page and Barabas 2000). Additionally, elites are generally more in favor of hawkish policy than the public (Page and Barabas 2000), but the public has shown willingness to support hawkish policy in times of threat. Although the public generally supports cooperative foreign policy, there is considerable public support for increasing military spending as well as using troops when citizens feel under threat (Page and

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Barabas 2000). For example, in a 1998 survey taken shortly after the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Africa, 63 percent of the public supported using ground troops to attack terrorist training camps and 80 percent supported air strikes (Page and Barabas 2000). Given that the political leadership is so supportive of internationalism and is more supportive of more hawkish types of internationalism than the public, it would be surprising if the public ignored these elite cues entirely and moved toward isolationism in the wake of terrorism.

Foreign policy spending preferences

As Figure 2.1 shows, after the 9/11 attacks, public support for internationalism increased, yet this figure cannot demonstrate the more specific types of foreign policy that Americans supported. After terrorism landed on the shores of the U.S, did Americans increasingly support a foreign policy that emphasized cooperation, negotiations, and foreign aid or did the public instead prefer a foreign policy that emphasized military power and defense spending? Support for defense spending reached its highest peak in two decades in 2002, providing evidence that as Americans faced the threat of terrorism, in the aggregate they supported a more assertive type of foreign policy that necessitates a stronger, well-funded military. Figure 2.2 displays the percentage of respondents who either wanted to "expand/increase" federal budgetary spending on defense or "cut back/decrease," measured by the CCFR and the NES from 1974 to 2004. The CCFR question asked respondents simply whether defense spending should be expanded, cut back, or kept at the same level, while the NES question asked respondents to place themselves on a 7-point scale ranging from the government should "greatly increase" to "greatly decrease" spending on defense. The top panel of the figure presents respondents'

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attitudes from the CCFR over a 30 year time period while the lower panel presents opinions from the NES for 24 years. Respondents who placed themselves anywhere on the “increase” side of the NES scale (placement at 5,6,or 7) are in the “increase” category on Figure 2.2 while respondents who placed themselves at the lower end of the scale (1,2,or 3) are included in the “decrease” category.

Defense spending attitudes are sensitive to events and changes in the international arena. For example, after the end of the Cold War, the public and primarily well-informed individuals supported decreases in defense spending (Bartels 1994). Over time support for the defense budget varies widely, and in a majority of surveys, Americans prefer to decrease the amount of money spent on the military. A larger or equal percentage of respondents wanted to cut the defense budget in 7 of 12 NES studies presented here and 6 of 9 CCFR studies, suggesting that the public is not always supportive of a large and active military. Yet both datasets reveal that the highest level of support for increasing defense spending came in 2002, the first wave of each survey after the terrorist attacks. Forty-four percent of respondents in the 2002 CCFR study supported expanding the defense budget, a 14 percentage point increase in support from the 1998 survey. In comparison, 59 percent of NES respondents wanted more spending on defense in 2002, also a 14 percentage point increase from the previous survey wave before the 2000 election. This year to year increase is in support for defense spending is larger than all but one other year-pair over time in these surveys, suggesting that the threat of terrorism influenced defense spending attitudes in dramatic fashion.

The increase in support for defense spending after 9/11 is suggestive that the threat of terrorism increased support for hawkish foreign policy more generally. Defense

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spending attitudes are strongly related to individuals' willingness to use force in international affairs; those respondents prepared to send troops to handle international problems are also more supportive of expanding defense spending (Bartels 1994). The CCFR contains three other spending measures that should illuminate whether the threat of terrorism increased support for other types of hawkish policy and decreased support for dovish policies such as foreign aid. In addition to asking about defense spending, since 1974, the CCFR included questions about whether the government should expand or cut back spending on economic aid to other countries and military aid to other nations. In 2002 and 2004, the survey also included a question about whether spending on homeland security should increase or decrease.

Expanding economic aid to other nations clearly falls into the dovish foreign policy category, but military aid falls into more of a gray area between dovish and hawkish. Respondents may interpret military aid in terms of another type of economic assistance and diplomacy to other countries or see military aid as a form of defense since the United States may sell arms to allies to ensure security abroad. Figures 2.3 and 2.4 display the percentage of respondents who wanted the government to expand and cut back on military aid and economic aid, respectively.

The figures demonstrate that support for expanding military or economic aid programs is quite low across time, yet these attitudes are movable. The average support for expanding economic aid is 10 percent of the public over the three decade time span while support for military aid is even lower at approximately 6 percent over the time period. Even at its highest point, support for expanding economic aid to other countries only reaches 14 percent of the public in 2002, while in the same year, 48 percent of

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respondents wanted the government to cut back on foreign aid. The highest point of support for expanding military aid also came in 2002, but the absolute level of support for increasing military aid is only 10 percent of respondents. From 1998 to 2002, support for expanding military aid increased by only 2 percentage points but the support for cutting military aid decreased by 10 percentage points, from 56 percent to 46 percent of respondents while support for cutting economic aid remained identical at 48 percent of the public. The difference in the patterns between military and economic aid suggests that in the wake of the terrorist attack, the public increasingly thought of military aid in more hawkish terms and supported a continued level of support while the public continued to consider economic aid as more dovish policy and preferred to cut it.

In addition to the questions about foreign aid and defense spending, the CCFR included a question on the 2002 and 2004 survey waves on respondents' attitudes on homeland security. In both years that asked about homeland security, an overwhelming majority supported increasing spending – 65 percent of the public in 2002 and between 51 and 60 percent in 2004 depending on survey mode. Although there is no measure of homeland security spending attitudes prior to 2002, the decrease in support for expanding funding in 2004 suggests that as a result of the terrorist threat, 2002 may have been a high point in support for homeland security spending. This high level of support for homeland security in 2002 and 2004 is also found in the NES. In 2002, 65 percent of NES respondents wanted the federal government to increase spending on homeland security. While support for homeland security decreased a bit in 2004, a majority of NES respondents – 58 percent – preferred that the government further increase spending on homeland security.

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Overall, in the wake of the threat of terrorism, the public increasingly supported hawkish foreign policy such as defense spending while support for dovish policy such as economic aid was relatively unaffected. Figure 2.5 shows the percentage of respondents in the CCFR and the NES who wanted to increase spending on defense, economic aid, military aid, foreign aid, homeland security, and border security from 1998 to 2004, several years before and after 9/11. Citizens overwhelmingly supported increasing spending on policies designed to keep the country safe at home – 65 to 70 percent of individuals in these surveys supported increases in spending for border security and homeland security. Support for defense spending does not reach the same level as homeland security; however, it is clear that as the political environment grew more threatening after 9/11, public support for military spending increased. Although the country did not turn inward after 9/11, neither did Americans suddenly want to spend more money abroad in the form of foreign aid. Only between 8 and 14 percent of respondents supported increasing spending for any type of aid abroad in these years; the more threatening environment after 9/11 did not lead to a sharp decrease in supporters of foreign aid nor did it lead to an increase.

The public as a whole increasingly supported more hawkish policies after the terrorist attacks, but did different segments of the public react differently to the threat of terrorism? Did support for hawkish policies increase only among respondents who already supported defense spending prior to the terrorist attacks or was it more widespread? The NES's 2000-2002-2004 panel study provides a way to explore how foreign policy attitudes changed over time among the same respondents. The panel interviewed the same respondents over five survey waves: pre- and post-election

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interviews in 2000 and 2002 and a post-election wave after the 2004 presidential race. The 2000 sample included 1,807 respondents in the pre-election wave and 1,555 were re-interviewed after the election. Two years later, 1,187 respondents from the 2000 study were re-interviewed before the election and 1,070 participated in the 2002 post-election study. Additionally, the 2002 study added 324 respondents in a "fresh cross" sample. All figures in this section refer only to the respondents in the original panel who were re-interviewed in 2002. In 2004, 840 panel members were re-interviewed as the last wave. This panel provides a unique opportunity to test how a changing political context affected how American citizens understood the world.

To explore how the changing context surrounding terrorism influenced the public, Figure 2.6 shows respondents' mean foreign policy attitudes during the three waves of the NES survey, and separates individuals by their partisanship in 2000 as a way to explore whether the increase in hawkishness was widespread among the public. Partisanship provides individuals a way of view the political world and a heuristic for what types of policies to support or oppose. As a long-standing political predisposition, partisanship is strong determinant of policy attitudes and how accepting citizens are of cues and policies from elites. Democrats tend to be less supportive of hawkish policy than Republicans, and may be less willing to take cues about foreign policy from a Republican president.

Support for hawkish policy increased among the public as a whole and also among partisan identifiers. Figure 2.6 displays respondents' mean attitudes on a series of foreign policy attitudes that the NES asked over at least 2 waves of the survey. These measures are respondents' preferences on federal spending on border security, defense,

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foreign aid, and homeland security. Respondents answered questions about whether they wanted to increase, decrease, or maintain current levels of spending on these areas. The variables are scaled from -1 (decrease) to 1 (increase) with the midpoint of 0 indicating that the respondent wanted to spend the same. In addition, the last panel of Figure 2.6 displays the average level of approval of George W. Bush's handling of terrorism, scaled from 0 to 1 with higher values indicating higher approval of the president's hawkish policy. While the approval question measures presidential approval in part, it also reflects respondents' views about the hawkish policies pursued by the president.

Similar to the findings from the previous section, Figure 2.6 reveals that from 2000 to 2002, overall opinion on border security and defense spending grew more hawkish while attitudes toward foreign aid remained steadily in the category of "spend less". The other thing to note is that in 2000, there were substantial differences in foreign policy attitudes by partisanship. On average, Democrats preferred substantially more spending on foreign aid and substantially less spending on defense than did Republicans. The differences in attitudes about border security were not as stark by party, but Republicans wanted the highest average spending to protect the border in 2000.

While partisans' baseline attitudes were different, the more threatening political environment after 2001 influenced Democrats, Independents, and Republicans in similar ways. From 2000 to 2002, the average spending preference for border security increased by .26 for Democrats, .25 for Independents, and .23 for Republicans, a significant increase in a hawkish direction for all groups. Similarly, the increase in support for more defense spending ranged from .21 for Independents to .25 for Democrats. The patterns for foreign aid were slightly different; while Independents and Republicans supported

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slightly more foreign aid in 2002 than in 2000 by .07 and .08 respectively, on average, Democrats wanted slightly less foreign aid in 2002. In addition, in 2002, while Republicans had the highest levels of support for the president's handling of terrorism and homeland security spending, the level of support among Democrats and Independents for both measures was quite high. Seventy-two percent of Republicans supported an increase in funding for homeland security in 2002 compared to 62 of Democrats and 60 percent of Independents.

A similarly high percentage of Americans approved of the president's handling of the War on Terror in 2002, which may indicate both a rally effect in addition to support for the policies of the War on Terror. Forty-eight percent of Democrats strongly approved of the president's performance on terrorism in comparison to 64 percent of Independents and 76 percent of Republicans. Given that only 16 percent of Democrats voted for George Bush in the 2000 election, this high level of approval among Democrats again suggests that the events of 9/11 and the threatening political environment broadly influenced the public by increasing support for the president and the hawkish policy advocated by his administration. Figure 2.6 demonstrates that to the extent that support for hawkish policy increased, the increase is not explained by respondents' partisanship since Democrats, Independents, and Republicans reacted similarly to an increasingly threatening political environment.

Alternative explanation: Changes in partisanship

As the last section demonstrates, while partisan groups had different levels of support for foreign policy, Democrats, Independents, and Republicans alike increased their support for hawkish policy after 9/11. However, there is an alternative explanation

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to explain general hawkish trend after 9/11 – changes in partisan identification. If more people identified as Republican in 2002, then a public with a larger proportion of Republicans may express hawkish foreign policy attitudes consistent with its partisanship. This increased hawkishness could result simply from citizens updating their partisanship for reasons that may or may not have to do with threat of terrorism and adjusting their foreign policy attitudes to reflect their partisanship. If this is the case, then it would be the net increase in Republicans rather than threat perception that would lead to an increasingly hawkish public and the increase in hawkishness should primarily occur among Republicans rather than Democrats and Independents.

Several pieces of evidence suggest that the increase in hawkishness cannot simply be explained by a public with higher proportions of Republicans looking to increase defense spending. The first piece of evidence is that among NES panelists interviewed over four years (2000-2004), the correlation between partisanship over each wave ranges between .85 and .87 depending on the years in question, demonstrating that partisanship is quite stable in this representative sample of the public. Moreover, only 53 respondents, or 5 percent, moved from identifying as Democrats in 2000 to identifying as Republicans in 2002 while an equal number (54 respondents or 5 percent) moved from calling themselves Independents to calling themselves Republicans. However, this 10 percent is not enough to move opinion so far toward the hawkish end by 2002.

Using a set of three questions asked on all three waves of the NES panel (border security, defense, and foreign aid), combined into an additive index, it is clear that the shift in opinion occurred in parallel among Democrats and Independents as well as Republicans. Table 2.1 presents the means of these indices for the three survey waves,

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which are scaled to range from -1 (spend less) to 1 (spend more). The indices are also divided by partisanship, measured in 2000, which only accounts for partisanship at one point in time. The table illustrates that not only Republicans became more hawkish after the terrorist attacks but rather, there was a marked hawkish shift among the public as a whole from 2000 to 2002 and that the shift was either as large or larger among non-Republicans than Republicans. Looking across the whole four year time horizon, the opinions of Democrats and Independents moved more in the hawkish direction than did Republicans' opinions. Additionally, the general trend among attitudes of all groups is to grow more hawkish in 2002 than 2000, then decrease hawkishness in 2004 but remain more hawkish than attitudes were originally in 2000. Overall, it is clear that the increase in hawkishness in the public after the 9/11 terrorist attacks cannot be solely attributed to an increase in Republican identifiers, and that respondents of all political stripes became more hawkish over time.

There are some differences in attitudes between those people who remained Democrats and Independents from 2000 to 2002 and those who switched to identify with the Republican party in 2002, yet these differences are not large enough to account for the overall hawkish trend in the public. Democrats who changed their party affiliation were significantly more hawkish in 2002 ($p < .01$) than the 95 percent of Democrats who remained Democrats; Independents who became Republicans were only marginally more hawkish than Independents who stayed Independents ($p < .10$, one-tailed). It is true that the 10 percent of respondents who became Republicans in 2002 had higher levels of hawkishness in 2002 than their former co-partisans, yet partisans who maintained their partisanship from 2000 onward also preferred more hawkish policies in 2002 as

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evidenced in Table 2.1. In addition, although the differences in opinion from 2000 to 2002 are larger for Democratic switchers than for Democratic steadfasts (.28 v .18, t = 4.38, 6.77, respectively), steadfast Democrats do move quite substantially toward the hawkish end.

Threat and media consumption as moderators

While partisanship cannot explain the increase in support for hawkish policy from 2000 to 2002, concerns about terrorism and perceptions of threat are closely related to support for assertive types of foreign policy. Citizens concerned and fearful about the next terrorist attack supported more hawkish policies than those less fearful of further terrorism. As Chapter 3 will discuss in more detail, perceptions of threat are correlated with support for a wide variety of punitive policies, so we may expect concerns about terrorism to partially explain the increase in support for hawkish foreign policy (Gordon and Arian 2000; Huddy et al 2005). Figure 2.7 displays foreign policy spending attitudes from the 2002 NES divided by how concerned respondents were about the potential for another terrorist attack. The NES asked respondents how likely they believed another terrorist attack was in the next 12 months with answers ranging from "not very likely" to "very likely". Concern about terrorism was high in the 2002 NES - two-thirds of respondents believed that terrorism was likely or very likely in the near future with the remaining one-third less concerned about future terrorism. The figure divides respondents into "high threat" and "low threat" categories by the mean level of the terrorism question and illustrates respondents' mean attitudes on four foreign policy spending questions – foreign aid, defense, homeland security, and border security. As before, the spending questions are scaled -1 (decrease spending), 0 (keep the same), 1 (increase).

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Respondents highly concerned about terrorism adopted significantly more hawkish foreign policy positions than did those people who did not anticipate further terrorism. Individuals concerned about a terrorist attack in the next year wanted to spend significantly more on defense, homeland security, and border security ($p<.01$, all variables) and significantly less on foreign aid ($p<.02$) than their less threatened counterparts in the NES. The difference in attitudes based on respondents' level of threat suggests that those citizens most concerned by terrorism accepted the president's foreign policy positions, perhaps deeming those policies the most effective way to reduce the risk of further threat. The next chapter will review the literature on threat and discuss the political and psychological reasons for this close relationship between threat and hawkish policy.

One consequence of watching television news after the 9/11 attacks was an increase in individuals' sense of fear and threat (Cohen Silver et al 2002; Schlenger et al 2002), but another way that the media may have influenced the public was by influencing foreign policy attitudes directly. In addition to providing citizens information about terrorism, the news media may also have provided citizens both emotional reminders of their fear and helplessness on 9/11 and also cues from policymakers such as the president on the best ways to lower the risk of further terrorism. This raises the question of whether exposure to media coverage of terrorism influenced not only concerns over terrorism but also foreign policy attitudes.

To see how media exposure influenced foreign policy attitudes after 9/11, Figures 2.8-2.10 show the average spending attitudes on border security, defense, and homeland security for respondents by both threat level and level of media exposure, measured in

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2002. The figures display attitudes in both 2000 and 2002 for defense and border security spending and only in 2002 for homeland security. The media measure is an average of the number of days in the past week the respondent watched local or national news in the 2002 wave of the survey. I categorized respondents as "High TV" watchers if they watched more than the average number of days per week, or approximately 3.75 days per week, and "Low TV" watchers if they watched less than the average.

Collectively these figures demonstrate that respondents watching more television news supported more hawkish policy than did those with less media exposure. In addition, high threat respondents with the most exposure to television news prefer significantly more spending on defense, border security, and homeland security than respondents less concerned about terrorism with less media exposure. Looking at defense spending attitudes in 2000 in Figure 2.8, television watching increased support for hawkish policy but concerns about terrorism did not. In contrast, in 2002, both threat level and media consumption mattered: 63 percent the 373 respondents in the "high threat, high TV" group supported increased defense spending, in comparison to 52 percent of the "low threat, low TV" group. Clearly support for defense spending was high across all the groups, but exposure to television news warning the country about the dangers of terrorism pushed support for defense even higher. Figures 2.9 and 2.10 demonstrate similar patterns – overall high levels of support for spending on protective measures like border security and homeland security and even stronger support for these measures among those people frightened by the prospect of more terrorism who watched the most news coverage. Together, these figures suggest that the threat of terrorism and media exposure strongly influence the public's support of certain types of foreign policy.

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The 9/11 attacks altered the United States in a variety of ways, one of the most fundamental being the type of foreign policy that its citizens supported. The public increasingly supported more aggressive types of foreign policies and continued to reject measures such as foreign aid. Partisanship cannot explain the trend toward more hawkish preferences in 2002– all partisans increased their support for more punitive types of foreign policy to approximately the same degree. In contrast, perceptions of threat appear to shape how citizens wanted the government to pursue foreign policy. Concern over future terrorism shaped the amount of money citizens wanted the federal government to spend as well as support for the president's hawkish policies abroad. As Chapters 4 and 7 will demonstrate, perceptions of threat also increased support for the Iraq war and Republican politicians, indicating that these perceptions have powerfully shaped the course of the country in the past seven years. Clearly threat mattered for what type of foreign policy the public desired in the wake of terrorism. The next chapter presents a general model of threat's effect on persuasion and how the political and media environment affected the public's willingness to adopt hawkish policy attitudes.

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Table 2.1: Change in foreign policy attitudes by partisanship

	Foreign policy spending 2000	Foreign policy spending 2002	Foreign policy spending 2004	Difference 2000-2002	Difference 2002-2004	Difference 2000-2004
All respondents	0.36	0.51	0.48	0.15*	-0.03*	0.12*
Democrats	0.26	0.44	0.39	0.17*	-0.04	0.13*
Independents	0.36	0.49	0.58	0.13*	0.09	0.22*
Republicans	0.47	0.61	0.55	0.14*	-0.06*	0.08*

* Source: NES 2000-2004. Asterisks indicate that the difference is significant at $p < .05$ (two-tailed test). Indices are made up of 3 questions weighted equally that asked respondents whether they believed that the federal government should spend more (1), less (-1), or the same (0) on foreign aid, defense, and securing the borders. Partisanship comes from the 2000 wave and includes leaners with partisans. For all respondents $N_{2000} = 1800$, $N_{2002} = 1069$, $N_{2004} = 838$. For Democrats $N_{2000} = 885$, $N_{2002} = 500$, $N_{2004} = 386$. For Independents, $N_{2000} = 225$, $N_{2002} = 119$, $N_{2004} = 79$. For Republicans $N_{2000} = 690$, $N_{2002} = 450$, $N_{2004} = 373$.

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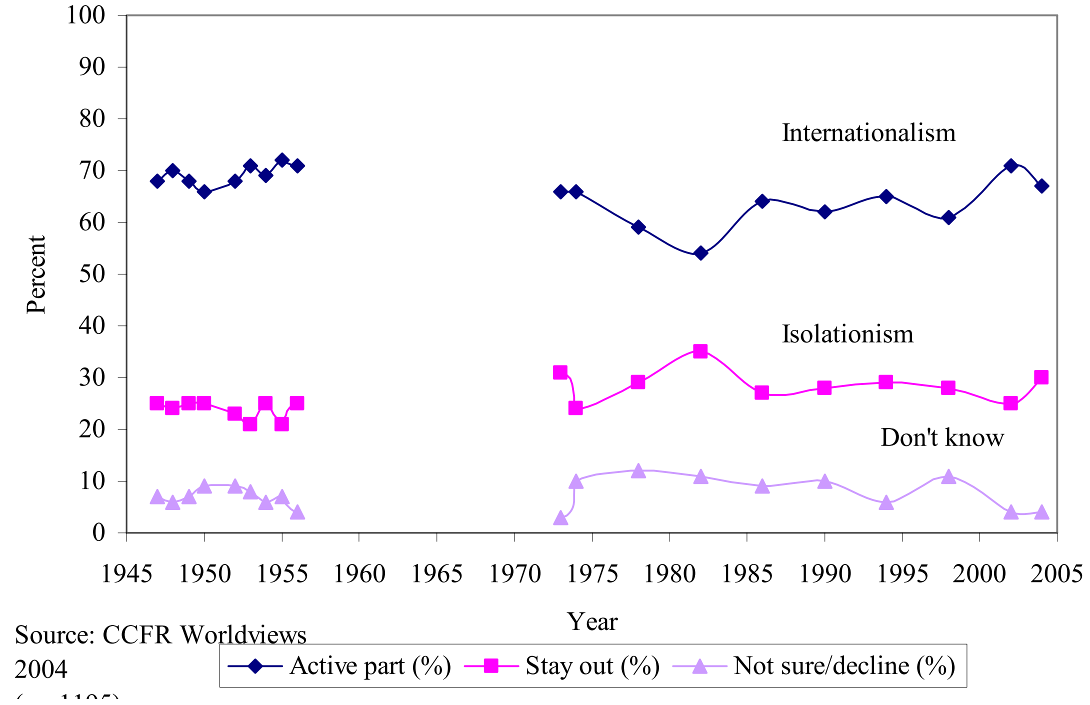
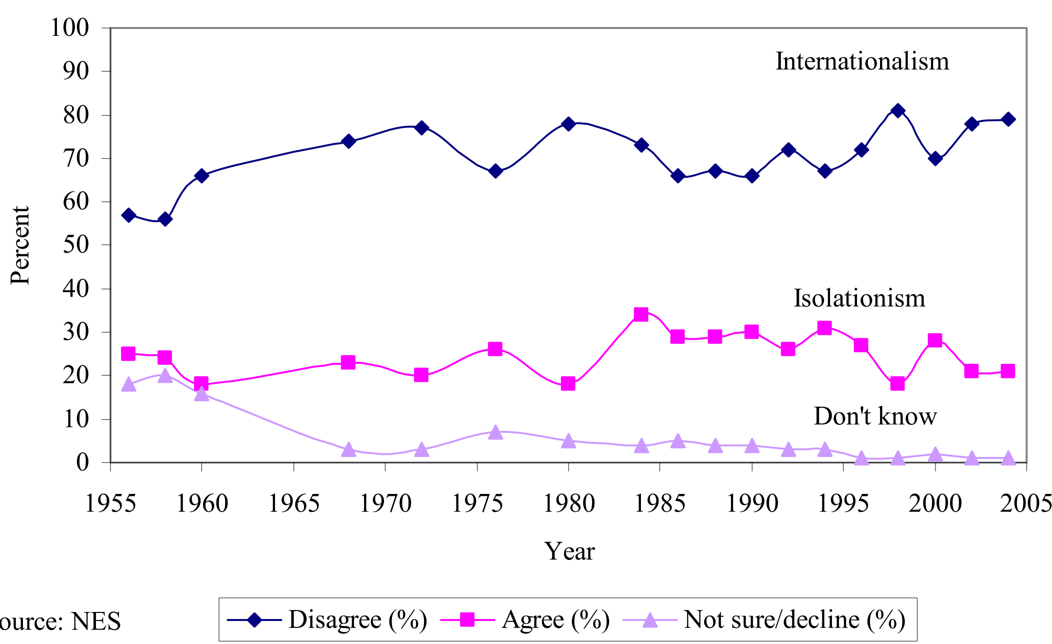
Figure 2.1: American isolationism attitudes 1945-2005



Internationalism and Isolationism over time



Source: NES

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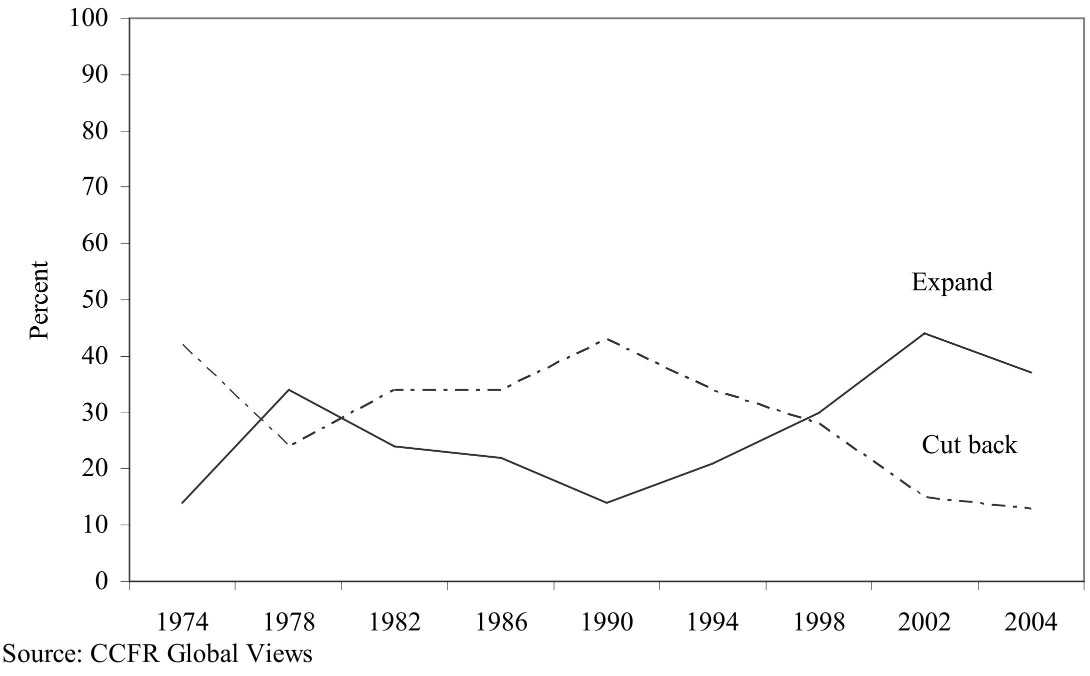
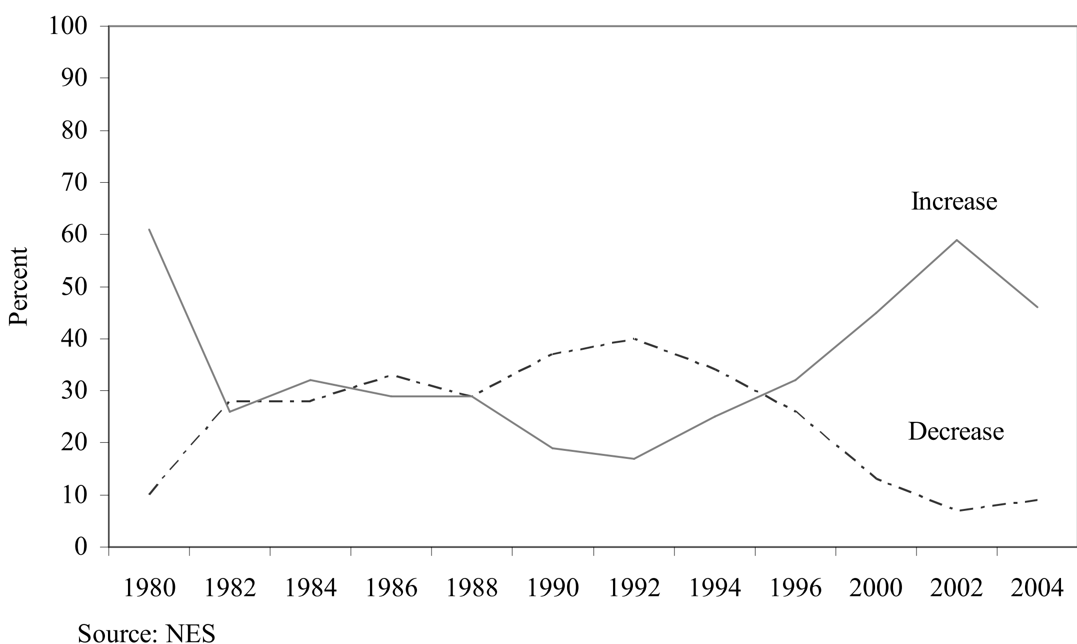
Figure 2.2: American defense spending attitudes 1974-2004



Source: CCFR Global Views



Source: NES

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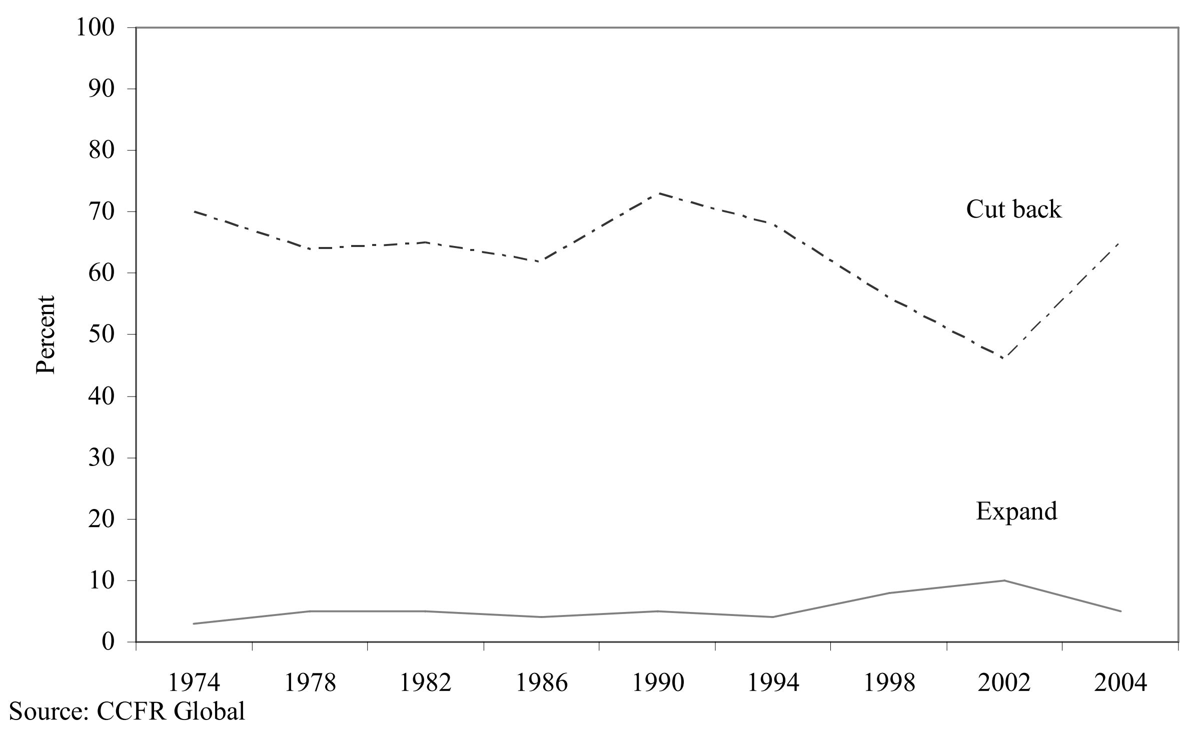
Figure 2.3: Military aid attitudes 1974-2004



Source: CCFR Global

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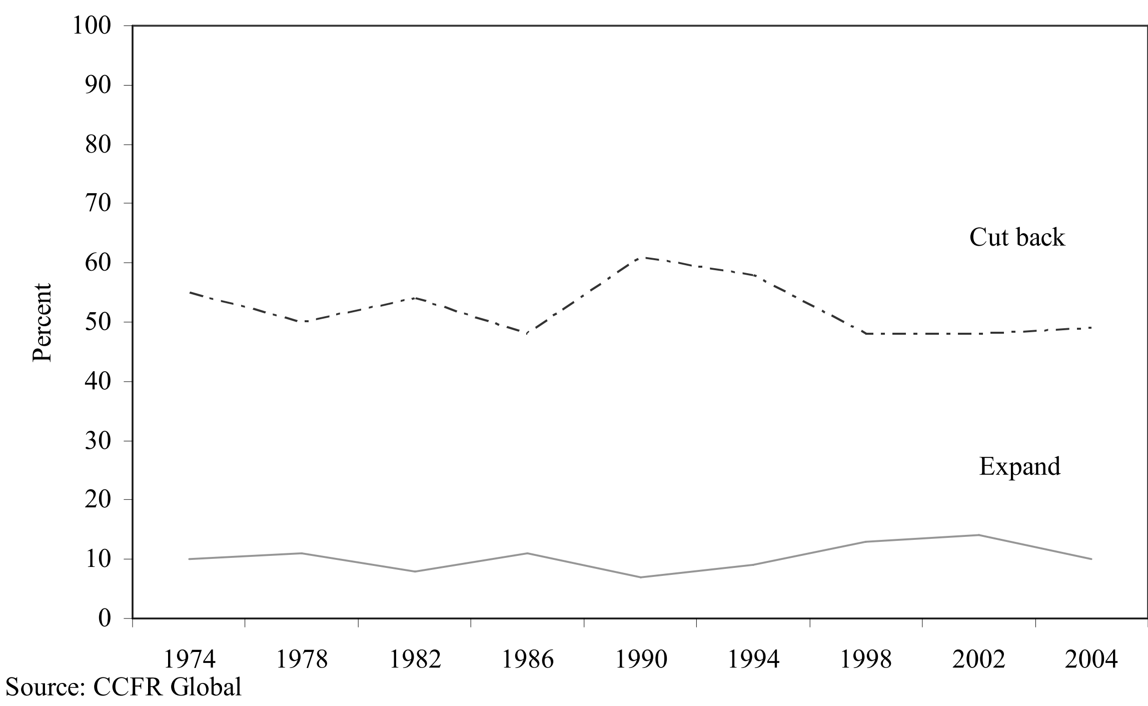
Figure 2.4: Economic aid attitudes 1974-2004



Source: CCFR Global

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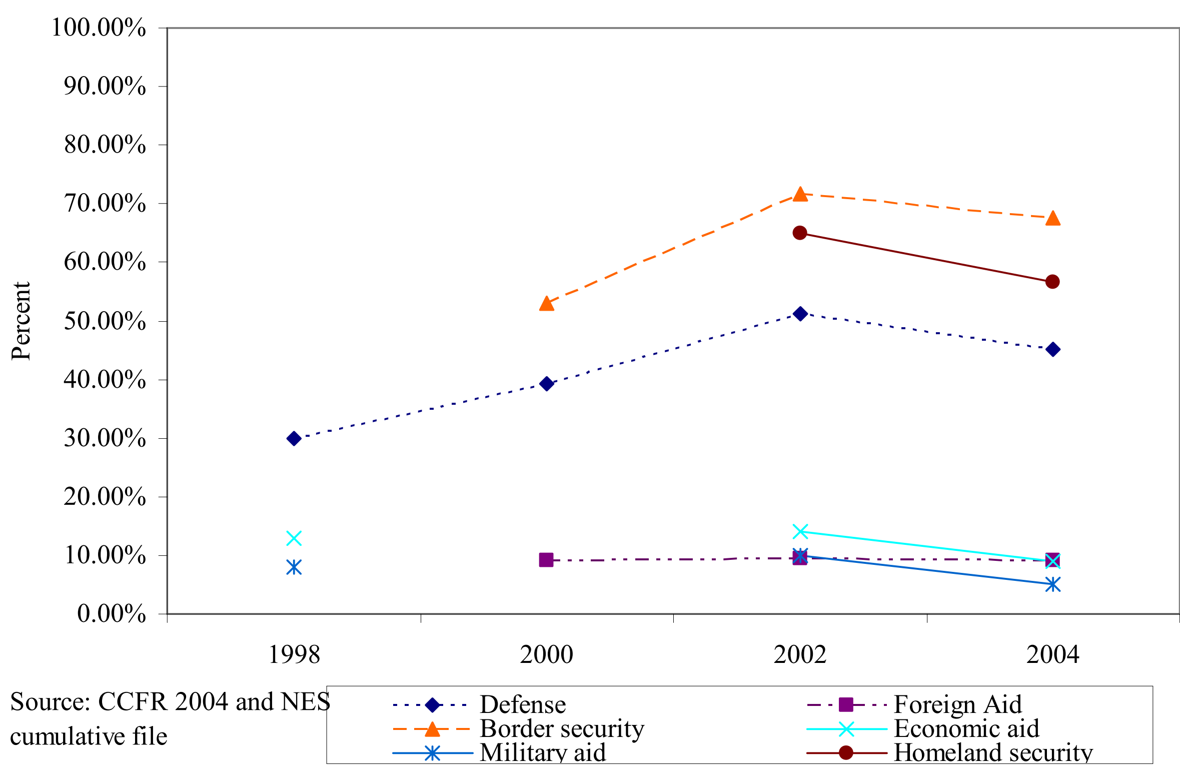
Figure 2.5: Overall foreign policy attitudes 1998-2004



Source: CCFR 2004 and NES cumulative file

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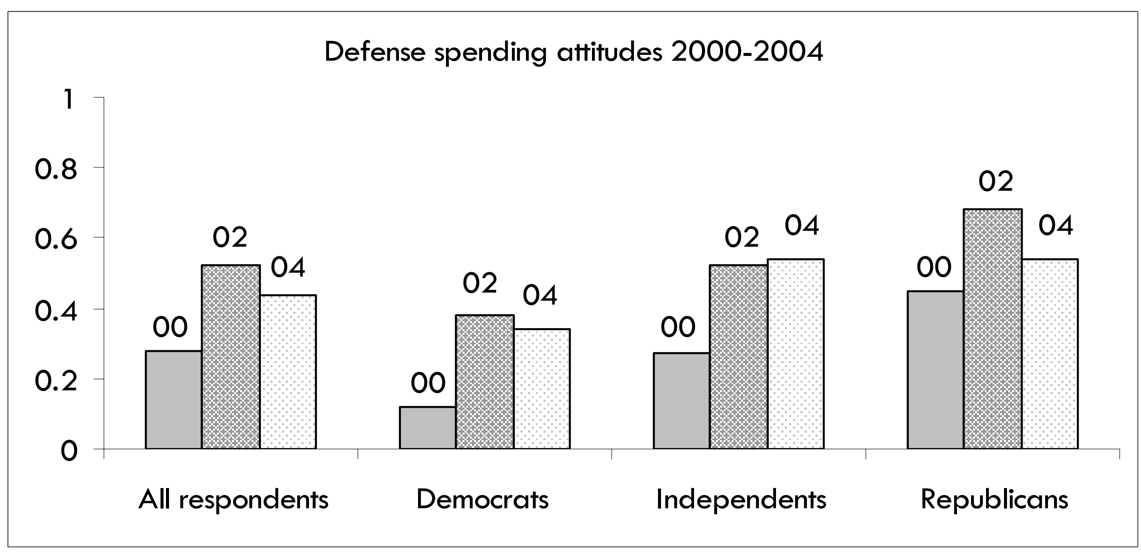
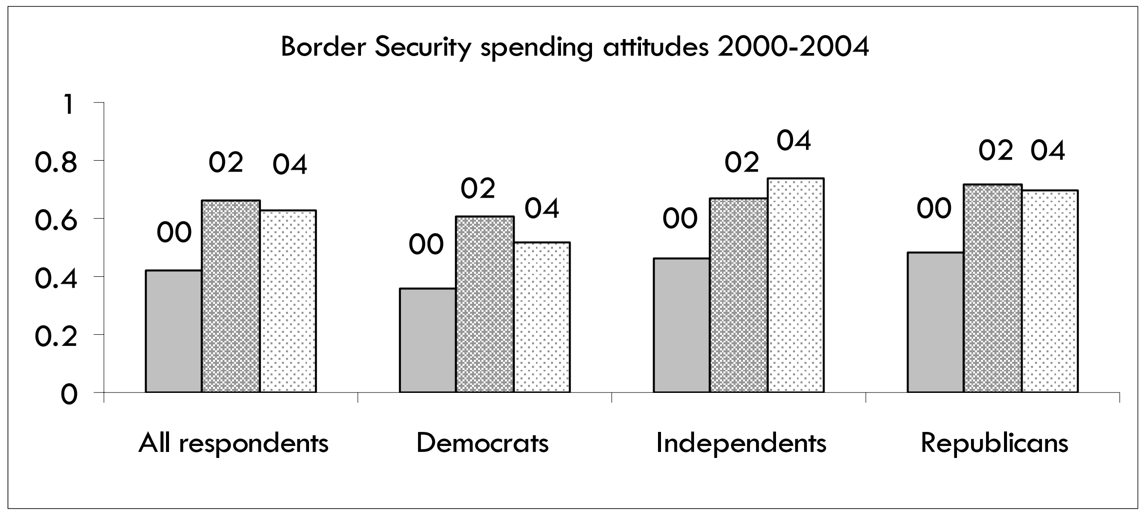
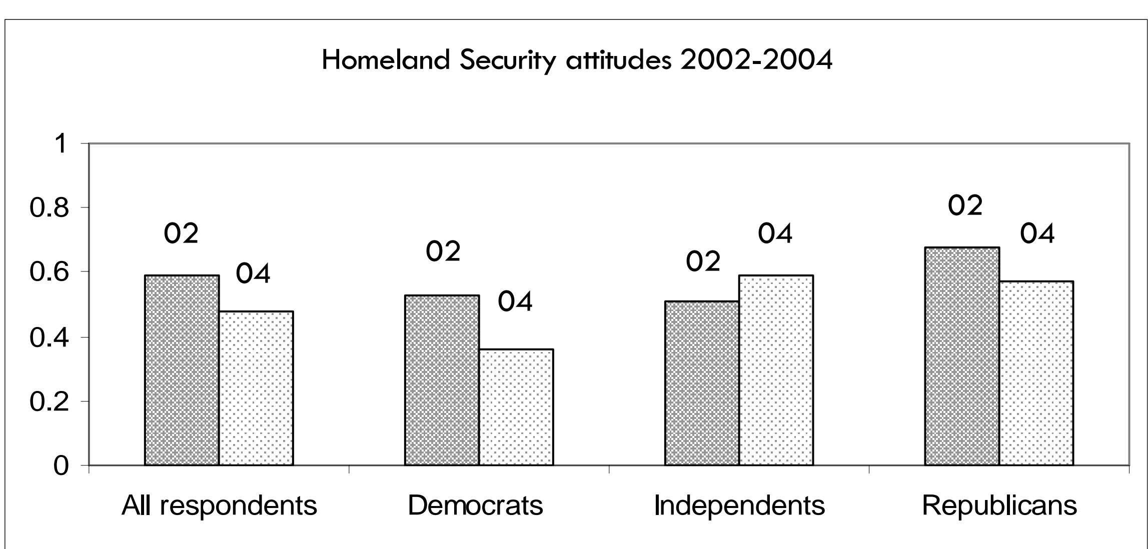
Figure 2.6: Foreign policy attitudes by partisanship







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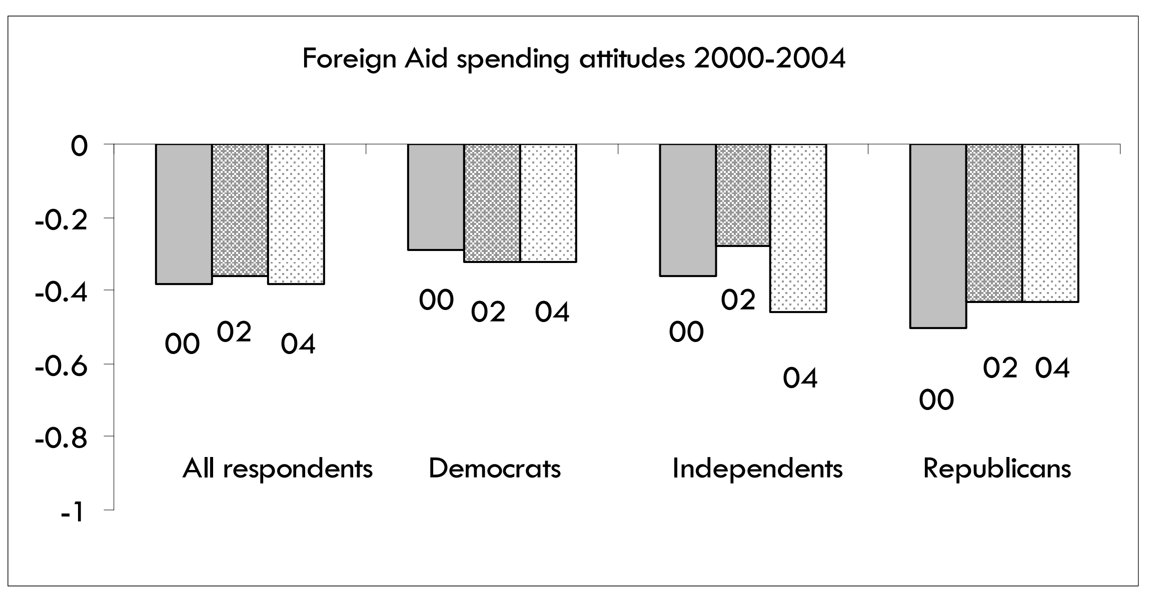

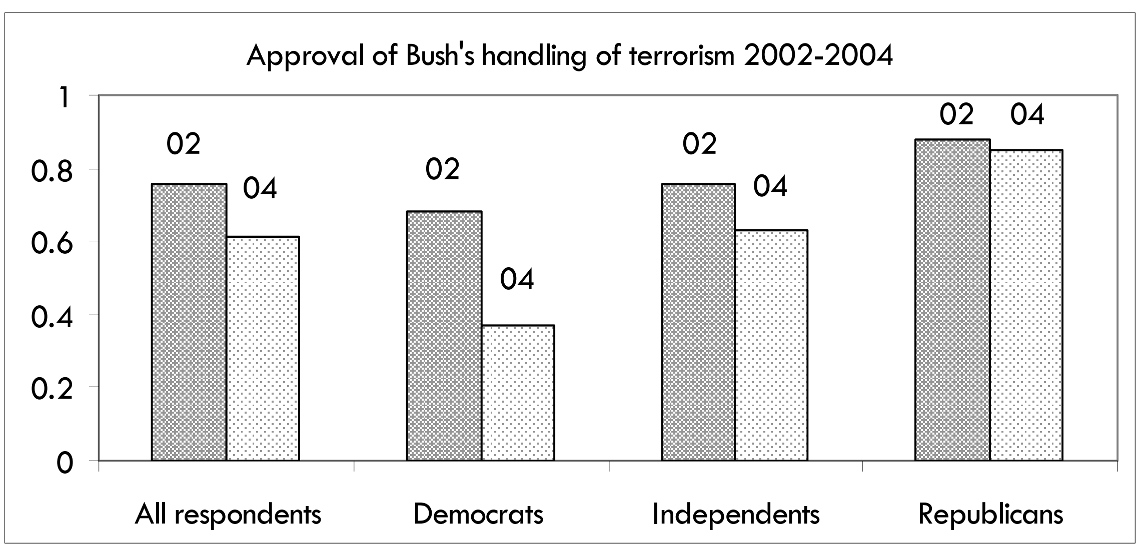

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Figure 2.7: Foreign policy spending attitudes 2002 by threat level

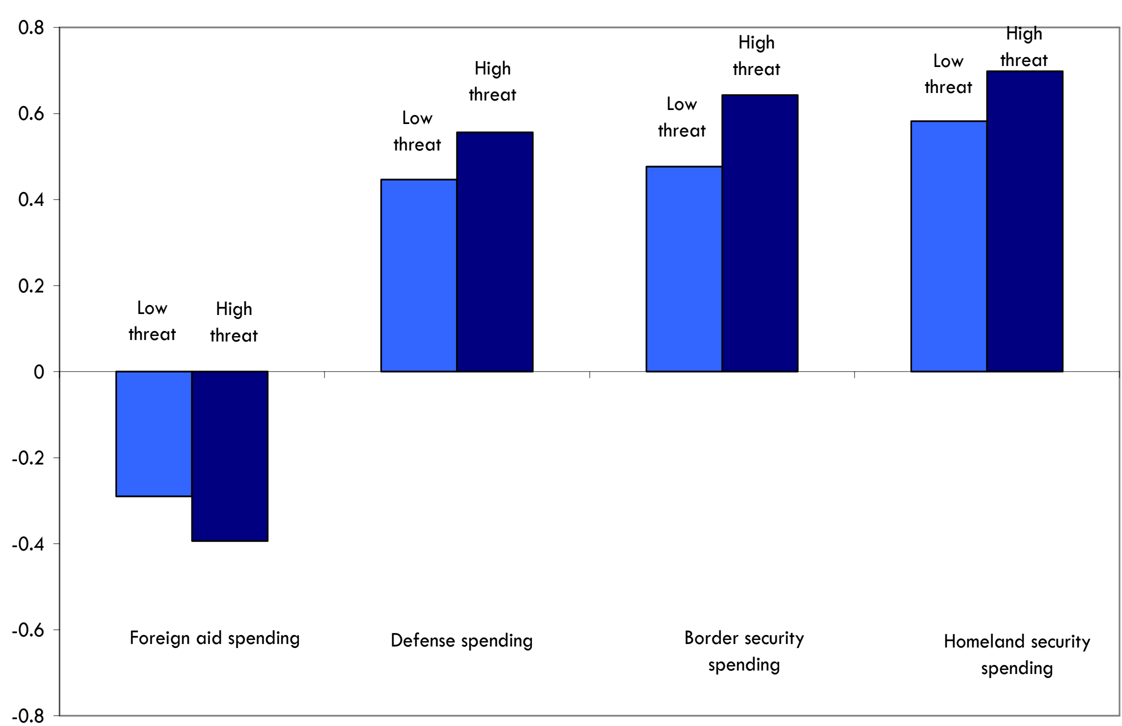

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Figure 2.8: Defense spending attitudes by threat level and TV exposure

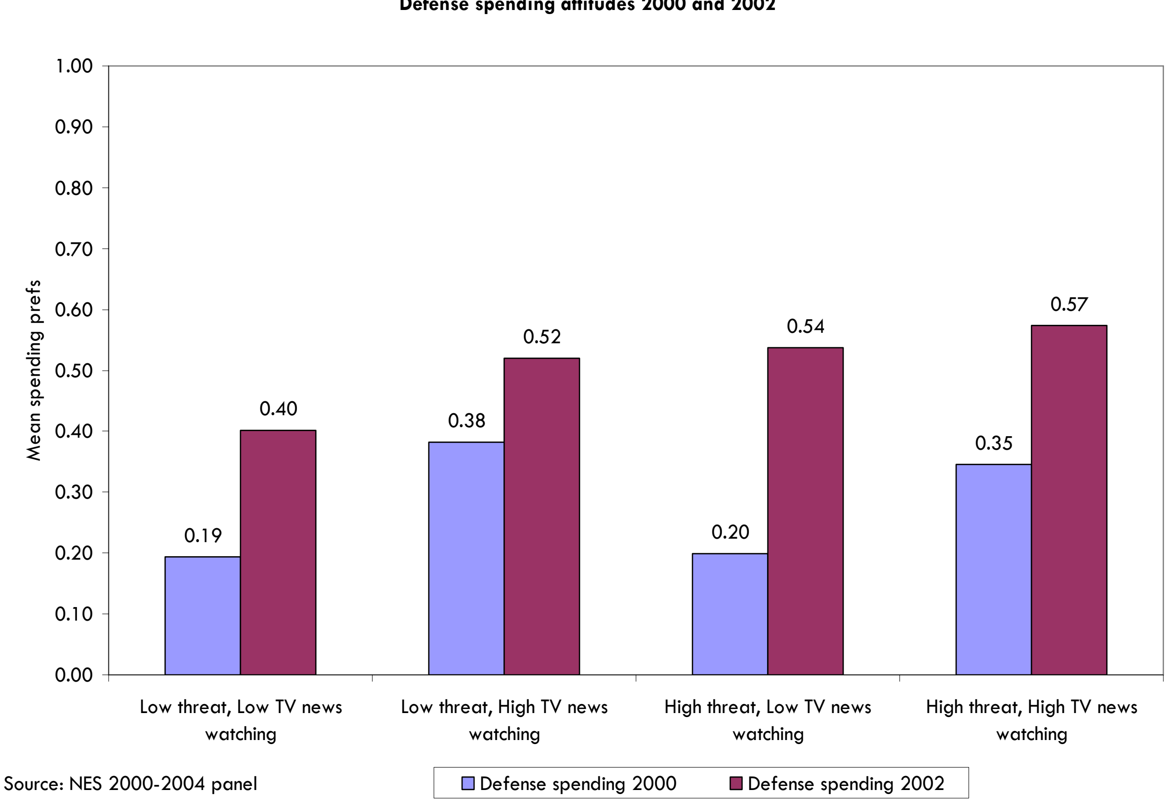

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Figure 2.9: Border security spending attitudes by threat level and TV exposure

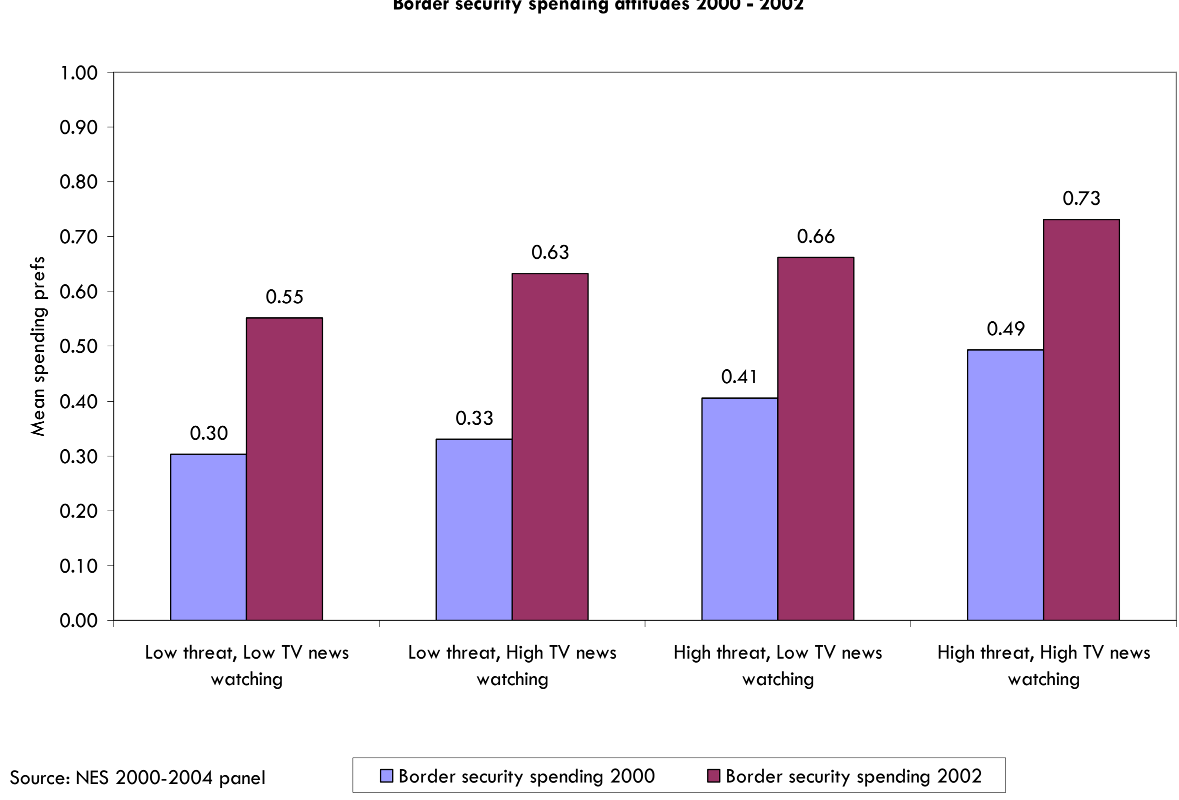

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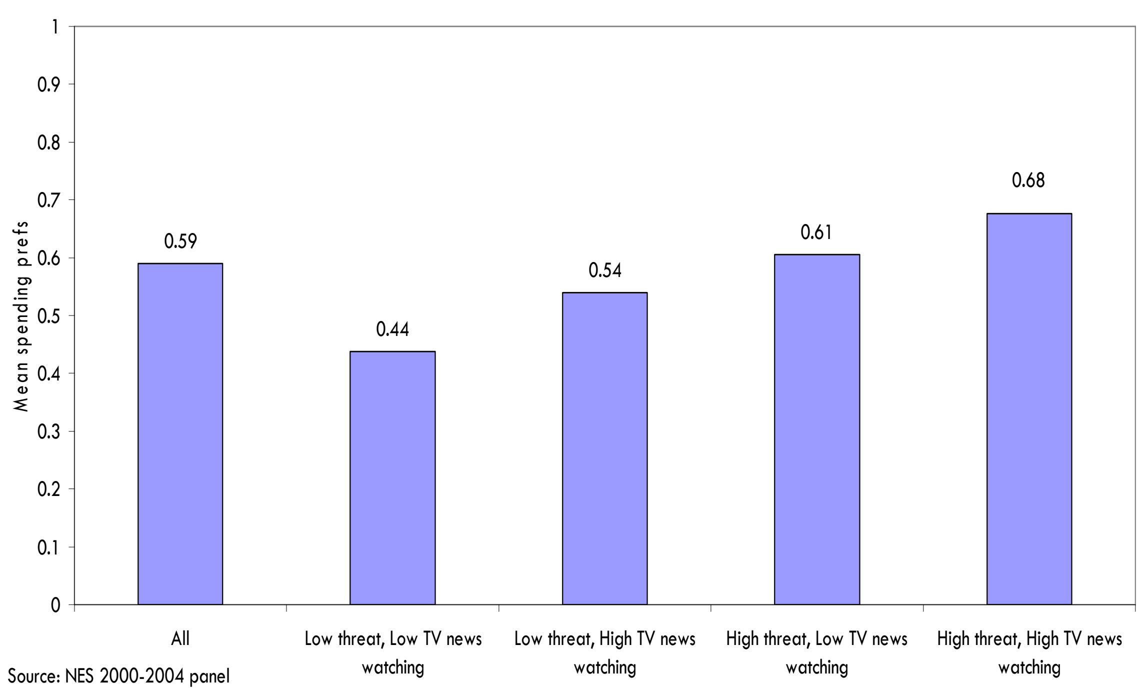
Figure 2.10: Homeland security spending by threat level and TV exposure



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Chapter 3: The Threat Theory: A Model of Foreign Policy Attitudes

Politicians and the news media regularly sound warnings about threats to the nation and citizens' lives and safety. It is difficult to turn on a news channel without hearing about the latest virus, food, political regime, or ideology that is an imminent threat to one's life and the security of the nation. The mass media disproportionately cover threatening issues such as crime and terrorism (Iyengar 1991), and even within newscasts, the media focus prominently on the most threatening aspects of stories and spend far less time providing reassuring information to the public (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2007).

Political elites also evoke threat to inform the public of danger or to explain the need for policy change. Since 9/11, George W. Bush and members of the administration have given more than 700 speeches and addresses on national security ranging from briefings on the Patriot Act to broader discussions on the War on Terror. These speeches often invoke the 9/11 attacks and the potential for future attacks as a rationale for the president's proposed policies. For example, in a February 2008 speech arguing that the federal government should be allowed to continue wiretapping suspected terrorists, the president began with these words,

> *At this moment, somewhere in the world, terrorists are planning new attacks on our country.* Their goal is to bring destruction to our shores that will make September the 11th pale by comparison. To carry out their plans, they must communicate with each other, they must recruit operatives, and they must share information. The lives of countless Americans depend on our ability to monitor these communications. (White House, Feb. 13, 2008, italics added)

The president's speech did not simply explain that wiretapping is an essential counterterrorism tactic, but rather reminded the public of the continuing and ever present

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threat to their safety. The speech used language and imagery in induce memories and emotions linked to September 11th to not only inform citizens about wiretapping but to also surround the issue with fear-inducing uncertainty. This type of communication informs but also frightens the public, increasing the potential for persuasion and also manipulation. Fear increases attention to politics but also biases the type of attention that citizens bring. Once frightened, attention is biased; citizens pay closest attention to negative and threatening information as a way of identifying and potentially neutralizing threat. The tendency of political leaders, particularly the president, and the mass media to elicit threat and fear influences political attitudes and decision making. To the extent that political leaders like the president induce fear in public without being challenged by either the political opposition or the media, citizens' attitudes are likely to be constrained by the foreign policy choices presented by the most prominent political leader, most likely, the president.

This chapter will trace out the role of threat in how individual citizens form their attitudes specifically on foreign policy. I argue that emotion, not simply information, affects citizen decision-making, suggesting that theories that focus mostly on how elite arguments influence attitudes (Berinsky 2007; Zaller 1992) or concentrate on the public's ability to make cost-benefit analyses about foreign policy and war (Jentelson 1992; Mueller 1973) overlook a significant component of opinion formation. In addition, the Threat Theory argues that the media's focus on threat and fear assists political leaders to convince the public, preventing the media from serving as a check on the political leadership.

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Given that threat is such a prominent feature of politics, the question becomes whether and how citizens process threatening messages that they encounter and approach related political decisions. Does a sense of threat influence the types of policies that citizens prefer and the types of political leaders that citizens want to represent them in times of trouble? Does a threatening political environment lead the public to support more punitive types of policies over more cooperative types or hawkish Republican political leaders over more dovish Democrats? In addition, are frightened citizens more open to persuasion than citizens unconcerned about a looming threat? If so, are threatened individuals likely to support any policies offered by elites or are they more likely to support only policies they believe will protect them from future harm? In essence, what role does threat play in politicians' ability to persuade the public?

I conceptualize threat perception as a sense of future harm to self, family or country[4]. In this conceptualization, threat perception is composed of both an objective calculation about the potential risk from an object or person and also an affective component attached to that object. That is, when citizens evaluate the potential harm from a policy change or a terrorist attack, they process both on a cognitive and an affective level. They (implicitly) calculate the risk to an appropriate reference group, such as self, state, or country, and simultaneously evaluate their emotional reaction to the source of the threat. Because this concept has both cognitive and affective elements, I use the term threat rather than fear or anxiety.

In this model, threat perception is mainly a state characteristic rather than a permanent, individual difference variable. While some people are more likely to identify

[4] This is similar to a definition offered by the Oxford English Dictionary of threat as "a denunciation to a person of ill to befall him; esp. a declaration of hostile determination or of loss, pain, punishment, or damage to be inflicted in retribution…"

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threats in the environment (see Mogg et al 1990; MacLeod and Mathews 1991), threat perception is not constant over time across citizens or within the same individuals over time. What one considers threatening might be determined by that individual's permanent characteristics (i.e. women might be particularly concerned about changes in abortion policy), but whether or not an individual considers a particular threat to be troublesome depends not only on personal characteristics but also on how the threat is framed, presented, and who articulates the threat. For example, particularly vivid depictions of terrorism on the nightly news might cause almost all Americans to feel threatened. In comparison, if the same news story included clips of the president warning the public of new threats, partisanship might shape threat perception to a greater degree.

This chapter offers a theoretical perspective on how citizens confront a political world made threatening by events, elites, and issues and how the information environment shapes what type of foreign policy attitudes citizens prefer. In line with other models of public opinion, this model argues that political elites and particularly the president influence public opinion on foreign policy and do so via messages delivered to the public through the mass media (Berinsky 2007; forthcoming; Canes-Wrone 2006; Zaller 1992). Unlike other models of public opinion; however, I argue that the mass media influence foreign policy opinion through not only communicating a set of policy options from political leaders, but also through covering threatening issues such as terrorism in a particularly evocative way. The media's incentive to grab viewers and ratings by providing dramatic images and story lines increases a sense of vulnerability and fear in the public that in turn increases the public's probability of supporting policies offered by elites. This sense of vulnerability created by elites and reinforced by the media

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proves problematic when the political environment is so constrained by fear that alternative voices and policies are unavailable and true deliberation cannot occur. When journalistic incentives to present conflict and drama occur in concert with a single dominant policy message, the media cannot be an agent of accountability.

Theories of the media's influence over policy attitudes that focus on policy content but ignore the often threatening nature of news coverage are likely to underestimate the media's effect on the public. Since foreign policy tends to be covered in threatening ways, it is particularly important to account for the emotional aspects of media coverage which may ultimately increase persuasion and fundamentally shape the public's foreign policy preferences. However, the model of threat and media effects proposed here is generalizable beyond foreign policy, although the dissertation tests this model with foreign policy examples. This model argues that to fully understand how the mass media influences the public, we need to look holistically at its effects and account for the emotional dimension of coverage as well as the informational component.

Understanding the effect of threat on individuals' information processing and attitude formation is particularly important in the domain of foreign policy. Foreign affairs is a policy area where citizens tend to lack information and where ideology and partisanship may be generally less useful heuristics than in domestic policy (Almond 1960; Gilens 1999; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987). The issues surrounding foreign policy also tend to be complex as well as less familiar to the public except in times of crisis (Baum 2002). This suggests that information about foreign policy is more plentiful under the conditions of threat and crisis and that citizens may be more motivated to gather information during threatening times as well. In the post-9/11 era, to the extent that the

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news media emphasize terrorism news, the types of threatening messages and subsequent anxiety that these messages cause should influence citizen attitudes about foreign policy.

This chapter argues that the public's foreign policy attitudes are shaped by citizens' sense of threat and that the distribution of elite views helps citizens to match their sense of threat to a particular set of policy options. The chapter also argues that the features of the information environment, particularly the media's emphasis on threatening information and emotional imagery, increases the probability of supporting hawkish foreign policy. Threat and the anxiety that accompanies feelings of risk increase the support of strong political leaders as well as support for punitive policies that tend to escalate conflict (Landau et al 2004; Gordon and Arian 2000; Merolla and Zechmeister nd). As fear leads individuals to search for information, it also leads to less reliance on long-standing political predispositions such as partisanship as individuals rely more on new information in forming attitudes (Brader 2006; Marcus et al 2000). Thus anxiety may ultimately open respondents up to persuasion, and to the extent that political leaders offer a set of hawkish policy options, the probability of the public accepting those policies increases in a threatening environment.

Previous research suggests that threat and fear increase the potential for persuasion by increasing individuals' interest and information. Anxiety tends to lead people to pay closer attention to their environment and seek relevant information (Brader 2006; Marcus et al 2000), and more engaged citizens are likely to encounter political information that may help them to form attitudes (Zaller 1992). How threatened citizens form or update their policy opinions depends in part on the type of information available,

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how the information is presented, and the political leaders who support each policy (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Kinder 1998; Zaller 1992).

At the same time, threatening events such as a terrorist attack not only increase a collective sense of threat but also contract the political space and elite discussions of foreign policy options. Generally in the domain of foreign policy, the views of the presidential administration are covered most prominently in news and opposition voices are less likely to be heard (Entman 2004; Nacos 1990). In talking about the relationship between the president and the press on foreign policy, Page and Shapiro (1992) write,

> In matters of foreign policy, the executive branch of government often controls access to information, and it can sometimes conceal or misrepresent reality without being challenged. The political opposition is often intimidated or co-opted. Journalists, even when they are aware of what is going on, sometimes willingly hold back awkward truths in the name of national security. (Page and Shapiro 1992, 367)

Particularly after threatening events, one dominant foreign policy message tends to emerge as elite dissonance fades, leading, at least in the short term, to a political environment where one elite message leads news coverage. In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, George W. Bush's definition of the attacks as a commencement of a war on terrorism dominated other potential news frames and the president's hawkish foreign policy views became the prominent arguments reflected in news coverage. Not only did the news media adopt the president's frame as the dominant one, but mainstream news coverage did not consistently feature opposition voices from the Democratic party or outside of the government, thus cementing the president's frame as main one for the public to rely upon in forming their own foreign policy attitudes (Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2007).

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In considering how psychological mechanisms as well as the information environment influence foreign policy attitudes, this threat model differs from previous work on foreign policy attitudes and provides a unique contribution to the study of public opinion. Huddy and colleagues' (Huddy et al 2002; Huddy et al 2003; Huddy et al 2005) work on support for Iraq and counterterrorism policies argues effectively that individual perceptions of national threat increase support for hawkish policy, yet this work pays little attention the political process at play in defining the range of policies offered to the public. From this work it is difficult to disentangle whether threatened individuals will always support aggressive types of policies or are more likely to support hawkish policies when those are ones most prominently offered by elites and reflected in media coverage. Merolla and Zechmeister's work examines the effect of both terrorist and economic crises on American and Mexican citizens' evaluations of political leaders, support for homeland defense, and engagement with the outside world. They find that in times of crisis or when citizens are experimentally manipulated to believe that terrorism is likely, citizens throw their support behind a variety of foreign and domestic policies designed to defend and protect their country such as homeland security funding as well as support for both unilateral and multilateral military action to destroy terrorist groups abroad. By using the comparative case of Mexico, Merolla and Zechmeister are able to argue that the turn to more militant policies in times of threat is a general phenomenon, not one bounded by the political environment of the United States after 9/11. The authors show that times of crisis increase support for militant policies compared to more pleasant times, and while their interest is in comparing "good times" to "crisis times," this dissertation concentrates on variations within the "crisis times" and how media exposure may moderate the effect

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of existing levels of threat perception on attitudes. Merolla and Zechmeister utilize crafted media stories to induce threat in experimental subjects but do not consider how variation within the threatening types of media stories may influence citizens differently. In addition, the threat theory that I offer explicitly considers the role of individuals' partisanship in shaping attitudes toward foreign policy and how the role of partisanship changes over time in a way that neither Huddy et al or Merolla and Zechmeister do.

Other work in public opinion pays closer attention to how partisan leaders may influence citizens through the media but fail to account for how fear may increase the persuasiveness of elite cues. Both Zaller (1992) and Berinsky (2007; forthcoming) suggest that the mass media play a prominent role in helping individuals form attitudes about foreign policies and war. In both of these models, the mass media function mostly as a conduit for elite cues; the distribution of elites supporting each position informs citizens how to align their own views to elite policies. However, the threat model argues that while the media influence citizens through providing information about foreign policy and elite's views on policy, that the media also affect attitudes through evoking fear. Thus, the model argues that the media influence public attitudes not only by providing realistic information but also by activating psychological mechanisms that produce biased choice.

In the context of terrorism, citizens' own sense that terrorism may harm them or the country will increase their probability of supporting more hawkish foreign policy. That is, I argue that citizens' own psychology affects the likelihood that any individual citizen will support war over negotiations. Yet, there is a political process at play in how elites define which foreign policy options are legitimate and viable in order to curb

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terrorism. In addition, the process by which the media chooses to reflect elite views and how the media links those elite views with images, frames, and story-lines also affects how the public understands foreign policy and the policies that they prefer. The rest of the chapter outlines the components of the threat model: 1. the psychology of threat and its effect on attitudes, 2. how the political environment influences attitudes, and 3. the information environment's role in spreading and reflecting threat.

Fear itself – The psychological underpinnings of foreign policy attitudes

The threat model argues that threat and anxiety increase the probability that citizens will seek out information in order to lower their anxiety. In turn, as respondents seek out more information, their sense of threat will increase the chances that citizens will be persuaded to adopt foreign policy positions offered by political elites that are reflected in the news. There is a fundamental bias in how anxious individuals process information – they pay the closest attention to negative and threatening information (Green, Williams, and Davidson 2003; Mathews and MacLeod 1986; Mogg et al 1990). As individuals seek more information, to the extent that the information environment contains at least some negative information and they are themselves threatened, these individuals will pay closer attention to negative than positive information.

In my threat model, individuals receive information about foreign policy primarily through the mass media, which disproportionately focuses on threat and covers issues of foreign policy like terrorism in evocative and sensationalistic ways (Iyengar 1991; Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2007). In addition, during times of threat, the political spectrum tends to conform to a "one-message" environment where opposition to the president's foreign policy lessens and the media will reflect one particular message of

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how the country should pursue foreign policy – which in the case of the post-9/11 era is through hawkish means (Zaller 1992). To the extent that threatened individuals seek out news about terrorism and foreign policy, they are likely to encounter hawkish messages linked to emotion-inducing frames and images and adopt those hawkish attitudes. By this process, threatened individuals seek information about terrorism and foreign affairs in the media and are offered media coverage that further induces anxiety. Under the conditions where hawkish policy options are linked to fear and individuals believe that the policies offered by elites will effectively protect the country, the public is likely to accept these policies and adopt more hawkish policy attitudes (Pratkanis and Aronson 1991).

How threat and fear influence information seeking

Feelings of anxiety and perceptions of threat generally increase individuals' desire for information and engagement with the political world (Brader 2005, 2006; Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008; Marcus et al 2000; Miller and Krosnick 2004). In order to make sense of the unfathomable events of 9/11, Americans in large numbers turned to the mass media to provide them information and explain the meaning of the attacks. In the week following the attacks, the audience for the evening news doubled from 13 percent of American adults in the week of Sept 3-9 to approximately 26 percent of the public in the week of Sept 10-16 (Althaus 2002). Nielsen ratings estimated that 79.5 million Americans watched coverage of the events on at least one of the broadcast or cable networks airing coverage of the terrorist attacks, tying the audience for the 2001 Super Bowl. Americans did not sustain the dramatic increase in news viewership – the size of the news audience returned to 15 percent of adults soon after and finally returned to the baseline of 13 percent of adults by April 2002 (Althaus 2002). However, while

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Americans just as quickly turned away from their television sets, exposure to the searing images and frightening content in the news stories influenced their attitudes long after they put down their remotes. As Robert Entman writes, "Some words and images possess sufficient resonance to impress themselves on public consciousness without requiring a significant number of exposures: airliners flying into the World Trade Center on September 11, for instance" (Entman 2003).

While threat may increase information and interest in politics, it also biases the type of information that individuals gather and how they process that information. Anxious individuals are more likely to be drawn to and more easily process threatening information than those who are not anxious (Eysenck 1992; Mathews and MacLeod 1986, Mogg et al 1990; Pratto and John 1991; Yiend and Mathews 2001). Literature in cognitive psychology demonstrates that high stress and anxiety are associated with a tendency to pay closer attention to threatening information. Anxiety heightens attention to threat and prioritizes the processing of threat cues (Mathews 1990). Anxiety causes a shift of resources toward threat cues rather than away from away from them and this bias occurs without conscious awareness (Mathews and MacLeod 1986). Brader, Valentino, and Suhay (2008) find that experimental subjects made anxious about the costs of immigration are likely to request information about immigration but are most likely to request information from anti-immigration groups. Gadarian and Albertson (2007; 2008) find that citizens who are anxious about immigration tend to pay closest attention and remember negative information about immigration. The mechanism that creates this bias is selective attention to information; individual citizens see the same information but remember different parts depending on their emotional state. Both trait-anxiety and state-

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anxiety cause biased information processing (Mathews and MacLeod 1986; Mogg et al 1990), meaning that exposure to political threat communicated by political leaders or the mass media can induce these biases.

This bias in information processing suggests that as citizens become more concerned about terrorism they are likely to turn to the mass media for information but pay closest attention to negative and frightening information. In so far as the mass media link the threatening information about terrorism to the president's hawkish message about terrorism, those respondents concerned about terrorism should be most likely to accept hawkish foreign policy attitudes. Thus threat should increase support for hawkish policy indirectly through increasing citizens' engagement with news, particularly when the news covers the policy in a particularly threatening manner and connects the threat (either implicitly or explicitly) to a set of policy options.

How threat and fear influence foreign policy attitudes

Threat not only leads respondents to support more hawkish policies indirectly by increasing exposure to news but also more directly. Individual perceptions of threat and anxiety lead to a variety of aggressive attitudes. Threat leads citizens to support policies that they believe will neutralize the source of the threat and therefore protect themselves (Gordon and Arian 2001; Landau et al 2004). That is, the more threatened people feel, the more their policy choices tend to maintain or intensify conflict (Gordon and Arian 2001). The presence of threat is associated with increased in-group solidarity (Turner et al 1984), intolerance, ethnocentrism (Feldman and Stenner 1997; Gibson and Gouws 2001; Struch and Schwartz 1989), and increased reliance on enemy images and stereotypes (Bar-Tal and Labin 2001; Hermann 1986). Threat also leads citizens to support curtailing

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civil liberties, and support for civil liberties declined following September 11th (Marcus et al 1995; Davis and Silver 2004; Davis 2007; Merolla and Zechmeister nd). These consequences of threat are not simply a straightforward rational response in defense of realistic threat but rather reflect biases. Nothing in a rational-choice framework would suggest that threat should lead people to be more ethno-centric or rely on symbolism or stereotypes when making decisions.

Studies of attitudes of Israelis and Palestinians following terrorist attacks confirm that the threat of terrorism alters both personal and political attitudes. After terrorist attacks in Israel, Jewish Israeli youth are less likely to express a desire to socialize with a Palestinian youth of similar age - one personal consequence of threat (Bar-Tal and Labin 2001). On the political side, after threatening events, support for the peace process decreases and support for armed attacks against Israeli targets increases among Palestinians (Shikaki 2006). Conversely, after a reassuring event, support for armed attacks decreases (Gordon and Arian 2001).

In the domain of American foreign relations, the threat of terrorism is associated with increased support for retaliatory action by the government (Healy et al 2002; Huddy et al 2002a), greater support for overseas involvement (Huddy et al 2003; Merolla and Zechmeister nd), and support for President Bush (Huddy et al 2003; Landau et al 2004; Merolla and Zechmeister nd; Willer 2004). McFarland (2005) finds that among the strongest correlates for supporting the war in Iraq was the belief that Iraq threatened America. Using experiments that increase the salience of threat, Merolla and Zechmeister (nd) find that American subjects in their “terror threat” condition, where respondents are told that terrorism is likely in the near future, are more likely to support a unilateralist and

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militant type of foreign policy than those in their “good times”/no threat condition. In addition, they find that citizens threatened by terrorism are more likely to support policies to protect the homeland like decreasing immigration and increasing border security. In sum, threat is related to a range of shifts toward more conflictual preferences and behavior.

From a social psychological perspective, Terror Management Theory (TMT) posits that the mechanism by which threat influence attitudes is by invoking a fear of death that leads individuals to support aggressive policies and political leaders in order to reduce anxiety (Bonnano and Jost 2006; Landau et al 2004; Pyszczyzynski et al 2003). TMT proposes that in times of threat that it is salience of death and the accompanying anxiety that leads the public to support aggressive policies and political leaders. In addition, the various experiments with TMT find that a variety of both conscious and subconscious probes can provoke death-related thoughts such as asking people to imagine their own deaths, pictures of accidents, interviews in front of funeral homes, subliminal exposure to words such as “death” or the 9/11 related cues “911” or “WTC” and that those death related thoughts then influence behavior (Landau et al 2004; Cohen et al 2005). The theory posits that people also turn to strong leaders in order to alleviate the fear of death. As Landau et al (2004) write the appeal of the leader is his or her ability to save the people from illness, chaos, and death (1138).

As the threat of terrorism increases and the specter of death rises, TMT predicts that the public should support charismatic leaders as well as policies intended to keep them safe. A variety of studies demonstrate that individuals more anxious about death and terrorism had higher levels of support for George W. Bush and his policies after 9/11.

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When the Department of Homeland Security raises an alert about terrorism, President Bush's popularity increases (Willer 2004; Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2007). The authors also found a significant interaction between ideology and priming terrorism experimentally; priming terrorism affected liberals more than conservatives (Bonanno and Jost 2006). The terrorism prime increased support for the presidential more among liberals than conservatives, making liberals and conservatives equally likely to support Bush in that condition. This demonstrates the effect of death related thoughts was larger among liberals (Democrats) than conservatives (Republicans), meaning that the residue of 9/11 increased support for the president even several years after the event itself. In a similar study of students registered to vote immediately prior to the 2004 presidential election, Cohen et al (2005) found that while a majority of subjects in the control condition reported an intention to vote for John Kerry, that respondents reminded of death intended to vote for Bush over Kerry by a 2 to 1 margin. Cohen and colleagues posit that the continual references to the 9/11 attacks from the Bush-Cheney campaign as well as the release of a video of Osama bin Laden threatening the United States the weekend before the election primed the public to think of death and prefer Bush to Kerry in the election.

While the mortality salience mechanism may explain one aspect of political support for hawkish policy, the salience of death is only one reason that as perceived threat increased after 9/11, support for President Bush and hawkish policies also increased. What the psychological literature does not take into account is the political debate surrounding terrorism and how debate is either compressed or expanded during times of threat and how the political debate may affect opinion. It may be the case that

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during times of threat, when the salience of death is high, that political debate over issues of security and policies to counter threat are relatively compressed and opposition voices are not voiced and in turn, support for the president and presidential policies increases (Brody 1991; Mueller 1973; Zaller and Chiu 2001). Congressional and opposition leaders may be likely to avoid criticism of the president's policies during times of crisis until ramifications are clear (Zaller 1994; Zaller and Chiu 2001). This political environment would then conform to Zaller's one-message model, where public opinion follows the single elite message offered (1992) and look observationally equivalent to what the TMT theory would predict under the conditions where the political leader offers hawkish policies framed as protecting American citizens from harm and protecting their way of life.

In TMT, the media influence political attitudes only insofar as the stories increase feelings of anxiety and mortality salience. The media also provide the mechanism by which citizens connect those feelings of anxiety to policies advocated by political leaders. Dramatic coverage of death and destruction like in a natural disaster reminds citizens of their own mortality but does not increase support for hawkish leaders or policies, meaning that the fear of death alone cannot account for support for hawkish policy. After 9/11, the public faced continual reminders of death and destruction from the news in addition to both political parties uniting behind the president and his counterterrorism policies that included war in Afghanistan and later in Iraq. These are exactly the conditions under which both TMT and theories of public opinion would predict that the public would grow more hawkish. If, as the threat theory suggests, what threat does is open the public up to persuasion, then under the condition where threat is high and the

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political environment trends toward dovish policy, then we should observe more dovish attitudes.

From the psychological and political science literature on threat, we can derive two general hypotheses about how threat should influence foreign policy opinion. Threat moves individuals toward policies that potentially increase conflict and away from policies that are more cooperative in nature (Huddy et al 2002, Huddy et al 2003). *Therefore, we should expect that a more threatening environment will lead the public to support more hawkish policy preferences.* [5,6] *Conversely, heightened threat will decrease support for dovish foreign policy.*

Political underpinnings of hawkishness

In addition to psychological reasons that citizens may support hawkish policy in a threatening environment, the political environment and the distribution of elite views also influences public opinion on foreign policy. The threat of terrorism serves as an organizing concept in both how political elites discuss foreign policy and how the public forms opinions about foreign policy. That is, the fight against terrorism serves as a

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[5] In theory, both hawkish and dovish policies could coexist; that is, the government could both send food and military personnel to the same country to fight terrorism. I believe most people think of the choice between sending troops and negotiating in terms of an either-or decision. But since it is not necessarily incoherent to prefer policies such as food aid in addition to military action, I have broken these into two different hypotheses. The literature on threat demonstrates a general movement toward more aggressive and hawkish attitudes, so I believe that these predictions have empirical and theoretical grounding.

[6] It is important to differentiate supporting hawkish policy from simply supporting Republican policies and leaders. Evidence from Israel suggests that as citizens become more threatened by terrorism, support for Likud, the hard-line, right party increases. Berrebi and Klor (forthcoming) find that occurrence of a terror attack within three months of elections in Israel leads to an increase in electoral support for the right party. These findings hold regardless of which party holds office at the time of the attack, meaning that the shift in support is not about accountability but rather an increase in support for the hawkish policies themselves. In the post-9/11 context, Republican policies and hawkish policies are intertwined, yet the American party system is not defined by a hawk-dove dimension like the Israeli system is (Ventura and Shamir 1992). Although the Republican party is currently more supportive of defense spending and an assertive foreign policy than the Democratic party, which party is more hawkish on foreign policy has been fluid over time. This indicates that in a different era, an increase in hawkishness may lead to increased support for Democrats over Republicans (Zelizer forthcoming).

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unifying concept in how elites explain foreign policy and as determinant in how the public forms attitudes about foreign policy. The threat of communism shaped Americans' views on a wide variety of foreign policy topics, and in the post-9/11 era, the threat of terrorism underlies a range of attitudes on foreign policy. The way that respondents think about terrorism shapes how they want the government to pursue foreign policy.

In the years since 9/11, President Bush and members of his administration have consistently called for a hawkish, pro-active foreign policy in order to prevent terrorism. They argue that only through "taking the fight to the terrorists" can the US protect its citizens and that any other type of foreign policy will be ineffective and indeed dangerous. In a recent address to the military's Central Command, Bush stated the administration's policies clearly:

> Our main enemy is al Qaeda and its affiliates. Their allies choose their victims indiscriminately. They murder the innocent to advance a focused and clear ideology. They seek to establish a radical Islamic caliphate, so they can impose a brutal new order on unwilling people, much as Nazis and communists sought to do in the last century. This enemy will accept no compromise with the civilized world. Here is what the al Qaeda charter says about those who oppose their plans: 'We will not meet them halfway, and there will be no room for dialogue with them.' These enemies have embraced a cult of death. They are determined to bring days of even greater destruction on our people. They seek the world's most dangerous weapons. *Against this kind of enemy, there is only one effective response: We must go on the offense, stay on the offense, and take the fight to them.* (italics added, White House 2007)

From this statement it is clear that the presidential administration considers the War on Terror as akin to the struggles against communism and fascism and holds that offensive military measures will most effectively defeat the terrorists. From the 9/11 terrorist attacks forward, the message from the president and the Republican party (and until recently the Democratic party) was that the way to lower the threat of terrorism was to pursue *hawkish policy* abroad up to and including war.

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Given the clear positions of the president on foreign policy since 9/11, we may expect that citizens who approve of the president or who share his partisanship or ideology would prefer hawkish policy. In the wake of an attack on the United States, public approval of the president tends to increase (Mueller 1973) while elite criticism of the president decreases (Brody 1991), meaning that support for these hawkish policies should increase in general and support for hawkishness should be especially strong among Republicans. But support for the president and hawkish policy increased among not only among Republicans – the increase in presidential approval after 9/11 was most concentrated among Democrats and Independents (Jacobson 2007). In addition, Chapter 2 demonstrated that the increase in hawkishness occurred in parallel across Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. Therefore, we can expect that immediately after 9/11, public opinion in the aggregate should be increasingly hawkish. Chapter 2 also provided evidence that the public grew more hawkish in more threatening environment after 9/11. More broadly*, we should expect that the continued perception that terrorism is an imminent threat should lead to high support for hawkish policies and that an increase in threat should increase support for hawkish policy.*

While support for hawkish policy is in line with the president's policies, it is also the case that the threat of terrorism provides a unique context under which hawkish policies may appear to be the best political choice to both elites and the public. As the threat of terrorism increases, elites offer hawkish policies and the public increasing prefers hawkish policies. First, it is unclear that alternative cooperative policies to fighting terrorism would be either successful or acceptable to political leaders or the public. The United States is unlikely to negotiate with non-state actors such as al-Qaeda

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or cede to demands to abandon democracy and embrace an Islamic theocracy. Additionally, there is no economic evidence that poverty causes terrorism (Berrebi 2003; Krueger and Maleckova 2003), so simply advocating cooperative anti-terrorism policies that assist countries economically may be ineffective.

The public itself may either acquiesce to hawkish policy by rewarding the more hawkish party in times of threat (Berrebi and Klor 2006) or actively push the government to pursue hawkish policy by voting for more assertive leaders in times of threat. In the Israeli context, there is evidence to support this pattern of public support for hawkish policies and leaders. Palestinian suicide bombings frequently lead to Israeli military incursions into the Occupied Territories and electoral victories for hard line candidates (Berrebi and Klor forthcoming). As the average number of monthly terror fatalities increases in Israel, support for the hard-line Likud party increases regardless of which party holds office during the terrorist attack (Berrebi and Klor 2006). This finding means that the right party only benefits and is not punished for terrorism, even when the right party is in control of the government and could plausibly be blamed for ineffective anti-terrorism policies. Given these findings and the hawkish message from the presidential administration, we should expect that under the circumstance of a threat from terrorism, the public as a whole should increasingly support hawkish policy.

Media and foreign policy attitudes

The news media play a key role in informing and educating the public about the fundamental issues facing the nation. Particularly in foreign affairs, where complicated issues as well as low knowledge challenge the public's ability to form sensible attitudes, the media can shape opinion (Baum 2002, 2003; Berinsky 2007; Delli Carpini and Keeter

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1996; Holsti 2004). Yet the role of media in forming foreign policy preferences is mostly ignored in the literature on how people understand and form attitudes about war and conflict (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Jentelson 1992; Mueller 1973). Given the public's low knowledge about and interest in foreign affairs (Berinsky 2007; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1992; Holsti 2004), it seems clear that the media have an opportunity to shape opinion on foreign policy, especially when events include terrorism. Journalists provide a forum for terrorists to bring both their message and fear to the public. In their volume on the media's role after terrorist attacks, Norris, Kern, and Just (2003) write, "journalists function as facilitators in the sense that without the oxygen of publicity, without the airwaves of al Jazeera or the front-page headlines of the *New York Times*, group and state terrorists would fail to achieve many of their objectives" (Norris, Kern, and Just 2003, 9).

An increase in the volume of news about terrorism tends to increase concern over terrorism throughout the public (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2007; Gallup 2007). Terrorism can influence the public not simply by having a venue via the mainstream media but also through the way that terrorism stories are presented to the public. The media influence public attitudes both through the content of communication and the presentation of news stories, and a theory of foreign policy opinion should consider how news exposure broadly influences the public. Terrorism is inherently newsworthy given its dramatic nature (Gans 1979), and it receives inordinate coverage on the national news. Even before the recent focus on terrorism, news coverage of terrorism predominated on the airwaves even over other types of potentially threatening news. In the early part of the 1980s, Iyengar found that ABC, NBC, and CBS broadcast more stories on hijackings and hostage situations than on poverty, unemployment, racial inequality, and crime combined

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(Iyengar 1991). Not only does terrorism receive a considerable amount of coverage, the coverage itself tends toward sensationalism. More generally, the news tends to favor negativity and conflict in coverage (Baum and Groeling 2008), meaning that coverage of terrorism should be especially negative and potentially quite threatening to those exposed to it. The remainder of the chapter hypothesizes about how emotionally evocative coverage of terrorism influences the type of policies and leaders the public chooses.

Unlike other work on opinion about foreign conflict, Baum's (2002; 2003) work on soft news pays close attention to how certain types of news exposure influence attitudes toward foreign policy. Baum argues that because of their human-interest framing and focus on select foreign policies, soft news programs bring political information about foreign policy to citizens who otherwise are inattentive to politics. In Baum's work, the effect of media on attitudes depends on citizens' prior level of information, while in my threat theory, the effect of media on attitudes is moderated by citizens' level of perceived threat. Additionally, Baum's work is mostly concerned with how a particular set of news sources influence attitudes about foreign crises and pays closest attention to the effect of framing and other informational content on citizens while this project looks at how the media influences the public through content and presentation.

Both the content of news stories and the presentation of stories matter in how citizens understand foreign policy and in how they form opinions about how the government should best counter threats in the environment. News that references or features stories about terrorism may influence attitudes in at least two ways: by enhancing a sense of fear and by cueing citizens on how to connect that sense of threat to

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a policy option. In this way, the message and the medium work together as a frame to define a problem (i.e. terrorism) and then propose a solution to the problem (i.e. hawkish foreign policy) (Kinder 1998). Both the information of the mediated communication as well as the presentation of that information through visual imagery may affect attitudes.

The use of a terrorism frame or enhancing a terrorism frame with emotional imagery may help elites to enact more hawkish foreign policy than they otherwise could. Frames provide a "central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events…The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue" (Gamson and Modigliani 1987, 143). In addition to defining a problem, frames also offer solutions to the problem (Kinder 1998). News stories about terrorism provide citizens information about potential or actual terrorist attacks as well as cues from elites about policies to counter terrorism. That is, news frames potentially shape how threatening citizens believe the world is and also which policies these people prefer the government to pursue in order to avoid terrorism.

Entman (2004) argues that substantive news frames perform at least two of the following basic tasks in covering events, issues, and political actors: 1. defining effects or conditions as problematic, 2. identifying causes, 3. conveying a moral judgment of those involved in the framed matter, and 4. endorsing remedies or improvements to the problematic situation. The most important function that news frames perform within these stories is in endorsing policy remedies to counteract terrorism. Entman considers both visual and verbal information as part of the frame unlike other theories of framing that do not consider visual information separately from the verbal message of a news story.

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Entman's theory primarily concerns how journalists contest, accept, or reject political elites' framing of foreign policy and how frames spread to the public. He argues that foreign policy frames cascade down like a waterfall from the presidential administration to other elites, including Congress members, down to the media who create framing words and images and then on to the public. Entman's cascading activation theory argues that frames used by elites that employ culturally resonant terms and images have the greatest potential for being accepted by journalists. Words and images that are noticeable, understandable, memorable and emotionally charged are most likely to be picked up and repeated by journalists in reporting the news and more culturally congruent frames are more likely to cascade down to the public. Additionally, the most powerful frames are those that are prominent, repeated, and fully congruent with schemas habitually used by members of society. What is key about this argument for this work is that almost immediately after the attacks, September 11th became a frame congruent with terrorism and the images from that day became part of the War on Terror frame.

President Bush's framing of the 9/11 attacks as the commencement of a global war against terrorism that could be won through aggressive military action gained acceptance by Democrats and journalists (Entman 2003). For example, in *New York Times* front-page coverage of the War on Terrorism from 2001 to 2005, more than 70 percent of stories that utilized a "terrorism" frame took a pro-military engagement (or hawkish) tone (Boydstun and Glazier 2008). Although the pro-military frames generally dominated news coverage of the broader War on Terror, there was not a complete lack of opposition to hawkish policies reflected in the news. Guardino and Hayes (2008) found

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that in the run-up to the Iraq war, the national network news featured sources opposed to the war but that those opposition voices came mostly from overseas – from Iraqi officials and other countries arguing for a diplomatic solution. In contrast, the pro-military arguments in the news came from the Bush administration and other "official sources". Although more dovish viewpoints calling for more diplomacy were available to the public, they came from less credible sources, suggesting again that hawkish views dominated the information environment.

In news stories of foreign crises, the visual imagery tends to support the presidential administration's definition of the problem as well the policy recommendation favored by the president (Entman 2004). This finding is consistent with evidence from Bennett's indexing theory that the most prominent elite voices tend to be reflected most heavily in news coverage (Bennett 1991; Zaller and Chiu 2000) and that the president typically enjoys more power in foreign affairs than domestic affairs (Widalvsky 1966; Canes-Wrone 2006; Canes-Wrone, Howell, and Lewis 2008).

At least in the case of terrorism, when opposition to the hawkish policies arose, it is difficult to imagine visuals that would accompany a frame to oppose the War on Terror frame that would be within journalistic norms or that would be effective in communicating a less hawkish position. Griffin (2004) found that photographs in *Time, Newsweek, and US News and World Report* after 9/11 framed the events in ways congruent with the Bush administration's framing of the War on Terrorism. Given that the War on Terror is the centerpiece of George W. Bush's presidency, the images associated with the 9/11 attacks and terrorism more generally will be used in frames

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supportive of Bush's foreign policy positions and will be interpreted as being supportive of hawkish policy.

While Entman's theory provides leverage in understanding how frames originate and spread to the public, it is less specific about the conditions under which citizens will accept news frames and whether individuals need to accept the entire frame. The partisan political environment adds another dimension to the way that frames influence the public. Entman argues that frames that are not culturally resonant are unlikely to gain acceptance by either journalists or the public. Yet this argument assumes an undifferentiated public that as a whole accepts culturally relevant frames, when it may be the case that partisans may accept only part of a frame or reject a frame altogether when it clashes with their predispositions. Druckman's work on the limits of framing demonstrates that frames are not always successful in affecting the considerations that people use when making decisions or affecting attitudes directly (Druckman 2001; 2004). Druckman finds that contextual factors such as elite competition over frames, deliberation among citizens, particularly among heterogeneous groups, individual expertise, as well as source credibility limit the effects of frames. These findings suggest that news frames about terrorism may not be successful in affecting citizens' foreign policy attitudes under the conditions of partisan polarization.

The role of visual imagery in the effect of media on attitudes

In the threat theory, the media act to not only to provide the public with cues about foreign policy but also to impart emotion to foreign policy and terrorism stories. I argue that media, and primarily television, communicate policy recommendations and add emotion to news stories through emphasizing threatening information and the use of

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emotionally evocative visual imagery. In the area of terrorism, pictures of the World Trade Center or bloodied victims of a terrorist attack may arouse various emotions in the viewer including empathy, anger, sadness, and most powerfully, fear. Additionally, the imagery cues viewers into the "right" policy to fight terrorism. Visual information captures viewers' attention and interest (Neuman, Just, and Crigler 1992) and is easier to understand than verbal information by itself (Graber 1990). Intensely negative images, including images of victimization that are prominent in terrorism stories, are more memorable than the verbal content alone (Newhagen and Reeves 1992; Zillmann et al 2001). Pictures make it easier to retrieve stored information from memory and also improve detail retention, particularly when the images are negative and evocative (Graber 1996; Newhagen and Reeves 1992).

Visual imagery may powerfully arouse emotions in respondents and influence attitudes independently of news story messages (Sears 1993; Brader 2006).
Brader writes, "Images and sounds, or even words that tap personal experience or deeply ingrained symbols of success, failure, or danger, can help unleash the desired emotional response in an audience…" (390-391). Negative visuals such as the ones that accompany terrorism stories are particularly likely to invoke emotions since they invoke a fear of death (Landau et al 2004) and also remind viewers of their emotions on 9/11 itself. Surveys of Americans immediately after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 showed a strong connection between media exposure to the events of 9/11 and probable post-traumatic stress disorder (Schuster et al 2001, Schlenger et al 2002, Cohen-Silver et al 2002). In the days following 9/11, 44 percent of those surveyed showed at least one substantial symptom of stress. The more television coverage people watched on 9/11 and in the days

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afterward, the more severe their stress responses were (Schuster et al 2001; Schlenger et al 2002). Even controlling for demographics and direct exposure to the terrorist attacks (i.e. being near the Trade Towers), TV content and hours of exposure were associated with clinically significant distress symptoms and respondents who saw particularly vivid images of the attacks reported more severe stress (Schlenger et al 2002).

Although there is a strong connection between threatening media exposure and emotion, it is possible that traumatized people self-select into exposure rather than the media itself causing the trauma. However, experimental work confirms that media exposure itself does affect individuals' level of fear. Despite repeated exposure to the 9/11 images over time, these pictures still affect threat perception and views on terrorism. Iyengar (2006) found that viewing a 30-second news clip from 9/11 that included an image of the smoking Twin-Towers significantly modified Democrats' views on the causes of terrorism. Using an experiment that exposed subjects to images of 9/11 not at all, once, or repeatedly more than four years after the attack, Lizotte, Lodge, and Taber (2006) find that repeated exposure to the images increased fear in respondents.

In addition to emotion, visuals contain policy information to accompany the verbal message of the news story. Literature on racial attitudes demonstrates that the visual message in a campaign ad or news story may "speak" as loudly as the explicit verbal message in cueing respondents to what information they should use to form and opinion or to the policy that will solve a problem (Gilens 1999; Mendelberg 2001). In fact, visual images may be more effective in activating mental associations than words alone: "Photographic images are explicit indicators of the objects they depict, and the emotions they arouse in the viewer are psychological effects in the strictest sense, while

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words must be elaborated to extract their symbolic meaning to have an 'effect'" (Newhagen and Reeves 1992, 38-39). The visuals most closely tied to stories about terrorism, the World Trade Center on fire, images of masked jihadists, bloodied victims of terrorist attacks, are also those images most closely tied to the president's foreign policy positions. The War on Terror frame that emerged after the September 11th attacks argued, in line with the president's positions, that a military solution was necessary to counteract terrorism (Entman 2003). The more often the president referenced the images of terrorism in speeches and campaign ads, the more ingrained these images became with the hawkish policy solution.

How threat and media interact

Terrorism becomes threatening not only through the violent acts alone but also through the publicity and coverage that follow. The threat of terrorism and media are inextricably linked, due to the inevitable media coverage that vividly and repeatedly reenacts the violence (Jacobson and Bar-Tal 1995; Norris, Kern, and Just 2003). The terrorist attacks of 9/11 extended beyond the immediate vicinity of New York and Washington the moment that news cameras broadcasted images of the burning Towers and Pentagon. The threat of terrorism was experienced broadly across the country because of the reporting on the events themselves as well as the coverage of the subsequent governmental and military reactions.

It may be the case then that the effect of media exposure on foreign policy attitudes depends on the individual's level of threat. That is, those people concerned about terrorism who witness threatening events on television will more strongly prefer hawkish policies than those who believe terrorism is likely but did receive the extra

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emotional impact added by the media coverage. Few places in the media and public opinion literatures explore the interaction of threat and media on foreign policy opinion. Notable exceptions are works by Huddy et al (2003), Peffley and Hurwitz (1992,1993), Hermann (1986), and Merolla and Zechmeister (nd). Collectively, these works find that threatening information and images increase support for hawkish foreign policy while reassuring information causes liberalization on defense issues. News images of the Soviet Union in the 1980s substantially influenced attitudes toward nuclear weapons, defense, and Central American policy for both elites and masses (Hermann 1986; Peffley and Hurwitz 1992). As the portrayal of the Soviet Union became less threatening, individuals who perceived the USSR as less dangerous were likely to become more liberal on defense related issues (Peffley and Hurwitz 1992). Huddy and colleagues find that watching TV news in late 2001 heightened emotional responses to the terrorist events of September 11th and perception of future risk (Huddy et al 2003, 264). In turn, increasing appraisal of risk led to greater support for U.S. military intervention, U.S. overseas involvement, and approval of President Bush (271). Yet none of this work looks specifically at whether at a given level of threat, different media messages and different levels of emotion in the messages influenced attitudes differently.

The perception of threat after 9/11 was compounded by media coverage that portrayed "vivid and unceasing depictions of death and destruction" (Landau et al 2004, 1140), meaning that threat may be moderated by media consumption. In their work on the effect of emotions on framing effects, Druckman and McDermott (2008) find that distress increases framing effects, suggesting that individuals concerned about terrorism may be more open to persuasion and the messages offered about foreign policy through the mass

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media. Thus, the influence of threat on opinion may depend on exposure to coverage of terrorist acts or threats. In other words, threat should have a larger influence on attitudes for those people exposed to fear-inducing media stories. If this is true, then we should expect the *interaction* of threat and media exposure to predict hawkish opinion. That is, *increased media consumption* <u>*in combination with*</u> *heightened threat will increase (decrease) support for hawkish (dovish) foreign policy. In addition, exposure to particularly emotional coverage of terrorism should increase support for hawkish foreign policy most powerfully.*

The role of partisanship

In addition to thinking about how individual perceptions and the media influence foreign policy attitudes, the threat theory also considers the role of partisanship in both directly shaping the type of policies that individuals prefer as well as affecting the type of information that individuals are willing to accept. In line with Berinsky (forthcoming) I agree that foreign policy opinion is a subset of broader public opinion, and theories of public opinion should pay close attention to how citizens' predispositions and particularly how partisanship shapes these views. Berinsky writes,

> Considering public opinion and foreign policy in isolation from the rest of the field of public opinion is not only unnecessary; it is a misguided enterprise. The public might be briefly influenced by dramatic events, such as Pearl Harbor and 9/11, but – as in the domestic arena – public opinion is primarily structured by the ebb and flow of partisan and group-based political conflict (7).

To that end, the theoretical perspective offered here explicitly considers the role of partisanship in influencing what foreign policies citizens support given the distribution of elite views. In contrast to Berinksy's view though, this theoretical perspective

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underscores the way that partisanship may increase or decrease individuals' capacity and willingness to accept threatening arguments about foreign policy. That is, partisanship may influence foreign policy attitudes by helping individuals to match their own views to the views of elites in their party, as suggested by previous public opinion literature, yet partisanship may matter also more indirectly by conditioning citizens' readiness to accept threatening and emotionally evocative messages offered by elites and the media.

Literature on emotion and politics suggests that emotions such as fear can lessen the impact of partisanship on policy opinions as people rely more on contemporary information in forming attitudes (Marcus et al 2000). Chapter 2 demonstrated that in the very threatening environment after 9/11 that all partisan groups regardless of prior attitudes increasingly supported hawkish foreign policy, giving credence to the idea that in threatening times that partisanship may matter less. Yet, if the two parties converged on foreign policy after 9/11, then it would be consistent for most citizens to support the one policy offered by elites. However, as foreign policy and the War on Terror became politicized, that is, as the parties moved further apart on these issues, partisanship could play a larger role in determining foreign policy views. The emotion literature assumes in part that citizens may not learn to use partisanship as filter on emotions, but it seems plausible that as terrorism became a politicized issue that partisans would accept the emotionally laden messages linked to the other parties' policies. In work on the effect of threatening immigration messages, Albertson and Gadarian (2008) demonstrate that individuals rely on partisan identification and group identification in order to counter the effect of the threatening messages. Democrats actively argued with messages intended to increase anxiety about immigration while Republicans accepted the messages. This

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suggests that even in an affectively charged information environment like the one surrounding terrorism, long-standing political identities such as partisanship still act as a "cognitive filter, mediating the selection and implication of information shortcuts typical individuals rely upon in making political judgments" (Baum and Groeling 2008, 2).

In a polarized political environment, partisanship will influence whether a citizen accepts a foreign policy frame in part or as a whole, that is, whether citizens will accept the problem definition as well as the remedy. If citizens believe that a news frame's remedy is incorrect or if the emotional language or imagery is no longer congruent with the message for the individual, then we may expect some citizens to be unresponsive to the frame. Evidence from Chapter 5 demonstrates that Democrats who feel manipulated by threatening news stories about terrorism reject the message that a terrorist attack is imminent, which is a large portion of the War on Terror frame. Yet most citizens, when exposed to threatening news stories, grow increasingly threatened, particularly when the news stories include threatening visual imagery. Given that citizens seem to accept the problem definition portion of the terrorism frame (i.e. terrorism is a problem), the question remains whether respondents will accept the policy recommendations portion and whether the visual imagery portion of the frame increases the likelihood of accepting the frame.

In a polarized political environment, partisanship will influence whether a citizen accepts foreign policy news in part or as a whole, that is, whether citizens will accept the problem definition as well as the remedy offered by the story (Block-Elkon and Shapiro 2005; Shapiro and Block-Elkon 2005). It may be the case that citizens are not all equally likely to accept threatening messages about terrorism that appear in the news or that all

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partisans will accept the policy recommendations offered either implicitly or explicitly in the news story. If citizens believe that foreign policy frame's policy remedy is incorrect or if the emotional language or imagery is no longer congruent with the message for the individual, then we may expect some citizens to be unresponsive to the frame. In addition, how the messages are presented may simultaneously enhance threat perception for one portion of the public and have no effect or the opposite effect on another. In understanding Americans' views on foreign policy in the post-9/11 context, it is important to think about whether repeated stories about terrorism persuade citizens that terrorism is imminent. In addition, do those citizens who believe that terrorism is imminent want certain types of foreign policy? Lastly, do the frames and presentation of the news help citizens to match their sense of threat on to the "appropriate" policy? To that end, analyses of attitudes in Chapters 5 and 6 will consider both how threatening news influences all respondents as a whole and also how partisanship conditions how willing individuals are to accept threatening information and update attitudes.

News coverage of the War on Terror is dynamic over time. In a study of the development of media frames in the War on Terror, Boydstun and Glazier (2008) find that from 2001 to 2003, media frames that emphasized fear and took a pro-military engagement tone dominated coverage of the War on Terror. Yet their analysis of over 1,000 front page news stories in the *New York Times* demonstrates that by 2004, frames that emphasized fear no longer dominated news coverage of terrorism but that other frames that emphasized shame and hope emerged (Boydstun and Glazier 2008). In addition, they find that as public support for the president dropped and opposition from the Democratic party increased, coverage transitioned from primarily a pro-military

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engagement tone to more neutral or even anti-engagement tone depending on surrounding events. In a more balanced political and media environment then, individuals are more able to rely on their partisanship to both evaluate policy options as well as the tone and emotional tenor of media coverage of terrorism. As the parties split more on terrorism and the War on Terror over time, Democrat and Independent citizens should be more resistant to the president's message about terrorism and adopt less hawkish attitudes. However, the question remains whether Democrats and Independents who continue to be concerned over terrorism will continue to support hawkish policy due to their level of fear. Democrats and Independents who continue to be fearful over terrorism will be more likely to support hawkish policy than their counterparts who reject the terrorism message. As the dominance of the hawkish message with fear laden presentation lessens, Independents and Democrats will have more opportunity to select the policy options closest to their own views, however a concern over terrorism should still increase the probability of supporting hawkish policy. Chapters 5 and 6, which describe findings from a 2006 experiment, will explicitly test the implication that partisanship will condition the acceptance of threatening messages.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the threat theory to explain how citizens form attitudes in times of threat. The threat theory proposed that as individuals feel threatened, in the example here, as they believe that terrorism is more likely, these threatened individuals will seek information to help to lower their sense of vulnerability. After 9/11, as citizens sought information, primarily from the mass media, they were likely to watch stories about terrorism that prominently featured the president's foreign policy message that

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promoted hawkish policy. In addition, media coverage of terrorism disproportionately spends time on threatening news that uses visual imagery in line with the president's foreign policy views and spends much less time on reassuring events. This model proposes that one of the main mechanisms by which the media influences attitudes is through not only providing policy cues but also by evoking emotion. To the extent then that respondents are threatened by terrorism, the theory predicts that they will support more hawkish foreign policy and be less supportive of dovish policy. In addition, the theory expects that media coverage also conditions the effect of threat on foreign policy attitudes. Those respondents most concerned about terrorism exposed to the most frightening media coverage should thus be the most supportive of hawkish policy.

When the specter of threat is raised, citizens turn to political leaders and the media in order to understand how they should react. The public is generally unable to gauge how immediate or damaging the threat may be or what the best policies are to counter the threat, so citizens rely on elites and the media to offer policy remedies. The threat model offered in this dissertation argues that how elites and the mass media offer those policies to the public matters as much as what those policies are. Information about terrorism influences the type of foreign policy citizens want, but emotions, particularly fear, affect attitudes by making citizens more open to the arguments political leaders offer. Previous literature on foreign policy attitudes considers the effect of elite cues (Berinsky forthcoming, Zaller 1992), fear and threat (Gordon and Arian 2001; Huddy et al 2002; 2003; 2005; Landau et al 2004), and the mass media (Baum 2002; Baum and Groeling 2008) on opinion formation. Yet, these works generally look at these aspects in isolation while this project considers how the political and information environment

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interact to lead citizens to adopt some policies over others. Terrorism is, by its nature, threatening and emotional to those affected. By considering how the media influence public opinion through providing realistic information but also by evoking and reinforcing fear, this project extends the media and politics literature, which mostly focuses on how information mechanisms of influence such as framing and priming. To test the implications of this model, I utilize both surveys and original experimental data. Chapter 4 tests the role of threat and media consumption on foreign policy attitudes over time using the American National Election Studies five-wave panel. Chapters 5 and 6 rely on an experiment to test the effect of evocative news coverage on foreign policy attitudes.

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Chapter 4: Testing the influence of threat on foreign policy attitudes

One cannot wage war under present conditions without the support of public opinion, which is tremendously molded by the press and other forms of propaganda.

- Douglas MacArthur

Threat is an inherent part of politics. Politicians utilize threat to advance and explain their policy agendas, particularly in explaining foreign policy decisions. For example, in a 2006 speech at Kansas State University, President George W. Bush reiterated a rationale for the Iraq war by saying, "…because oceans no longer protect us, the United States of America must confront threats before they cause us harm". Threats necessitate responses, so it is important to understand how citizens prefer the government to counter threats once they are identified. Terrorism is an especially potent source of threat because it is unpredictable, potentially catastrophic, and signals both potential harm to the individual and the government (Landau et al 2004). This was especially true for 9/11, both because of the dramatic nature of the acts themselves as well as the accompanying loss of life. As such, the perception of the threat of terrorism should be consequential for political attitudes and behaviors.

The task of this chapter is to understand what policies citizens prefer once threatened and test the implications of the threat theory explicated in Chapter 3. In particular, the chapter will tackle three questions: As the threat of terrorism increases, do Americans support more hawkish types of foreign policy? What is the effect of exposure to terrorism news on how citizens think about terrorism and the types of policies that they want from the government? How does partisanship influence what types of foreign policy citizens want and how likely are different partisans to accept messages about terrorism?

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From the threat theory, I expect that in the political environment after 9/11, that individuals threatened by terrorism will support the most hawkish policies. Chapter 2 demonstrated that concern about terrorism on average led to more support for higher defense spending and lower support for foreign aid in 2002. In addition, I expect individuals exposed to frightening media coverage of foreign policy will be the most likely to support hawkish policy, particularly if they perceive terrorism to be imminent because these people are most likely to be able to connect their personal sense of threat to the policies offered by the president and reflected in the media.

To test the implications of the threat model in the post-9/11 era, I turn to the 2000-2002-2004 National Election Studies (NES) panel as well as a 2002 Pew study on attitudes about military action abroad.

Testing the effect of threat and media on foreign policy 2002

The threat theory implies that one of the major ways that the media can influence attitudes is by enhancing feelings of fear and vulnerability. By using multiple measures of media consumption, the models in this chapter attempt to test the implication that emotion, not just information, moves foreign policy attitudes. In order to test the effect of threat and media exposure, I utilize the NES panel to model the effect of threat and television news and newspaper consumption on an additive index of foreign policy attitudes from 2002 using OLS. Looking at an index of policies rather than at each individually shows the influence of threat and media consumption on foreign policy broadly apart from the context of and the peculiarities of each policy area. The 2002 index contains six items all weighted equally: Iraq approval, approval of Bush's handling of terrorism, spending on foreign aid, defense, border security, and homeland security

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(Cronbach's α = .62, mean = .60, sd = .33). Foreign aid is reverse coded in the index. The index ranges from -1 to 1 and is constructed so that higher values translate into more hawkish attitudes. The measures in the index can be understood as reflecting both more long-term attitudes toward foreign policy as well as reactions to the terrorist attacks, media coverage of foreign policy, as well as the governmental response.

The regressions model the effect of threat perception, television news consumption, newspaper reading, and the interactions of threat and television and threat and newspaper, controlling for ideology and partisanship. Ideology and partisanship are measured in 2000 while television watching, newspaper reading, and threat perception are measured in 2002. All independent variables are scaled to range between 0 and 1 with higher values indicating more newspaper reading, television watching, and threat perception. Higher values on the ideology and partisanship measures indicate more conservative and Republican views.

If the media influence attitudes through providing threatening information, then we should expect newspaper reading to affect attitudes; however, if the media influence attitudes through heightening the effect of emotion rather than simply providing information, then television news exposure should have a larger effect than newspaper reading. News consumption is measured by two variables that capture media exposure: the average number of days in the past week the respondent watched national and local television news and the number of days in the last week respondents read a daily newspaper. Newspaper consumption remained steady over the two year period between 2000 and 2002 while television watching increased significantly. On average, in 2000, respondents read a newspaper 3.44 days a week, with 25 percent of respondents not

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reading a newspaper at all. In 2002, 21 percent of respondents read no newspaper in the past week and the average respondent read a newspaper 3.67 days per week. In comparison, television news consumption increased by a half of a day a week from 3.12 days in 2000 to 3.75 days in 2002 ($p<.01$). From 2001 to 2002, approximately 660 separate segments on terrorism ran on national network and cable news, meaning that a respondent who watched more television after 2000 increasingly watched news stories focused on terror plots, Osama bin Laden, and the next possible terrorist targets.

Almost a year after the terrorist attacks, American citizens were still quite concerned about future terrorism. I operationalized threat perception as how likely respondents believe another terrorist attack is on the United States, ranging from "very unlikely" to "very likely". Forty-eight percent of the 1,100 respondents in 2002 thought that another major terrorist attack was likely in the next year, while another 19 percent believed that a terrorist attack was *very likely*, leaving one-third of respondents less concerned about terrorism. Only 8 percent of respondents answered that terrorism was very unlikely in the next year, and partisans were all equally concerned about the prospect of another terrorist attack. This level of concern over foreign affairs was high in comparison to respondents' level of worry in 2000. Although there were no questions about terrorism in 2000, the NES did ask respondents in 2000 and again in 2002 how worried they were over the prospect of both conventional and nuclear war. Concern over both types of war increased substantially from 2000 to 2002, indicating that the political environment grew more threatening. In 2000, 50 percent of respondents answered that they were somewhat or very concerned about the prospect of conventional war, and that percentage increased to 84 percent by 2002 ($\chi^2 = 31.8$, $p<.01$). Similarly, anxiety over

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nuclear war increased over time, in 2000, 43 percent of respondents were either somewhat (35 percent) or very worried (8 percent) about nuclear war, while in 2002, 75 percent of the same respondents were somewhat (50 percent) or very worried (25 percent) ($\chi^2 = 92.8$, $p<.01$).

One of the main finding of these models is that the effect of television news on foreign policy attitudes in 2002 depended on respondents' level of concern about terrorism. Television news watching did not significantly affect attitudes in the absence of threat perception. Table 4.1 displays the results of the models for all respondents and separately for Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. Respondents already concerned about future terrorism reacted to threatening news by increasing hawkishness while the one-third of respondents unconcerned by terrorism were not moved to adjust their foreign policy views by television news. Among all respondents, the effect of television exposure ranges from -.03, when a respondent believed that terrorism was very unlikely in the next year, to .18 at the highest level of threat. Figure 4.1 presents the expected hawkishness scores for a respondent at varying levels of threat and television watching, holding partisanship, ideology, and newspaper reading at their means. The figures demonstrate that as respondents believed that terrorism was more likely, they preferred more aggressive types of foreign policy and that television watching increased hawkishness among those concerned about terrorism. The lower line displays the effect of increasing television watching on attitudes for respondents at the lowest level of threat; the flatness of the line demonstrates that citizens not worried about a terrorist attack were unaffected by more exposure to television news. In contrast, respondents at the highest level of threat were much more responsive to media messages, as demonstrated by the

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steeper top line of Figure 4.1. As they were exposed to more television news, high threat respondents increased their hawkishness by one-third, from .55 to .75, almost the top of the hawkishness scale.

Partisanship significantly shaped the type of foreign policy that citizens preferred in 2002 – Republicans and conservatives preferred a significantly more hawkish type of policy than do more liberal respondents. Yet, as Democrats and Independents became more worried about terrorism and watch more television news, they increasingly also expressed support for aggressive policies. The last three columns of Table 4.1 show the effect of threat and media consumption on attitudes separately by respondents' partisanship in 2000 and the bottom panel of Figure 4.1 shows the effect of television watching on attitudes among partisans most worried about terrorism. Among those concerned about terrorism, television exposure affected the attitudes of Democrats and Independents more than those of Republicans. This indicates that as of 2002, Republicans did not need the emotion or threatening information conveyed by television news to support hawkish policy since these types of policies were in line with their political predispositions. More remarkable is the fact that at the highest levels of threat, Independents who watched television news every day prefer almost identical policies to threatened Republicans while Democrats preferred only slightly less hawkish policy. In 2002, as moderate and liberal citizens watched countless news stories on the terrorist threat, those citizens increasingly wanted the government to counter the threat by hawkish means. In the wake of 9/11, Americans increasingly turned to the television news and received repeated doses of death and destruction. Those not worried about terrorism remained unaffected by the news, but for those already concerned about

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terrorism, the news exposure pushed them to support more aggressive types of foreign policy.

Unlike television exposure, newspaper reading had no significant effect on foreign policy attitudes either on its own or when controlling for television exposure. Newspaper readers are more able to tailor the information that they are exposed to – individuals not worried about terrorism may simply have choose to avoid terrorism stories or avoid the most threatening aspects of threatening stories (Yiend and Mathews 2001; Green, Williams, and Davidson 2003), and therefore the threatening information did not influence their attitudes. Threatened and non-threatened respondents may also take different information from watching the same news story about which policies best fight terrorism. Alternatively, low threat and high threat respondents may simply watch different news altogether, which is not possible to ascertain using this measure of media use. Yet the differences between newspaper reading and television exposure may also be due to the more emotional nature of television news – television stories provide information about what to be concerned about as well as allow individuals to visualize the consequences of terrorism

Given that threat matters substantially for overall opinions on foreign policy, it is interesting to know more specifically how threat perceptions mattered for particular foreign policy views in 2002. I expect that an increased sense of vulnerability about terrorism should increase support for more hawkish policy or at least the more hawkish of policy options. Figure 4.2 displays the influence of threat perception on NES panel respondents' views in 2002 on the Iraq war, approval of the president's handling of terrorism, as well as federal government spending on foreign aid, border security,

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defense, and homeland security. These figures show predicted values from OLS models identical to those in Table 4.1, varying television watching and threat while holding partisanship and ideology at their means. Each graph mirrors Figure 4.1 in demonstrating exposure to television news separately for low and high threat respondents. High threat respondents in the graphs are those who answered in 2002 that a terrorist attack is likely or very likely in the next year while low threat respondents are those who answered that terrorism was very unlikely or unlikely. Threatened citizens more strongly approve of military action in Iraq and want to spend much more on border security and homeland security while simultaneously wanting less foreign aid than those less concerned about future terrorism. Yet while exposure to television news enhanced the effect of threat on these four attitudes, television exposure did not influence defense or presidential approval attitudes in the same way.

Of the six attitudes, attitudes toward Iraq, foreign aid, border security, and homeland security are the most affected by respondents' threat level and news exposure. It makes sense that of the broadest range of foreign policy attitudes, that citizens needed to rely on the media to help connect their sense of threat about terrorism to policies such Iraq and foreign aid but not to defense since the former were less clearly tied to terrorism in 2002 than defense. In fact, the president and his administration made a significant effort to connect Iraq and terrorism in the lead-up to the 2003 war, but the connections may not have been obvious to those with less news exposure (Gershkoff and Kushner 2005). From this first figure on Iraq it is clear that effort of the president to make Iraq part of the larger War on Terror was at least partially successful as of 2002. The Iraq question asked respondents to evaluate the possibility of taking military action against

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Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power and provided four response choices that ranged from strongly disapprove to strongly approve. I recoded this variable to range between 0 and 1, with higher values indicating greater approval and the more hawkish choice. Even before the war commenced, support for it was quite high among these respondents – 50 percent strongly approved of military action in Iraq as of fall 2002. This high level of approval was due in part to the belief that terrorism was imminent and exposure to media coverage that transmitted the president's message that Iraq and 9/11 were connected (Gershkoff and Kushner 2005). At the highest level of television exposure, respondents who believed that terrorism was likely in the future were 20 percent (.2 units on the scale) more approving of sending troops to Iraq than those lower in threat.

While the opinion on Iraq represents to some extent the most dramatic foreign policy attitude – support for war – threat also helped citizens structure other foreign policy views like how much the government should allocate to a variety of programs. Chapter 2 demonstrated that in the aggregate, support for foreign aid was unmoved by the events surrounding 9/11 while support for border security increased and support for more money for homeland security was quite high in the public in 2002. As a reminder, two-thirds of the NES sample desired more homeland security spending, 72 percent wanted more spending on border security, while 45 percent preferred a cut in foreign aid spending. The next graphs show the same pattern as the Iraq graph – as threat increases, respondents prefer the more hawkish policy option (i.e. more spending on border fences and less spending on foreign aid), and television heightens the effect of threat on attitudes. Each of the spending questions is scaled so that -1 is equal to "spend less", 0 is

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"spend the same" and 1 is equal to "spend more". As the figures demonstrate, respondents very concerned about terrorism want to spend significantly more on homeland security and border security and much less on foreign aid. The effect of television news is particularly stark on foreign aid attitudes: the effect of news exposure is to significantly polarize high and low threat respondents. As high threat respondents watch more television news, they support cutting back on foreign aid while low threat respondents actually want to increase aid. At the highest level of television exposure, low threat respondents are close to the status quo position of "spend the same" while high threat respondents were much more clearly on the "spend less" side.

While threat increased support for Iraq and a variety of spending attitudes, threat's effect on defense spending attitudes and approval of the president depended much less on the information environment than the other attitudes. Approval of the president's handling of terrorism was quite high at both levels of threat and was not significantly affected by television news watching. In comparison, respondents worried about a terrorist attack preferred a higher level of defense spending than those less worried no matter how much news they watched. Overall these graphs provide support for the threat theory. In the threatening political environment of 2002, Americans supported hawkish foreign policy and that support was strengthened by exposure to a news environment that consistently highlighted the threat of terrorism and the president's policy solutions. In combination with the results from the newspaper and television models of the foreign policy index in 2002, these results suggest that in 2002, citizens translated their concern over terrorism into support for a variety of hawkish policies, particularly as their exposure to fear-inducing types of media increased.

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Alternative threat models 2002

Table 4.1 and Figures 4.1 and 4.2 provide evidence that the threatening political and media environment after 9/11 led citizens to increase support for a strong and militaristic foreign policy. Yet we may be concerned that endogeneity lurks within these models – that the perceptions of threat and media consumption are not exogenous as the OLS models assume but rather are related to each other. There are both theoretical and empirical reasons to believe that threat and news exposure are intertwined; in other words, that threat perception and television exposure potentially influence each other.

Several empirical studies show a relationship between threat perception and television exposure. In the week following the events of 9/11, as a response to the terrorist attacks, the evening television news audience doubled (Althaus 2002). Ridout, Grosse, and Appleton (forthcoming) show that media exposure increases Americans' threat perception on a wide variety of threats including global economic crises, major wars, religious fanaticism, and weapons of mass destruction. Surveys of Americans immediately after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 showed a strong connection between media exposure to the events of 9/11 and stress (Schuster et al 2001, Schlenger et al 2002, Cohen-Silver et al 2002). While there is a connection between threat and television exposure, these cross-sectional studies are unable to distinguish the direction of causality - whether threat caused the television watching, whether television watching created a sense of threat or whether threat and television watching are reciprocally related.

Scholarship from Israel points to the explanation that television exposure influences threat perception. Experimental work on terrorism news shows that television stories about attacks can increase threat perception, even in a society where terrorism is

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more prevalent. Using an experiment that randomly assigned Israeli citizens to either watch a film with news scenes of terrorism or a film with non-terrorism related news, Slone (2000) found that subjects exposed to clips of terrorism were more anxious than those who saw no news of terrorism. From this study we can conclude that television may increase threat perception when the selection process for exposure is random. However, this experimental design cannot distinguish whether threat might influence the choice to watch television in the first place.

Theoretically, threat may lead individuals to pay closer attention to their environment and seek out information in order to cope with novel and potentially harmful situations (Eysenck 1992; Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000). So threat might lead people toward their television sets, yet they might only hear and remember the most threatening parts of the news, exacerbating rather than lowering threat perception. This would lead to the expectation that the relationship between threat and media exposure is potentially cyclical and endogenous.

Since my major interest is modeling the influence of threat and media exposure on attitudes, it is important to take into account the relationship between threat and media exposure. Ignoring endogeneity will generally lead to biased coefficients and high variance estimates in both linear regression and discrete choices models, which may lead to drawing incorrect inferences (Achen 1986; Alvarez, Butterfield, and Glasgow nd). Given these potential drawbacks, I also model the relationship between threat and foreign policy attitudes using two-stage least squares (2SLS).

There are two significant advantages to relying on panel data to test the effect of threat on attitudes. The first advantage is that the data allow me to explore the effect of

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threat on foreign policy opinion and control for prior opinion. In other words, the design allows us to draw inferences about the effect of the "treatment" of 9/11 by comparing the views on foreign policy in 2002 with views two years later and control for baseline attitudes in 2000. Having a direct measurement of prior opinion increases the efficiency of the estimation and also provides a sense of the weight of pre-existing attitudes and new information on attitudes (1991a, 3). Additionally, the panel data provide a measurement of respondents' attitudes and political behaviors from the more "normal" political environment of 2000.[7]

This feature of the panel structure is particularly useful for finding instruments for media exposure variable in 2002 because respondents answered the same media use questions in 2000. The television use questions asked respondents how many days in the last week they watched local and national television.[8] In order to get a "purged" measure of television watching in 2002, I regressed the average of respondents' national and local news watching in 2002 on respondent's average television watching in 2000, race, age, education, political sophistication, partisanship, ideology, marital status, and whether they lived in the West. I then use the predicted measure of television watching in the second stage equations. Since this measure of television watching is derived from

[7] There are also drawbacks to using panel data, including panel conditioning and panel attrition. In panel conditioning, the experience of being interviewed and re-interviewed actually changes the behavior and responses of the sample. Although some of these respondents were interviewed five times over the four years, the interviews were separated by either months or years, so panel conditioning does not seem to be a serious concern. A more serious problem is panel attrition, where the sample of people who remain in the panel are unrepresentative of the original sample and unrepresentative of the population generally. For my study, what would be particularly problematic if the remaining members of the panel were somehow systematically different than the general public on either their threat perception or their foreign policy attitudes. Bartels (2000) found that significant panel biases are rare with NES panel studies and that those that do occur are small in magnitude in comparison to the inferential advantages gained.
[8] Please see Appendices A.1, A.2, and A.3 for exact question wordings.

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measures from two years beforehand, it should be interpreted as a propensity to watch television rather than as television exposure.[9]

Finding a useful instrument for threat perception is much more difficult since, for obvious reasons, the 2000 NES questionnaire did not ask about the threat of terrorist attacks. Nor do demographic variables from the 2000 wave explain much variance in the threat perception measure.[10] Additionally, although I have theoretical expectations about the effects of threat on political attitudes and behavior, there is little theoretical guidance in the literature on either the individual-level or contextual origins of threat perception. Threat perception may also be closely related to individual-level personality dispositions such as trait-anxiety, for which there are few good measures on the NES. Although I conceptualize threat as a state characteristic, some people may be more inclined to perceive a wide variety of threats in the environment, particularly those people naturally prone to anxiety (Spielberger et al 1970). This lack of theory and the lack of prior measures inhibit the ability to find appropriate instruments. While ignoring endogeneity may wreak havoc on statistical estimations, using weak instruments may also seriously bias statistical inferences (Bartels 1991b). Because I doubt the appropriateness of any instrument for threat perception in the NES, I include the original 2002 threat measure in all of the models in Table 4.2.

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[9] I recognize that there are biases with these self-reported media measures, particularly over-reporting because citizens seem unable to recall and estimate their own news consumption (Prior 2008). What makes these biases particularly troubling is that they do not seem to be consistent across demographic groups, so there is not an easy way to simply down-weight the measures. While I recognize these biases, these are the measures that are available to me on the NES. I have found similar results using a Pew study that asks respondents what their main source of news is – television, newspaper, etc, so I am fairly confident in the robustness of the findings even in the face of over-reporting of television news watching.

[10] I have tried various empirical models to predict threat using demographic variables such as race, gender, authoritarianism, education, sophistication and the R^2 value for the model is never above .05, leaving 95 percent of the variance unexplained. In part, I believe that there is a great deal of measurement error in this variable as people try to match their perceptions of the danger of terrorism to the 4-point scale.

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If television use and threat are endogeneous, then their interaction term is also endogenous. Since my main hypotheses focus on this interaction, I also instrument the interaction term. Following Achen (1986, 143), I purged the endogeneity from the interaction term as a single variable rather than multiplying the purged constituent elements together. All models of foreign policy opinion include the predicted values of the 2002 television measure and the interaction term. Additionally, the models use measures of demographics, ideology, and partisanship from the 2000 wave.

Table 4.2 displays results from models regressing foreign policy attitudes on respondents threat perception and exogenous measures of media consumption in 2002. The dependent variables are the same seven as discussed previously – a foreign policy index made up of spending attitudes (defense, homeland security, border security, and foreign aid), approval of the president's handling of terrorism, and support for the Iraq war and each of those variables independently. These 2SLS models reveal the same basic patterns as the OLS models with a few significant differences. Consistent with the findings from the previous models, respondents high in threat prefer significantly more hawkish policy than those lower in threat, as measured by the foreign policy index. Even respondents who watched no television news supported significantly more hawkish policy as they grew more threatened, and this effect is significant in six of seven models. Yet these models reveal a significant difference from the OLS models. Table 4.2 shows that television exposure significantly influences foreign policy preferences when threat is low by *lowering* support for hawkish policy. In comparison, in the OLS models television consumption mostly had no significantly effect on the foreign policy attitudes of low threat respondents. What these updated models suggest is that television news, even very

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threatening news that catches viewers' attention, may influence viewers in a variety of ways – the emotional states of consumers influences how viewers understand what they watch. These models suggest that high and low threat respondents take away different types of information and emotion from television coverage of foreign policy. However, given the way that news consumption is measured in these models (days per week), it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions about whether high and low threat respondents actually watched the same news, paid attention to the same types of stories, or remembered the same information. These models reveal that even when controlling for previous foreign policy attitudes and taking into account the reciprocal relationship between threat and media consumptions, threat led citizens toward more hawkish attitudes. To more directly test how those at different levels of threat interpret media messages about foreign policy, Chapters 5 and 6 utilize an experiment. Overall, though both the OLS and the 2SLS models provide support for hypothesis that an increased sense of vulnerability about terrorism led to more support for a variety of policies linked to the War on Terror – more defense and border spending, higher support for the Iraq war, and less support for dovish policies such as foreign aid. Additionally, the findings show that television watching rather than newspaper reading moved foreign policy attitudes in the hawkish direction, suggesting that more evocative and emotionally potent coverage of terrorism influenced attitudes more significantly than only the information found in newspapers.

Effect of threat on other potential conflicts

Threat and television news watching are significantly related to public opinion on issues either directly or indirectly related to 9/11 and the War on Terror – Iraq, foreign

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aid, border security, homeland security, and spending on terrorism. The question remains whether threat can shape opinion more broadly outside the previously defined bounds of the "War on Terror". To address this concern, I utilized a Pew survey from January 2002 that asked citizens whether they favored the United States taking military action to destroy terrorist groups in Somalia and Sudan. These questions serve as an ideal test for threat perception theory since the countries of interest are outside of the Middle East, not part of the "Axis of Evil," and not prominent features in Bush speeches on terrorism, making this a strong test of the impact of threat.

The Department of State considers both Somalia and Sudan as essential to fighting terrorism in Africa because of their instability and Sudan's role in providing a haven for Osama bin Laden in the early 1990s (Wycoff 2004). However, neither Somalia nor Sudan is a first priority in the War on Terror the way that presidential administration portrayed Iraq to be. Table 4.3 presents the findings from probit models of respondents' willingness to commit troops in Somalia and Sudan. Note that the models use different measures of threat because of the way that the Pew survey divided the sample. Respondents who received the Somalia question answered a question of how worried they were about another terrorist attack in the United States while respondents who received the Sudan question answered a question of how worried they were about becoming a victim of terrorism in the future. In addition, the media exposure question from the Pew survey asked respondents what their main source of news was rather than about the amount of exposure, as the NES does. Although the operationalization of threat perception differs between the NES and Pew – beliefs about the risk of terrorism in the NES and worries about terrorism in the Pew study – the fact that both of these measures

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are correlated with support for hawkish policies indicates the robustness of the finding. Additionally, while the NES measure taps more cognitive dimensions of threat, the Pew question more clearly taps emotion, suggesting that concerns over terrorism are tied to both affect and cognition.

In the case of Somalia, using TV as one's main source of news in combination with worrying about terrorism significantly increases the likelihood of favoring troop deployment to Somalia, and the variable is the largest predictor in the model. The substantive implications of this finding are relatively profound. Public outcry demanded the removal of troops from Somalia in 1993 after rebels killed 18 Army Rangers in Mogadishu. Yet, if they worried about terrorism, respondents to the Pew survey who mainly relied on TV news favored actually *committing* American troops to Somalia. The finding for Sudan is similar – the interaction of TV watching and threat increases willingness to send troops to the Sudan, although the effect does not reach statistical significance. In comparison to Somalia, Sudan has clearer ties to al-Qaeda, but the size of the coefficient on the TV-threat interaction is smaller in the Sudan model compared to the same variable in the Somalia model, although both increase the probability of supporting military action. One possible explanation is the difference between more personal threat measure used in the Sudan model – how worried individuals were about terrorism affecting their loved ones- and the sociotropic measure in the Somalia model – how worried individuals were about terrorism in the country. This finding matches the evidence that national threat is a better predictor of policy opinion than perceived personal threat (Huddy et al 2002b). Overall, though, these two models conform to the predictions from my threat model. Respondents who relied on television as their main

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source of news were more likely to support potential troop deployments to Africa as they grew more worried about potential terrorism. These findings suggest that early on after 9/11, the fear of terrorism was diffuse enough to be directed toward military action on a variety of potential fronts.

A long term effect – foreign policy attitudes in 2004

Clearly the threat of terrorism cast a long shadow over public policy long after the dust settled at Ground Zero. Terrorism and foreign policy also loomed large during the 2004 election; both George Bush and Dick Cheney portrayed John Kerry as soft on terrorism and an unsafe choice for the country. In a speech to supporters in Des Moines, Iowa in September 2004, Dick Cheney warned that if voters made the "wrong choice" in November, then "the danger is that we'll get hit again and we'll be hit in a way that will be devastating from the standpoint of the United States" (Sanger and Halbfinger 2004). The threat of terrorism was also salient in the minds of citizens in 2004 – 47 percent of NES panelists thought that terrorism was likely in the near future and 11 percent believed that it was *very likely* compared to 29 percent who believed another attack to be unlikely and 11 percent who thought that further terrorism was *very unlikely*. Given that threat still pervaded in 2004, albeit at lower levels than in 2002, did threat still influence foreign policy attitudes by the time of the 2004 election?

To test how threat mattered for attitudes in 2004, I ran a series of models for NES panel respondents exploring the effect of threat perception and media consumption on the same set of foreign policy attitudes (Iraq, foreign aid, etc.) measured in 2004 in addition to a 7-point militarism scale that asked how citizens generally wanted the government to "handle international problems" from negotiations and aid on the dovish end to military

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action on the hawkish end. Table 4.4 displays a set of OLS and 2SLS models that uses the foreign policy index as well as the militarism measure as the dependent variables. These models look at the effect of threat on these overall measures of foreign policy attitudes and how that effect varies with both television watching and newspaper reading. To avoid the possibility that citizens updated their threat perceptions in 2004 based on their foreign policy attitudes, the models use respondents' threat level and media consumption from the 2002 wave of the panel. As a reminder, in 2002, television watching moderated the effect of threat while newspaper reading did not, suggesting that the more emotive coverage of television watching affected attitudes more significantly than only the information provided by newspaper. The models control for partisanship, ideology, education, and previous foreign policy attitudes from 2002. The foreign policy index ranges between -1 at the dovish end to 1 at the hawkish end and the militarism scale ranges from 0 to 1 at the hawkish end.

Comparing across the four models, the effect of threat on 2004 attitudes is a bit unclear. The effect of threat at low levels of both newspaper and television consumption varies rather dramatically over the four model specifications, suggesting that threat matters little in 2004 without information about how to connect that sense of threat to policy options. In addition, the effect of threat on foreign policy attitudes is not consistent in one direction or another even when respondents are more likely to watch television news. Across the four models, the effect of threat on these measures of foreign policy preferences ranges from -.08 to .44 when respondents report watching television news every evening. Figure 4.3 below displays predicted values of the foreign policy index in 2004 at varying levels of threat and television exposure. The figures come from both the

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OLS and 2SLS models in Table 4.4 and hold other regressors at their mean. What is apparent from both the models and the figures is that while citizens with a stronger sense of foreboding about terrorism preferred more hawkish policies that television exposure did not moderate this relationship – higher threat respondents react to television news in 2004 in the same way as lower threat respondents.

In comparison to the effect of television news watching, newspaper reading increases support for foreign policy that relies more on bombs and less on dialogue for those people concerned about terrorism. The lack of effect of television watching in comparison to newspaper reading suggests that perhaps that the emotional appeals found in television news became less effective over time as the informational component, which was more likely found in newspaper coverage, became more important in helping citizens to structure their foreign policy views. Another possibility is that the index hides substantial variation on the issues where television may have influence. For instance, by 2004 views on Iraq were relatively crystallized and partisanship strongly determined the level of support whereas issues like foreign aid spending were much less connected to partisanship and were therefore more malleable by new information.

While the effect of threat on general foreign policy attitudes in 2004 was mixed, as mentioned, it is possible that threat influenced individual policies more significantly. Table 4.5 presents 2SLS models of the effect of threat on approval of the president's handling of terrorism, federal spending on foreign policy, and a 2-stage probit model on whether the Iraq war was "worth the cost". The models use the same purged measures of television watching and threat from 2002 as used previously in the 2002 models. Although threat does not significantly affect all six foreign policy attitudes, it is worth

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noting that each of the models controls for respondents' attitudes on these issues in 2002 and 2000 when available. To the extent that individuals' threat level influenced their foreign policy views in 2002, then the effect of threat in these models is the residual effect of terrorism concerns on 2004 attitudes over and above the effect two years prior. What these models demonstrate is that when looking at the individual policy level, threat did significantly increase support for spending on the border and defense spending among respondents watching television news and threat lowered support for foreign aid among low TV news watchers. In addition, consistent with Table 4.2, these models show that among respondents who believed that terrorism was very unlikely, the effect of watching television news was to lower support for the hawkish options. These models suggest that even three years after the 9/11 attacks, feelings of vulnerability led citizens to support hawkish policies over dovish ones, particularly as they consumed more news. While threat did not consistently influence general foreign policy views in 2004 like in 2002, the findings from the specific models suggests that threat remained a powerful source of opinionation on defense spending and border security. This implies that political leaders wanting to increase the Pentagon's budget could have increased popular support by increasing a sense of threat in the public.

The role of partisanship in foreign policy

In the year after 9/11, Democrats, Independents, and Republicans reacted in similar ways to the threat of terrorism – they increasingly supported hawkish policies in line with the president's War on Terror. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 demonstrate that partisans reacted in similar ways to the threat of terrorism although they differed in their level of support for hawkish policy. Additionally, Chapter 2 demonstrates that while there

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were baseline difference in foreign policy attitudes in 2000, all partisans reacted to the more threatening environment by moving in a hawkish direction.

These findings are consistent with the expectation that in an information environment that is both threatening and dominated by one political message that threatened citizens, no matter their political stripes, will tend to move in the direction of the dominant position. However, we may expect a different pattern of attitudes as elites diverged more on foreign policy and the information environment reflected the a more politicized foreign policy message. As the information environment becomes more diverse and the president's message fails to dominate, citizens can then rely more heavily on the heuristic of partisan identification in forming attitudes (Berinsky 2007; Baum and Groeling 2008; Lau and Redlawsk 2001; Rahn 1993). As political elites began to take positions contrary to the president's positions on foreign policy and the media began to cover a wider variety of views on foreign policy, the threat theory predicts that partisanship would shape both threat perception as well as foreign policy attitudes. Although much literature on foreign policy attitudes overlooks the role of political identities such as partisanship (Gartner and Segura 2000; Jentelson 1992; Mueller 1973), the threat theory explicitly considers how individuals' partisan identities interact with the messages and emotion in the information environment. The remaining pages of this chapter will establish that citizens' partisanship and ideological views were increasingly important in determining foreign policy attitudes after 2002 while the next chapter explores how partisanship influences threat perception.

Since the 1990s and particularly after 9/11, the public's foreign policy attitudes have become increasingly determined by partisanship (Pew 2005). In part, this

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polarization in the public comes from the polarization of foreign policy attitudes on the elite level (Shapiro and Bloch-Elkon 2005) and part comes from the reflection of those elite views in media coverage of foreign policy. Journalists and editors face incentives to rally behind the president in times of crisis but in more "normal" times face incentives to reflect a variety of views on foreign policy, particularly if the views represent "costly speech". Baum and Groeling (2008) show that the norms of professional journalism lead journalists to prefer novel, conflictual, and balanced stories, and demonstrate that when opposition to the president's policies arose from elites that it was reflected in national news coverage. In addition, they show that coverage of Iraq on the network news and Fox became increasingly critical as of the end of 2004. Boydstun and Glazier (2008) also demonstrate that the framing of the War on Terror in the *New York Times* became less dominated by pro-military and pro-presidential administration framings over time. These findings suggest that in the more diverse information environment of 2004 that partisanship should matter more for foreign policy attitudes and that Democrats should therefore be less hawkish in 2004 than Republicans.

Table 4.6 shows the effect of partisanship and ideology on a variety of foreign policy attitudes for respondents in the 2002 and 2004 National Elections Studies (NES) panel. These coefficients come from the models in Table 4.2 and Table 4.5 and highlight the increasing influence of partisan and ideological identities on foreign policy preferences over the two waves of the NES. One thing to note is that partisanship had a significant effect on attitudes toward the president and Iraq in 2002 but a small and insignificant effect on spending preferences. This indicates that partisanship did not help citizens to organize their attitudes on how much the government should allocate to

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foreign aid, border security, homeland security, or defense but that partisanship did help structure attitudes on issues more clearly aligned with the political battles over foreign policy – presidential approval and the Iraq war. Respondents' ideological views more powerfully affected spending preferences in 2002 than partisanship and the effect of ideology grew in 2004 for the issues of defense and the War on Terror, suggesting that general government spending attitudes mattered for views on foreign policy spending. In 2002, moving from being a strong Democrat to a strong Republican increased a respondents' approval of the Iraq war by .18, approximately 20 percent of the scale, which could mean the difference between disapproving and approving of the war or approving and strongly approving.

By 2004 the influence of partisanship on attitudes increased for six of seven attitudes. The effect of partisanship was large and significant for Iraq attitudes and over the two years of the panel, the effect of party increased threefold for presidential approval. By 2004, partisanship increased support for the Iraq war by .60 (at the maximum)[11], meaning that being a Republican almost guaranteed approval for the war while being a Democrat guaranteed disapproval. Over these two years, as partisan elites began to divide on foreign policy issues, citizens utilized partisanship and ideology as a heuristic in order to form attitudes about foreign policy. What this suggests for my theoretical perspective is that while individuals' concern about threat mattered greatly for foreign policy attitudes that long-standing political identities also increasingly played a role in attitude formation over time as the information and political environment became less one-sided.

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[11] This is the maximum marginal effect of partisanship on Iraq attitudes in 2004, calculated by multiplying the probit coefficient from the model (1.51) by .4.

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While Table 4.6 demonstrates that partisanship and ideology increasingly mattered for citizens' foreign policy views, it also showed that there was significant variance on the issues where partisanship mattered. This finding suggests that even as the parties moved apart on issues of foreign policy, that citizens did not follow on all policies. In addition, this suggests that perceptions of threat could more easily affect attitudes on issues where partisanship was less powerful. The next table describes in more detail the issues on which polarization between the parties occurred and where it did not. Table 4.7 presents Democrats' and Republicans' foreign policy views in 2002 and 2004 and provides evidence that the polarization on foreign policy that occurred over those two years came from views on foreign policy easily identified with Bush administration policies rather than over foreign policy attitudes more broadly. The left side of the table displays an index that captures attitudes toward Bush administration policies- approval of the Iraq war and approval of Bush's handling of terrorism (Cronbach's α_{2002} = .70, Cronbach's α_{2004}= .82). I determined of which foreign policy attitudes belonged in which index was made by factor analysis with varimax rotation. These two questions were asked in similar or identical form on both the 2002 and 2004 NES waves. The index ranges from 0 to 1 with higher values meaning more approval of these policies.

Over the two years, Republicans evaluated the war in Iraq and the president's handling of terrorism very positively while Democrats evaluated the war and the president more negatively in 2004 than in 2002. In 2002, among Democrats the average score on the index was .58; by 2004, Democrats' mean score had decreased by 14 percent of the scale to .30. It should be noted that while Democrats were less supportive overall of these policies in 2004 than in 2002, the average score still remained above zero,

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indicating that Democrats were not willing to swing as far as rejecting these policies completely. In contrast, over the two year period, Republicans' approval remained steadily positive toward the Bush policies. In 2002, the average Republican scored .79 on the scale and in 2004 the average was .72; while the over-time difference is statistically significant at $p<.01$, there is little substantive difference. The difference between Republicans' and Democrats' attitudes almost doubled in size from .21 in 2002 to .41 in 2004.

The right side of the graph presents attitudes toward a range of other policies that are not as easily identified with the current presidential administration. The 2002 index includes three items – respondents' attitudes toward federal spending on defense, federal spending on border security, and spending on the War on Terror. Both indices range between 0 and 1 with higher values indicating more hawkish attitudes (i.e. more spending on defense etc). Overall, Republicans are significantly more hawkish than Democrats in that they prefer more spending on defense and border security and feel more warmly toward the military; however, the difference between Republicans and Democrats does not grow over time. In 2002 the difference among Republicans and Democrats foreign policy attitudes on this scale was .10 while in 2004, the gap was the same, providing no evidence of polarization. From this data we can conclude that while partisan attitudes grew more polarized on issues like the Iraq war and Bush approval over time, on other foreign policy issues, this polarization is not nearly as large nor did it grow over time. Together, these tables imply that the weight of citizens' political identities such as partisanship grew over time as the parties grew further apart on foreign policy, but that

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partisanship was a stronger determinant of foreign policy attitudes on issues more closely related to the president – Iraq and presidential approval.

Conclusion

This chapter provides evidence that the threat of terrorism fundamentally shaped the type of foreign policy that American citizens preferred after the 9/11 attacks. As Americans believed terrorists would again attack their shores, they were more likely to prefer policies that relied on military force than policies that emphasized conciliation or overseas aid. The increase in support for this more hawkish policy is consistent with the expectations of the threat theory. Other theories of threat and attitudes imply that perceptions of threat influence citizen opinions through primarily psychological means (Gordon and Arian; Huddy et al 2005). The findings from this chapter imply that threat matters for political attitudes because the president and the media imbued the threat of terrorism with political meaning that citizens use to shape their attitudes. Respondents threatened by terrorism were open to persuasion and in the mostly one-sided political environment of 2002, these threatened individuals adopted the president's position on foreign policy. Support for hawkish policy was especially high among those people watching the nightly television news, news that in the year after 9/11 ran hundreds of segments on issues ranging from airport security and the threat of shoes and teddy bears with explosives to set-backs in the Afghan War. Because the national news reflected the president's War on Terror framing (Entman 2003), respondents already concerned about terrorism received messages to help connect their sense of threat to hawkish policy options. Television news, with its more episodic story-lines (Iyengar 1991) and more dramatic and emotional coverage of terrorism, mattered more for attitudes in 2002 than

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did more informative and less evocative newspaper coverage, a dynamic explored in the next several chapters.

Lastly, this chapter established that after the relatively unique period of bipartisanship and unity after 9/11, that party politics began to define foreign policy by 2004. Citizens relied more heavily on their long-standing identities in forming their views, particularly on issues closely related to the president's policies. Partisanship helped citizens decide which foreign policy messages to accept and which foreign policy attitudes to adopt, and also determines what threatening messages to accept, a theme explored more in depth in the next chapter.

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Table 4.1: The effect of threat and media consumption on foreign policy attitudes 2002

	Foreign Policy Index 2002					
	All respondents	All respondents	All respondents	Dems	Inds	Reps
PID 2000	**0.22**	**0.22**	**0.20**			
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)			
Ideology 2000	**0.14**	**0.14**	**0.15**	**0.22**	-0.01	**0.14**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.10)	(0.04)
Threat of terrorism 2002	0.01	-0.01	**0.14**	0.08	**-0.36**	0.02
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.10)	(0.19)	(0.08)
TV watching 2002	-0.03	-0.03		-0.07	-0.36	**0.17**
	(0.06)	(0.06)		(0.10)	(0.20)	(0.09)
TV * Threat	**0.22**	**0.22**		**0.23**	**0.68**	-0.05
	(0.08)	(0.08)		(0.13)	(0.27)	(0.12)
Newspaper reading 2002	0.01		0.03	0.03	-0.22	-0.04
	(0.05)		(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.20)	(0.07)
Newspaper * Threat	-0.03		-0.02	-0.07	0.23	0.07
	(0.07)		(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.26)	(0.10)
Constant	**0.36**	**0.37**	**0.33**	**0.34**	**0.81**	**0.51**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.14)	(0.06)
Observations	1157	1158	1163	552	134	479
R^2	0.15	0.15	0.13	0.10	0.07	0.07

Source: NES 2000-2004 panel. Model Specification: OLS. Coefficients in bold are significant at $p < .08$. Foreign policy index is additive, 6-item indices – spending on foreign aid, defense, border security, and homeland security/ war on terror, support for the war in Iraq, approval of the president's handling of terrorism. The indices range from -1 to 1, higher values are more hawkish. Partisanship and ideology are measured in 2000 and range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating Republican and conservative. Television and newspaper consumption are measured in 2002 as the number of days a week respondents watched TV news/read a daily newspaper, recoded to range between 0 and 1. Threat perception is respondent's belief about the likelihood of another terrorist attack ranging from "terrorism not very likely" (0) to "terrorism very like" (1).

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Table 4.2: Effect of threat and media on specific attitudes 2002 (IV models)

	Foreign policy index 2002	Iraq 2002	Bush approval terrorism 2002	Foreign Aid spend 2002	Border Security spend 2002	Defense spend 2002	War on Terror spend 2002
Black	-0.06	-0.06	**-0.15**	0.08	-0.06	0.08	-0.06
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.08)
Female	-0.04	**-0.10**	-0.07	0.06	-0.05	0.07	0.03
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Age	0.01	**-0.20**	0.04	-0.08	0.07	0.19	0.01
	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Education	**-0.15**	**-0.31**	-0.04	0.12	-0.12	-0.14	**-0.15**
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)
PID	**0.11**	**0.18**	**0.12**	-0.02	0.01	0.06	0.07
	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Ideology	**0.19**	**0.25**	**0.15**	-0.04	**0.14**	**0.22**	**0.20**
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)
TV news	**-0.74**	**-0.97**	-0.43	0.28	-0.54	**-1.32**	-0.59
	(0.27)	(0.38)	(0.30)	(0.57)	(0.51)	(0.57)	(0.55)
Threat	**0.11**	**0.12**	-0.02	**-0.14**	**0.12**	**0.14**	**0.21**
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
TV news * Threat	**0.93**	**1.04**	**0.57**	-0.22	0.82	**1.41**	0.87
	(0.29)	(0.41)	(0.33)	(0.62)	(0.55)	(0.62)	(0.60)
Foreign Aid 2000				**0.37**			
				(0.03)			
Border Sec 2000					**0.23**		
					(0.03)		
Defense 2000						**0.31**	
						(0.03)	
Constant	0.56	**0.81**	**0.74**	-0.25	**0.49**	**0.37**	**0.40**
	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.14)
R^2	0.18	0.23	0.13	0.17	0.14	0.23	0.06
N	1047	859	1026	930	938	779	947

Source: NES 2000-2004 panel. Model Specification: 2SLS. Coefficients in bold are significant at $p < .08$. Dependent variables are scaled so that higher values are higher approval of Iraq and the president, and more spending. Partisanship and ideology are measured in 2000 and range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating Republican and conservative. Television news watching is instrumented from TV news watching in 2000. Threat perception is respondent's belief about the likelihood of another terrorist attack ranging from "terrorism not very likely" (0) to "terrorism very like" (1). The interaction of threat and television watching is also instrumented from TV 2000, gender, education, authoritarianism, age, and isolationism measured in 2000.

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Table 4.3: Willingness to send troops abroad 2002

	Somalia	Sudan
Black	**-0.51**	-0.25
	(0.24)	(0.24)
Female	**0.44**	**0.30**
	(0.14)	(0.14)
Age	-0.45	0.16
	(0.30)	(0.32)
Education	-0.18	**0.53**
	(0.23)	(0.23)
PID	0.13	**0.40**
	(0.15)	(0.16)
Ideology	0.30	**0.48**
	(0.21)	(0.21)
TV as main source	**0.59**	0.22
	(0.28)	(0.21)
National threat	-0.23	
	(0.33)	
Personal threat		0.09
		(0.33)
TV news * Threat	**1.35**	0.71
	(0.43)	(0.43)
Constant	1.19	0.58
	(0.33)	(0.29)
Log likelihood	-218.73	-215.12
N	490	523

Source: Pew Survey January 2002. Model specification: Probit. Coefficients in bold are significant at $p<.05$
Notes: Dependent variable is scored 0/1, 1 is equal to approval for US taking military action to destroy terrorist groups. Exact question wording is, "Would you favor or oppose the US taking military action to destroy terrorist groups in Somalia [Sudan]?" All predictors are scored 0-1 with high scores for black, female, post-college degree, conservative, Republican, and worried about terrorist attack.

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Table 4.4: Effect of threat and media on foreign policy opinions 2004

	OLS models		IV models	
	Foreign policy index 2004	Militarism 2004	Foreign policy index 2004	Militarism 2004
PID 2000	**0.15**	**0.11**	0.08	0.13
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.07)
Ideology 2000	**0.16**	**0.21**	**0.20**	**0.20**
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Threat of terrorism 2002	**0.16**	-0.07	-0.35	0.12
	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.25)	(0.35)
TV watching 2002	0.05	-0.01	**-0.58**	0.04
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.29)	(0.39)
TV * Threat	-0.10	0.13	**0.79**	-0.20
	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.44)	(0.61)
Newspaper reading 2002	-0.03	-0.05	-0.44	**-0.83**
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.17)	(0.24)
Newspaper * Threat	0.02	0.02	**0.68**	**1.38**
	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.30)	(0.40)
Index 2002	**0.56**		**0.54**	
	(0.03)		(0.03)	
Constant	**-0.09**	**0.33**	**0.28**	0.27
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.17)	(0.23)
Observations	824	635	759	594
R^2	0.48	0.14	0.49	0.17

Source: NES 2000-2004 panel. Model Specification: 2SLS. Coefficients in bold are significant at $p < .08$. Dependent variables are an index of foreign policy attitudes measured in 2004 (Iraq approval, Bush approval, spending on border, defense, foreign aid, homeland sec) and a 7-point scale that asked respondents how the government should "handle international problems" from negotiations and aid to the military on the higher end. Partisanship and ideology are measured in 2000 and range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating Republican and conservative. Television news watching is instrumented from TV news watching in 2000 as well as other variables. Threat perception is respondent's belief about the likelihood of another terrorist attack ranging from "terrorism not very likely" (0) to "terrorism very likely" (1). The interaction of threat and television watching is also instrumented from TV 2000, gender, education, authoritarianism, age, and isolationism measured in 2000.

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Table 4.5: Effect of TV watching and threat on specific foreign policy attitudes 2004

	Iraq 2004	Pres approval terrorism 2004	Foreign Aid spending 2004	Border Security spending 2004	Defense spending 2004	War on Terror spending 2004
Education	0.01	-0.08	-0.09	0.01	**-0.32**	**-0.03**
	(0.23)	(0.04)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.01)
PID	**1.51**	**0.33**	0.10	-0.04	-0.17	0.06
	(0.28)	(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.10)
Ideology	**0.69**	**0.24**	**-0.14**	**0.13**	**0.30**	**0.26**
	(0.21)	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Threat of terrorism 2002	0.06	0.02	**-0.16**	**0.13**	0.14	**0.19**
	(0.20)	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.08)
TV watching 2002	-2.31	**-0.70**	0.13	-0.71	-0.69	-0.17
	(1.27)	(0.24)	(0.45)	(0.37)	(0.46)	(0.45)
TV news * Threat	2.28	**0.69**	0.27	**0.89**	**0.93**	0.60
	(1.46)	(0.28)	(0.52)	(0.44)	(0.53)	(0.52)
Foreign Aid 2000			**0.19**			
			(0.04)			
Foreign Aid 2002			**0.31**			**0.38**
			(0.04)			(0.04)
Defense 2000					**0.13**	
					(0.04)	
Defense 2002					**0.38**	
					(0.04)	
Border Sec 2000				**0.18**		
				(0.03)		
Border Sec 2002				**0.34**		
				(0.04)		
Bush approve 2002		**0.43**				
		(0.04)				
Iraq 2002	**1.34**					
	(0.17)					
Constant	**-1.77**	0.14	-0.18	**0.26**	0.25	-0.03
	(0.40)	(0.08)	(0.14)	(0.11)	(0.14)	(0.13)
R^2	.	0.45	0.20	0.26	0.28	0.19
N	615	732	693	705	588	703

Source: NES 2000-2004 panel. Model Specification: 2SLS. Coefficients in bold are significant at $p < .08$. Dependent variables are scaled so that higher values are higher approval of Iraq and the president, and more spending. Partisanship and ideology are measured in 2000 and range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating Republican and conservative. Television news watching is instrumented from TV news watching in 2000. Threat perception is respondent's belief about the likelihood of another terrorist attack ranging from "terrorism not very likely" (0) to "terrorism very like" (1). The interaction of threat and television watching is also instrumented from 2000 demographics.

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Table 4.6: The weight of partisan identification on attitudes 2002 and 2004

	PID		Ideology	
	2002	2004	2002	2004
Iraq	**0.18**	**1.51***	**0.25**	**0.69***
	(0.07)	(0.28)	(0.04)	(0.21)
Bush approval terrorism	**0.12**	**0.33**	**0.15**	**0.24**
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Foreign aid spending	-0.02	0.10	-0.04	-0.14
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Border Security spending	0.01	-0.04	**0.14**	**0.13**
	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Defense spending	0.06	-0.17	**0.22**	**0.30**
	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.07)	(0.08)
War on Terror spending	0.07	0.02	**0.20**	**0.28**
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.06)	(0.08)

Source: 2002-2004 NES panel. Bold coefficients are significant at p<.05.
These coefficients (standard errors) are taken from 2SLS models .controlling for previous attitudes, race, gender, ideology, education, TV exposure, and threat level. Support for Iraq is scored 0 to 1, with 1 indicating more approval/war worth cost. Bush approval is also scored 0 to 1, with 1 indicating more approval for the president's handling of terrorism. All of the spending questions asked whether respondent wanted the federal government to spend more (+1), less (-1), or the same (0), on that specific area. PID is measured from 0 (strong Democrat) to 1 (strong Republican).
* 2004 Iraq coefficient is a probit coefficient.

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Table 4.7: Attitudes toward foreign policy 2002 and 2004

	Bush foreign policy 2002		Bush foreign policy 2004		General foreign policy 2002		General foreign policy 2004	
	Dems	Reps	Dems	Reps	Dems	Reps	Dems	Reps
Mean	0.60	0.84	0.28	0.79	0.75	0.85	0.71	0.81
	t=11.79	p<.01	t = 15.04	p<.01	t=6.70	p<.01	t=5.80	p<.01
N	554	484	387	373	500	449	388	371

Source: 2000-2002-2004 NES. Note: "Bush foreign policy" is a 2-item index that includes approval of the Iraq war and approval of Bush's handling of terrorism (Cronbach's α_{2002} = .70, Cronbach's α_{2004} = .82). "General foreign policy" is a 4-item index that includes a feeling thermometer of the military as well as spending attitudes toward defense, homeland security/the war on terror, and border security (Cronbach's α_{2002} = .58, Cronbach's α_{2004} = .65) The indices range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating more approval of these policies. Each index is additive and the factor loadings were determined through principal factors factor analysis with varimax rotation.

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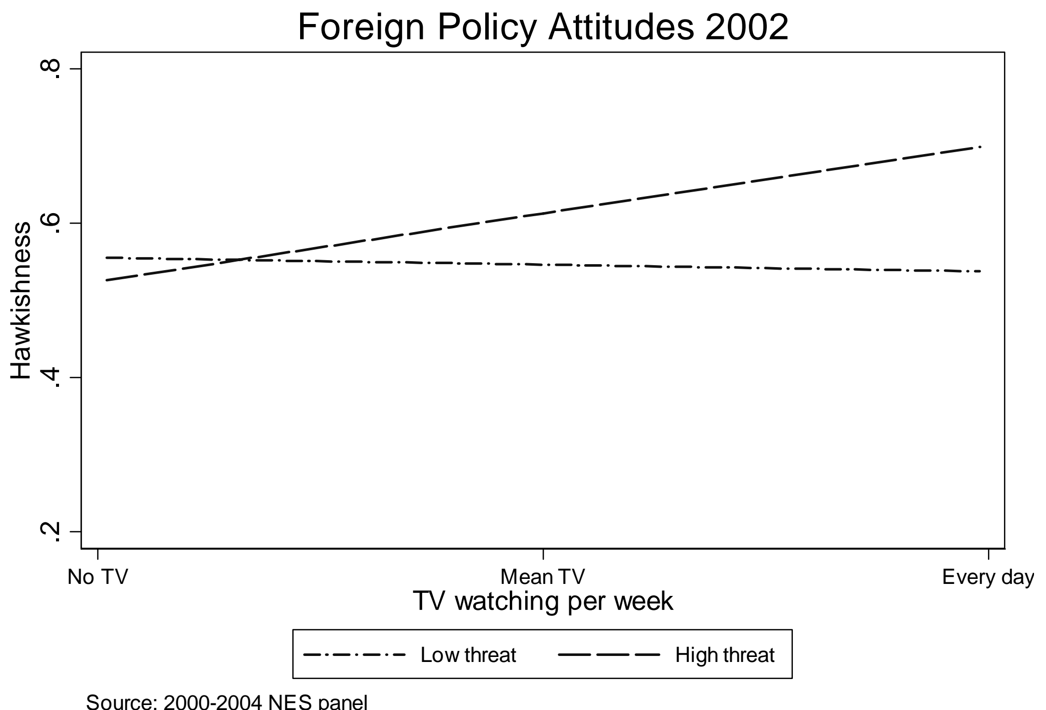
Figure 4.1: Effect of threat and media use on foreign policy attitudes 2002



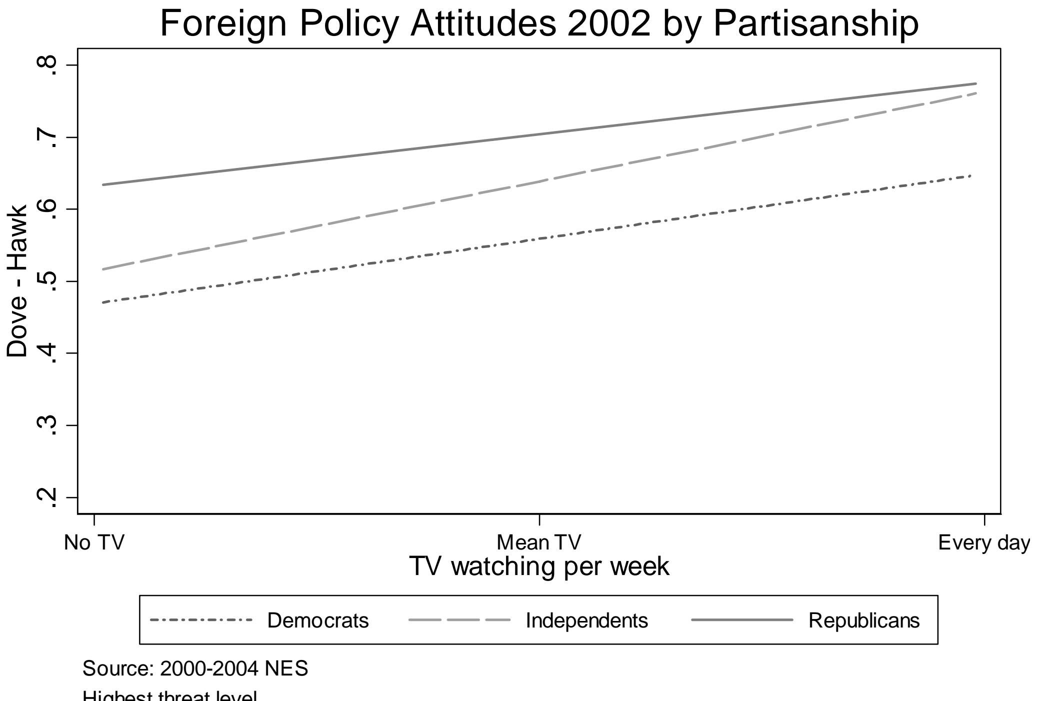


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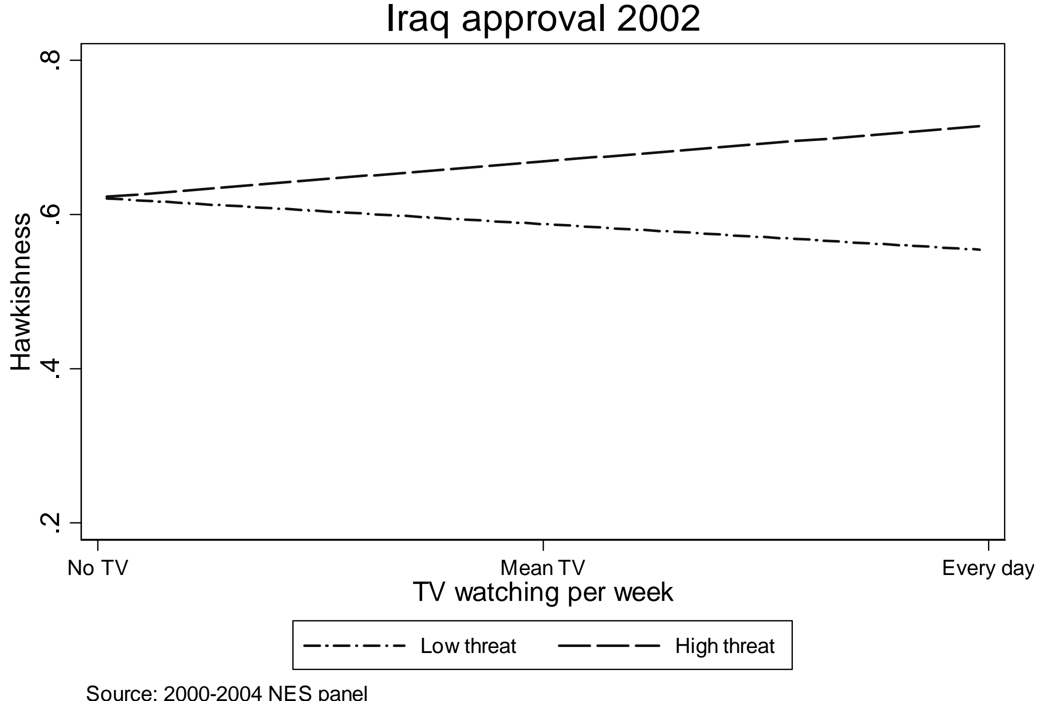
Figure 4.2: Effect of threat on specific attitudes 2002



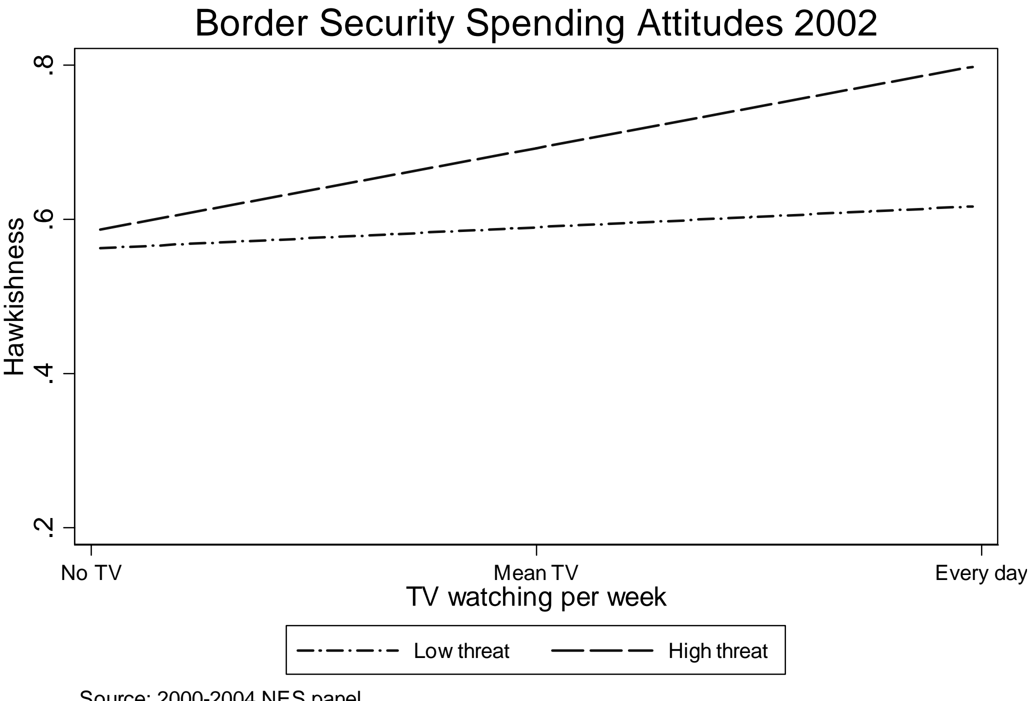


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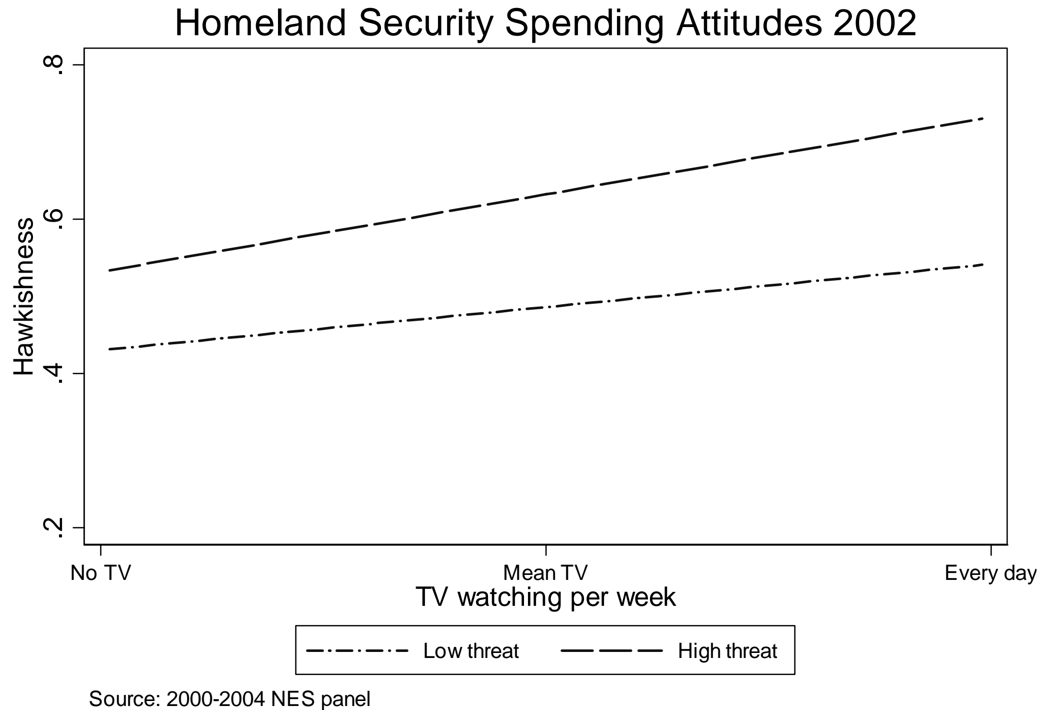
Figure 4.2: Effect of threat on specific attitudes 2002



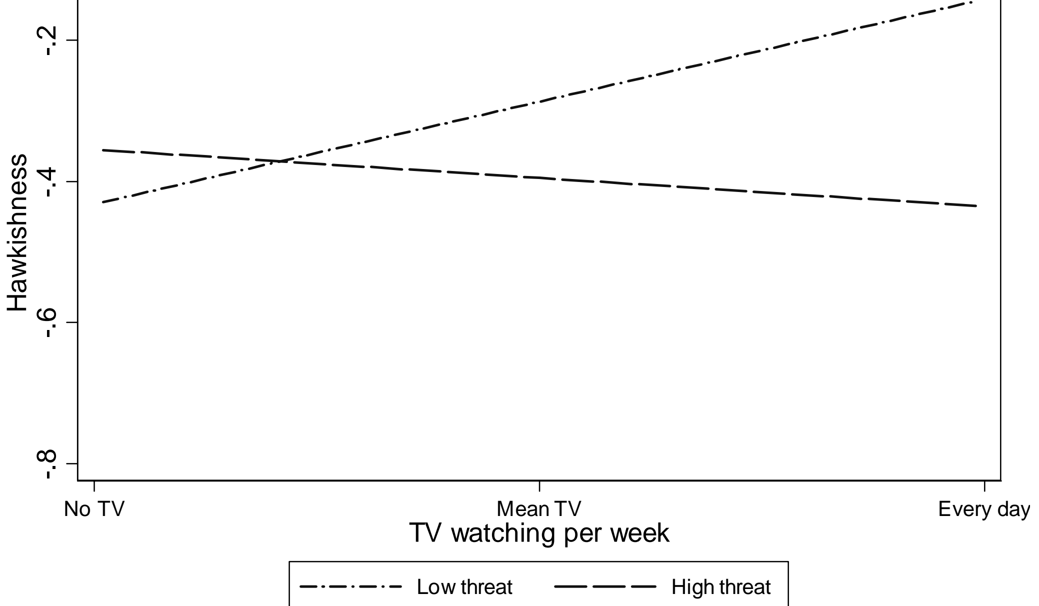


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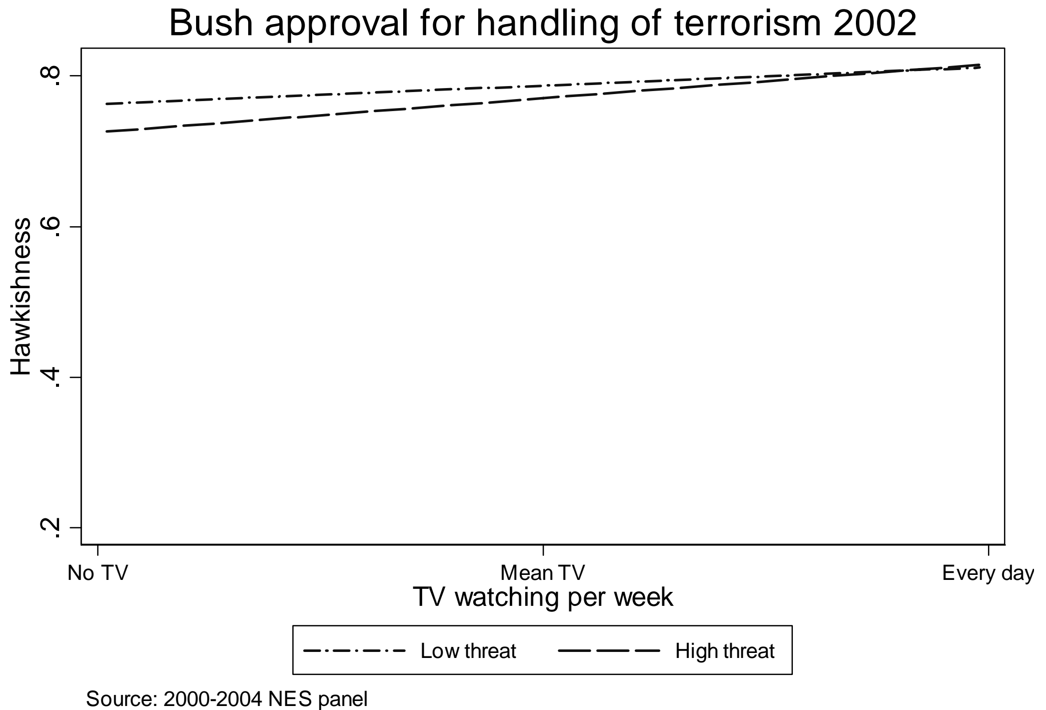
Figure 4.2: Effect of threat on specific attitudes 2002



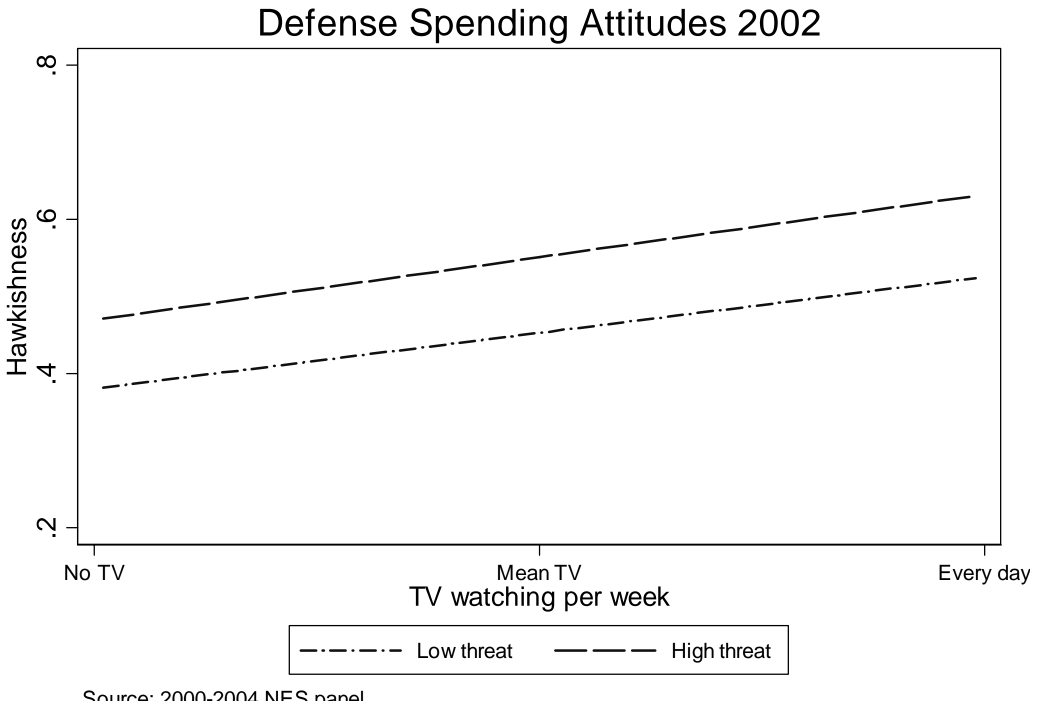


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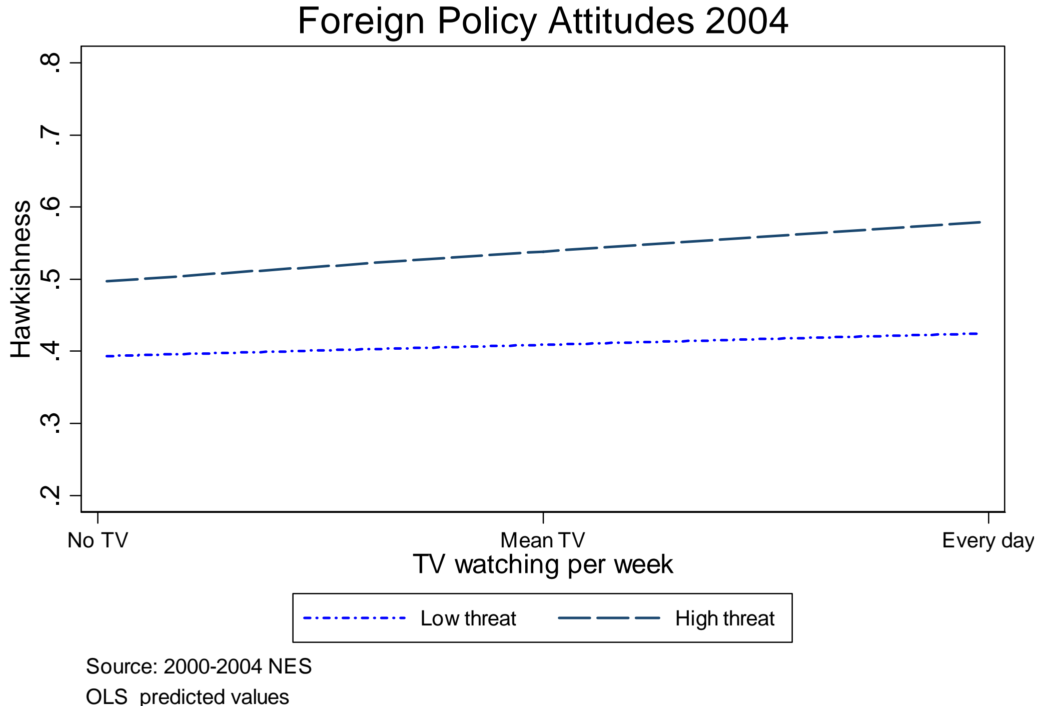
Figure 4.3: Effect of threat on foreign policy index 2004



Foreign Policy Attitudes 2004

Hawkishness

.2 .3 .4 .5 .6 .7 .8

No TV Mean TV Every day

TV watching per week

Low threat High threat

Source: 2000-2004 NES

IV predicted values

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Table A.1: Full models for foreign policy index 2002

	Newspaper model	TV model	All media
Black	-0.04	-0.05	-0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Female	0.02	0.02	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Age	-0.06	-0.09	**-0.10**
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Education	**-0.11**	**-0.10**	**-0.10**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
PID (1=Rep)	**0.15**	**0.16**	**0.16**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Ideology (1=Conserv)	**0.11**	**0.10**	**0.11**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Threat of terrorism	**0.11**	-0.02	-0.01
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.07)
Defense 2000	**0.12**	**0.11**	**0.12**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Foreign Aid 2000	**-0.10**	**-0.09**	**-0.10**
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Border Security 2000	**0.09**	**0.08**	**0.08**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Northeast	0.03	0.02	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Newspaper 2002	0.04		0.03
	(0.05)		(0.05)
Newspaper * Threat	0.00		-0.01
	(0.07)		(0.07)
TV watching 2002		-0.02	-0.02
		(0.06)	(0.06)
TV * Threat		**0.21**	**0.20**
		(0.09)	(0.09)
Constant	**0.35**	**0.41**	**0.39**
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
N	909	906	905
R^2	0.31	0.32	0.33

Source: NES 2000-2002 panel; Model specification: OLS, Coefficients in bold are significant at $p < .05$

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APPENDIX 4A

Question wording and response codes for National Election Studies 2000.

Spending preferences: Foreign aid: "Should federal spending on foreign aid be increased, decreased, or kept about the same? -2 = cut entirely (volunteered), -1 = decreased, 0 = kept the same, 1 = increased

Spending preferences: Border security: "Should federal spending on tightening border security to prevent illegal immigration be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?" -2 = cut entirely (volunteered), -1 = decreased, 0 = kept the same, 1 = increased

Spending preferences: Defense: Combination of 7 point placement question ranging from "greatly decrease defense spending" to "greater increase defense spending" with 7 point branching question. -1 = decreased ("a lot", "a little", and decreased combined), 0 = kept the same, 1 = increased ("a lot", "a little", and increased combined).

Education – "What is the highest degree that you have earned?" 0 = Some High School, Less than High School, .25 = High School Graduate, .5 = Some College, .75 = Jr. College Degree, Bachelor's Degree, 1 = Some graduate work or Graduate Degree.

Political Sophistication – Interviewer's evaluation: "Respondent's level of information about politics and public affairs seemed…" 0 = Very low, .25 = Fairly low, .5 = Average, .75 = Fairly high, 1 = Very high. Missing values were given the mean score = .69.

Party Identification – 7 point branching question ranging from Strong Democrat (scored 0) to Strong Republican (scored 1). Respondents who expressed no party preference were placed at the middle position with pure Independents (scored .5).

Liberal/Conservative Ideology – 7 point branching question summarized into either liberal, conservative, or moderate. 0 = liberal, .5 = moderate, 1 = moderate. Respondents who expressed no preference or refused to choose were placed in the middle position with moderates (scored .5).

Television use – "How many days in the past week did you watch the NATIONAL network news on TV?" 0-7 days, recoded to range between 0-1. "How many days in the past week did you watch the local TV news shows, either in the late afternoon or in the early-evening? 0-7 days, recoded to range between 0-1.
Average TV watching – average of network and local news viewing

Age – Age in years recoded to range from 0 to 1.
Female – 1 = Female, 0 = Male. *Black* – 1 = Black, 0 = Non-Black

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APPENDIX 4B

Question wording and response codes for National Election Studies 2002.

Bush approval for terrorism: All things considered, do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush [is handling the war on terrorism/has responded to the terrorist attack of September 11]? 0 = Strongly disapprove, .25 = Disapprove, .75 = Approve, 1 = Strongly approve.

Iraq: As you may know, President Bush and his top advisers are discussing the possibility of taking military action against Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Do you FAVOR or OPPOSE military action against Iraq -- or is this something you haven't thought about? 0 = Strongly disapprove, .25 = Disapprove, .75 = Approve, 1 = Strongly approve.

Spending preferences: Foreign aid, border security, homeland security, war on terrorism, and defense: "Should federal spending on foreign aid be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?" 1 = Increase, 0 = Keep the same,
-1 = Decrease.

Threat of terrorism – "How likely to you think it is that the US will suffer an attack as serious as the one in New York and Washington some time in the next 12 months? Would you say very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely?" 0 = Very unlikely, .25 = Unlikely, .75 = Likely, 1 = Very Likely

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APPENDIX 4C

Question wording and response codes for National Election Studies 2004.

Bush approval for terrorism: All things considered, do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush [is handling the war on terrorism/has responded to the terrorist attack of September 11]? 0 = Strongly disapprove, .25 = Disapprove, .75 = Approve, 1 = Strongly approve.

Militarism: 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. 0= Diplomacy, 1 = Military force. Middle positions fit in between.

Iraq: Taking everything into account, do you think the war in Iraq has been worth the cost or not? 0 = Not worth it, 1 = Worth it.

Spending preferences: Foreign aid: “Should federal spending on foreign aid be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?” 1 = Increase, 0 = Keep the same, -1 = Decrease.

Spending preferences: Border security, homeland security, war on terrorism, and defense: “Should federal spending on [border security] be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?” 1 = Increase, 0 = Decrease.

Vote Choice: How about the election for President? Did you vote for a candidate for PRESIDENT? Who did you vote for? Bush vote: 1 = Bush 0 = Other candidate. Kerry vote: 1 = Kerry, 0 = Other.

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APPENDIX 4D

Question wording and response codes for Pew Survey, January 2002.

Support for sending troops to Somalia: "Would you favor or oppose the US taking military action to destroy terrorist groups in Somalia?" Asked of respondents in Form 1 only (half of sample) 0 = Oppose, 1 = Favor.

Support for sending troops to the Sudan: "Would you favor or oppose the US taking military action to destroy terrorist groups in Sudan?" Asked of respondents in Form 2 only (half of sample) 0 = Oppose, 1 = Favor

Threat of terrorism (global) – "How worried are you that there will soon be another terrorist attack in the United States" Asked of Form 1 only (half of sample) 0 = Not at all worried, .25 = Not too worried, .75 = Somewhat worried, 1 = Very worried. Missing values were given the mean score = .58.

Threat of terrorism (personal) – "All in all, how worried are you that someone in your family might become a victim of a terrorist attack?" Asked of Form 2 only (half of sample). 0 = Not at all worried, .25 = Not too worried, .75 = Somewhat worried, 1 = Very worried. Missing values were given the mean score = .40.

Education – "What is the last grade or class that you completed in school?" 0 = Some High School, Less than High School diploma, .25 = High School Graduate, .5 = Some College, Business, technical or vocational school after high school .75 = Bachelor's Degree, 1 = Some graduate work or Graduate Degree.

Party Identification – "In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?" Follow-up for Independents: "As of today, do you lean more to the Republican party or more to the Democratic Party?" 0 = Strong Democrat, .25= Leaning Democrat, .5 = Pure Independents, .75 = Leaning Republican, 1 = Republican. Respondents who expressed no party preference were placed at the middle position with pure Independents (scored .5).

Liberal/Conservative Ideology – "In general, would you describe your political views as.." 0 = liberal or very liberal, .5 = moderate, 1 = conservative or very conservative. Respondents who expressed no preference or refused to choose were placed in the middle position with moderates (scored .5).

Television as main source– "How have you been getting most of your news about national and international issues? From television, newspapers, from radio, from magazines, or from the Internet?" 0 = TV is NOT main source, 1 = TV is main source

Age – Age in years recoded to range from 0 to 1; *Female* – 1 = Female, 0 = Male. *Black* – 1 = Black, 0 = Non-Black

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Chapter 5: The information environment and threat

Terror is an efficacious agent only when it doesn't last. In the long run there is more terror in threats than in execution, for when you get used to terror your emotions get dulled.
- Mark Twain

Where do perceptions of threat come from? What role do the media play in increasing the public's sense that terrorism is imminent? In particular, how does emotionally evocative news influence citizens' sense of vulnerability? In this chapter I develop and test hypotheses about how the information environment shapes citizens' beliefs about the probability of terrorism.

As we saw in Chapter 4, the perception that terrorism is likely increases support for a variety of hawkish foreign policies. But where does threat come from? Undoubtedly, many of the differences between Americans' perceptions come from individual personality factors; some people are simply more concerned about safety than others. Yet throughout this chapter, I demonstrate that the news that people watch can also increase perceptions of risk, even controlling for those individual differences. Almost seven years after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, terrorism still occupies a sizeable proportion of the nightly news. In 2006 alone, more than 700 news stories on terrorism aired on national network news, adding to the more than 4,300 stories related to terrorism that aired in the previous four years. Compare those 5,000 terrorism stories to 138 stories on poverty, 592 segments on education, and 724 stories on crime over the same time period and the dominance of terrorism news is clear.[12] To date, though, we know very little about how individual citizens make sense of

[12] These totals were found by searching for "terror*", "crime", "poverty" and "education" in the Vanderbilt television archive for stories that ran on all networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, PBS, Fox, MSNBC,

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and process stories about terrorism. This chapter explores how media messages affect individuals' threat perception and how information and emotion may work separately and together to influence perceptions. In addition, the chapter considers how partisanship may condition the influence of emotionally charged messages on perceptions.

The chapter will first present evidence from three surveys that both media consumption and partisanship affect threat perception. Then using two experiments, the chapter tests the relative weight of media messages and partisanship in shaping threat perception. One experiment took place in the lab over several months with students from Princeton University in 2005 and 2006 and the other took place online in late 2006 with a nationally representative sample of American citizens.

The experiments demonstrate that threat perception is a function of exposure to threatening news stories but also of partisan identification. While media coverage of terrorism affects how likely American citizens believe a terrorist attack is, it does not always work in the expected direction when the coverage runs up against individuals' partisan identification. The experimental findings imply that while terrorism news and the images of 9/11 can powerfully influence the public, the effects are at least partially limited by partisan ties. The next section reviews scholarship on threat and media in order to derive hypotheses for the experiments.

The correlates of threat

Results from Chapter 4 demonstrated that concerns about terrorism increased support for a wide variety of hawkish policies. Given that threat is so consequential for attitudes, the question then becomes what are the determinants of threat perception,

CSPAN, and CNBC) from September 11, 2001 to December 31, 2006, excluding commercials and special programs.

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particularly perceptions about the risk of terrorism. Three major categories of factors shape individual-level threat perception: 1. demographic/real life indicators, 2. the information environment, and 3. partisanship. Individual characteristics such as distance from a terrorist attack, gender, and education reflect how at risk individuals are or perceive themselves to be. First-hand exposure to terrorism as well as living in relatively close proximity to a terrorist attack increases a sense of personal vulnerability as well as the belief that the country is at risk for terrorism (Fischoff et al 2003; Skitka, Bauman, and Mullen 2004; Huddy et al 2005). Residents of the Northeast were more likely than other citizens to expect subsequent terrorist attacks after 9/11 (Fischoff et al 2003). Women report higher levels of threat perception as well as higher anxiety levels about terrorism while education seems to dampen threat perception (Bar-Tal, Jacobson, and Freund 1995; Fischoff et al 2003; Skitka, Bauman, Mullen 2004).

The public's level of perceived threat is also somewhat responsive to terrorist events abroad. Although there were no attacks on America after 9/11, the level of concern over terrorism is quite high and relatively steady over time, suggesting that threat is shaped by more than events themselves. Figure 5.1 shows three different measures of concern about terrorism measured from September 2001 to October 2005 from 149 different surveys gathered through Roper's I-poll database. The measures are how likely a respondent believes a terrorist attack is in the next several months, how worried the respondent is about the U.S. being a victim of terrorism, and how worried the respondent is about him/herself or a family member becoming a victim of terrorism. The graph shows the percentage of respondents who believe that terrorism is likely or are worried about their own or the country's victimization. What this figure shows is a majority of

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poll respondents perceive terrorism as likely in the near future and worry about it even after four years with no terrorism on American shores. The percent of respondent convinced that terrorism was likely reached a high point of 80 percent in September 2001 but decreased to between 60 and 70 percent in the last several months of this time-series. Many fewer respondents are worried about potentially becoming a victim of terrorism themselves, although personal threat seems to grow over time even as more sociotropic perceptions of threat decrease. Threat perceptions are responsive to events – in June 2005, an average of 58 percent of respondents thought that terrorism was likely in the next few months while after the July 2005 London bombings, 75 percent of respondents believed an attack on the US was likely. Yet, concerns did not rise substantially in the wake of the March 2004 train bombings in Madrid in these polls. Overall, what this graph shows is that on the whole, perceived threat does respond to threatening events, but events alone cannot explain the level of threat.

Threatening mediated messages also powerfully affect the public by increasing perceived threat (Iyengar 2006; Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2007). Looking over time from 2001 to 2005, Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro (2007) find that as the amount of television news coverage focusing on the terrorism increased, in the aggregate, the public became more threatened and the president's approval rating increased. However, the authors find that specific media messages matter for threat perception - simply mentioning terrorism did not increase a collective sense of threat. Reassuring coverage about terrorism, such as the lowering of the Department of Homeland Security threat advisory, had no significant effect on citizens' perceptions of risk while threatening coverage increased threat (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2007). Even five years after

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the 9/11 attacks, exposure to news images of the attacks increased approval of the president. Iyengar (2006) calls this the "9/11 halo" for the president; when people see the effects of terrorism, they respond more positively to the president (in Broder and Balz 2006).

Taken together, these studies suggest that the mention of terrorist attacks or a visual reminder of terrorism is so threatening that it should increase threat perception across a variety of people. However, this chapter argues that the power of mediated messages about terrorism might be limited by the partisan nature of the War on Terror. Neither Nacos, Bloch-Elkon and Shapiro nor Iyengar considers whether terrorism news affects partisan groups differently. In the years since 9/11, partisan disagreement over counterterrorism measures has increased, meaning that all threatening messages may not be created or accepted equally (Shapiro and Bloch-Elkon 2005; Broder and Balz 2006).

Partisanship significantly affects threat; Republican identification and conservative ideology tend to depress threat perception (Ridout, Grosse, and Appleton forthcoming). To demonstrate how partisanship influences threat in the aggregate, Figure 5.2 shows the percentage of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans who believe that terrorism is likely in the near future. These data come from 29 different polls from September 2001 to late August 2005; these questions are a subset of the larger data from Figure 5.1 for which respondents' partisanship was available.[13] Figure 5.2 confirms the partisanship findings from Chapter 4. While partisanship plays a minor role in terrorism attitudes in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks, the role of partisanship grew substantially over time. Democrats remained convinced that terrorism was likely while

[13] These 29 polls were found using Roper's I-poll database. Seventeen of the polls come from CBS News, 10 come from CBS/New York Times polls, one comes from an LA Times/Bloomberg poll, and one comes from a TIME/SRBI poll.

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Independents and Republicans perceived less threat from terrorism. One explanation for this finding is that Republicans are more reassured by Republican leadership than Democrats are, meaning that they trust a Republicans government to keep them safe. However, to the extent that Democrats tend to more female, less educated, and live in urban areas closer to potential future terrorist attack, the differences in threat perception among partisans may also be explained by those demographic factors.

Table 5.1 provides evidence that both partisan identification and television watching influence threat perception, and the experiments described later in the chapter help to pinpoint the mechanism by which the media influence perceived threat. The table uses the same measure of threat perception as shown previously – how likely a respondent believed another attack to be – measured in the 2002 and 2004 NES and in the 2006 national experiment described later in the chapter. The threat measures are all identically worded and coded from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating that respondents believe a terrorist attack is very likely. The measure from the experiment came prior to the experimental treatments, so it is a baseline measure of threat perception in the subjects. The models show the effect of television news watching (measured as days per week on average a respondent watches national and local news, recoded to vary between 0 and 1), education (measured as level of schooling from 0 to 1, higher values meaning more education), being female, and partisanship (measured as a 7-point scale, and as a series of dummy variables) on perceived threat using OLS. Across eight of nine models, respondents' news consumption significantly increases the level of threat by 9 to 14 percent of the scale. While television news always increases threat, the influence of partisan identification varies significantly over these three time periods. What these

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models suggest is that Democrats and Republicans were significantly less fearful than Independents in 2002 but by the next several waves, partisan identifiers split significantly on their perceptions of how well the government was doing in handling terrorism. Democrats and Republicans may simply trust the government more than Independents in general, which would explain their lower threat in 2002, but they also trust different parties to run the government. After several years of Bush policies, Democrats may have felt unhappy with the policies and judged them to be less effective in 2004. The 2006 experiment took place in December, the month after the Democrats' big gains in Congress and the potential for new foreign and homeland security policies. One explanation for why Democrats' threat was lower than Independents' and Republicans' was higher was a reaction to the potential for more Democratic counterterrorism policies. Together these models suggest that the effect of partisanship on threat varies over time as the War on Terror evolved to be a politicized issue and that the more respondents watched television news, the more threatened they were.

To gain some theoretical leverage, the rest of the chapter concentrates on how the information environment and partisanship interact to affect threat perception. I argue that the information environment shapes how Americans evaluate threat but that the force of threatening news stories may be blunted by partisanship and test this argument using two media experiments.

The Information Environment

As the previous section demonstrates, the more news citizens watch, the more concerned they are about terrorism, but news exposure may increase threat in a number of different ways. News stories about terrorism may increase threat perception through

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providing citizens threatening information, through invoking emotions, or a combination of both. Pictures of the World Trade Center on the news or bloodied victims of a terrorist attack may arouse various emotions in the viewer including empathy, anger, sadness, and fear, but those images are also linked to the War on Terror. The Bush administration consistently uses allusions and images of 9/11 to argue that the United States must employ hawkish foreign policy. The 2004 State of the Union address used just this type of allusion to argue that only decisive military action could follow the 9/11 attacks, "After the chaos and carnage of September 11th, it is not enough to serve our enemies with legal papers. The terrorists and their supporters declared war on the United States -- and war is what they got" (White House 2004). In the 2004 presidential race, several of the president's campaign ads used images of the rubble from the World Trade Center and flag draped coffins of firefighters as a way of arguing that the president's policies were the only effective way to fight terrorism. For some respondents, the emotional and policy components of terrorism news may work together to lead news watchers to feel more threatened. Yet for others, particularly respondents who dislike current antiterrorism policies, the emotional and policy aspects of the news stories may lead some news watchers to feel manipulated and reject the message of the news story.

Scholarship on the role of emotion in politics finds that anxious citizens rely less on partisanship in forming political evaluations (Marcus et al 2000, Brader 2005, 2006). If any set of images in the last decade could affect Americans on an emotional level and potentially override both the verbal content of the news and/or partisan considerations, it is those images connected with terrorism. Scholarship on partisan bias finds that partisans wish to maintain consistency with their previously held beliefs and perceptions that lead

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to those beliefs (Festinger 1957). Yet, accuracy goals also drive individuals, and it is not always possible to maintain prior beliefs in the face of reality. When evidence is strong enough or when one comes face to face with information that challenge one's perceptions, this information might make it through the perceptual screen of partisanship. Thus, "*a war, a sharp recession, a rash of scandal will leave their mark"* on perceptions (Stokes 1966, 127). Particularly graphic coverage of terrorism that includes images of casualties or the site of an attack might cause all those watching to feel threatened, regardless of partisanship. The fear of terrorism should then act to depolarize the public by leading partisans toward similar perceptions of the world.

Based on this work, we can draw the hypothesis that exposure to threatening news coverage will heighten threat perception for all individuals:

> *Media Hypothesis: Increased exposure to threatening news coverage will increase threat perception.*

Partisanship and the information environment

Prior scholarship pays very little attention to how partisanship may enhance or neutralize the effect of terrorism information on threat perception. Particularly because partisanship may motivate citizens to selectively process and accept information, not taking it into account may lead researchers to miscalculate the effect of threatening information on citizens (Taber and Lodge 2006). As the previous section demonstrated, the perception of the threat of terrorism is a combination of a risk assessment based on real-world factors observed through the media and partisanship, which acts a filter in assessing how well the government deals with the terrorist threat.

Table 5.2 presents other measures that provide evidence for the hypothesis that Democrats and Republicans perceive the threat of terrorism through partisan lenses.

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Specifically, partisans' perceptions are connected to their beliefs about the effectiveness of government policies and the competence of the government to keep Americans safe. The question on the left of the table asked respondents how well they believed the government is doing in reducing the potential for terrorism. This question comes from a survey that was fielded by the Pew Research Center in July 2005 after the bombings in London that killed more than 50 civilians.[14] Of course, this question about how well the government is doing to reduce the threat of terrorism taps a larger set of attitudes than simply a reaction to the London bombing itself. The larger issue of terrorism is rife with uncertainty by its nature – it is not clear how large the risk of terrorism is relative to other risks and it is not clear how to evaluate either the risk itself or the effectiveness of policies in fighting it. Under these conditions of uncertainty, we can expect citizens to rely on their predispositions to act as a guide in forming attitudes, particularly when elites are divided.

Looking at the question, we can see that Democrats and Republicans have quite different evaluations of how well the government is handling the threat of terrorism. Overall, a majority of both Democrats and Republicans say that the government is doing very or fairly well in reducing threat, but there is a 29 percentage point gap between the parties in their evaluations– 57 percent of Democrats and 86 percent of Republicans approve of the government's policies. While one quarter of Republicans believe that the government is doing "very well" in reducing potential terrorism, only 10 percent of Democrats give the government the highest mark. On average, Republicans are

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[14]Pew Research Center poll. 2005. "More say that Iraq War Hurts Fight Against Terrorism". Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 1,502 adults, 18 years of age or older, from July 13-17, 2005. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

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significantly more positive toward the government's antiterrorism policies than Democrats ($t=8.85$, $p<.01$), although again both Democrats and Republicans are positive toward the government generally. The variable is scaled from 0 to 1, where 1 is equal to saying that the government is not doing well at all at reducing the threat of terrorism, so higher values indicate less approval.

At the center of the table is a question that asks respondents whether they believe that the ability of terrorists to launch attacks is greater, lesser, or the same as it was before the September 11th attacks, also from the 2005 Pew study. This question also asks respondents to evaluate the effectiveness of government policies, particularly the War on Terror, in reducing threat for the country. This measures shows that there are large differences in evaluation by partisanship, with Republicans evaluating the government more favorably than Democrats. This variable is scored from 0 to 1 with 1 meaning than terrorists' abilities to launch an attack are greater. The means of Democrats ($M_{Dem} = .60$) and Republicans ($M_{Rep} = .35$) differ by one-quarter of the scale ($p<.01$) and fall on different sides of the mid-point, with Democrats saying that terrorists are more able to launch attacks on the U.S. and Republicans believing terrorists to be less able. One in six Democrats believes that terrorists are less able to attack the United States while almost one in two Republicans (45 percent) believes that terrorists are handicapped by current policies. In comparison, 47 percent of Democrats and 41 percent of Republicans answered that the terrorists' abilities, and therefore the risk of attack, are the same as before September 11th. Giving this answer implies that despite the efforts of the government, the risk of terrorism in 2005 was exactly the same as immediately before a massive attack. Almost half of Democrats believe that the current anti-terrorism policies

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are ineffective. Lastly, 36 percent of Democrats believe that terrorists now have more ability to attack the United States while only 14 percent of Republicans think so. This implies that more than one-third of Democrats believe that the War on Terror has not only *not* reduced the threat of terrorism but has in fact *increased* the risk.

Lastly, the table presents how partisans evaluated the president in 2002 and 2004. The question asked respondents whether or not they approved of the way that the president was handling September 11th (2002) and the War on Terrorism (2002 and 2004); it is scaled from 0 to 1 and higher values indicate stronger approval. Approval of the president's handling of terrorism in 2002 was strong among both Democrats and Republicans in 2002. An overwhelming proportion of both partisan groups approved or strongly approved, with support among Republicans of almost 100 percent – 71 percent of Democrats and 92 percent of Republicans. What is more striking about this relationship is how the role of partisanship is attenuated in 2002 when respondents are asked to evaluate the president's performance on terrorism. In 2002, general presidential approval and partisanship are correlated at .49 ($p<.01$) while approval of the handling of terrorism correlates with partisanship at .28 ($p<.01$). By 2004, though partisanship became an important factor in evaluating the president on terrorism policy. Republicans are still overwhelmingly supportive of the president's antiterrorism policies – in 2004, 88 percent approve of the president. In contrast, only 39 percent of Democrats in 2004 approve or strongly approve while more than half of Democrats, 52 percent, strongly *disapprove*. Mean approval is .37 among Democrats and .85 among Republicans; the difference in means is almost half of the length of the scale. Over time the gap between partisans more than doubled and the correlation between partisanship and approval

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almost doubled as well, from .28 in 2002 to .53 in 2004. Even though Democrats and Republicans saw the same policies in the two years between the surveys, clearly they evaluated those policies in vastly different ways. Republicans continued to endorse the president's policies and his handling of the War on Terror, while Democrats grew increasingly disenchanted with the president.

While the psychological work on threat ignores the role of politics in the formation of threat perception, the literature in political science from *The American Voter* onward demonstrates the strength of partisanship as a "perceptual screen" through which citizens process political information (Bartels 2002; Campbell et al 1960; Zaller 1992). In Bartels's words, partisanship "is not merely a running tally of political assessments, but a pervasive dynamic force shaping citizens' perceptions of, and reactions to, the political world" (138). Partisans may exhibit resistance to information inconsistent with beliefs and this bias is not mitigated by high levels of knowledge (Achen and Bartels 2006; Bartels 2002; Shani 2006; Taber and Lodge 2006; Zaller 1992). Partisans both search for and attend to information that reinforces pre-existing beliefs (Kunda 1987; Lodge, Taber, and Galonsky 1999; Lodge and Taber 2000; Redlawsk 2002). Information congruent with existing beliefs is easily assimilated while incongruent information is processed more slowly and may be discounted, counter-argued, or ignored, depending on the amount of incongruent information (Redlawsk 2002).

Partisans also show resistance to factual information, such as the size of the federal deficit, which would necessitate updating political evaluations and beliefs. Both Achen and Bartels (2006) and Shani (2006) find that partisanship colors citizens' knowledge of straightforward facts such as whether the federal deficit increased or

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decreased over time. Republicans and Democrats who have the same level of political knowledge differ dramatically in whether they know that the deficit declined substantially in the 1990s. Berinsky (2007) finds that the accuracy of citizen's estimates of casualties in Iraq is also conditioned on partisanship, with Democrats providing a more accurate guess of casualty numbers than Republicans. A 2004 Pew study echoes the finding that even when information about the "correct" answer is plentiful and the issue is salient, partisanship may still determine perceptions – 36 percent of Republicans versus 54 percent of Democrats correctly answered that American casualties in Iraq increased over the previous month.[15]

The strong influence of partisanship on factual information implies that partisanship may potentially have an even larger impact on threat perception because there is a difference between the availability of information. Facts such as the size of the federal deficit are empirically grounded. Those individuals interested enough can find out the actual size of the deficit fairly easily, which differs from a "fact" such as the likelihood of another terrorist attack in the United States. The probability of a terrorist attack is almost completely unknown to all but a tiny minority of citizens with specialized knowledge, if at all. Given that the probability of terrorism is inherently speculative, citizens may rely on a powerful cue such as partisanship when formulating their perceptions of how at risk the country is.

[15] Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. 2004. September 2004. Iraq Support Steady in the Face of Higher Casualties. Results for the September 2004 News Interest Index survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 2,494 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period September 8-14, 2004. Many questions in the report were asked only during the period of September 8-13 (a total of 2,003 adults and 1,580 registered voters); a much shorter questionnaire was used for interviewing on the night of September 14.

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The psychology literature on threat assumes that citizens process threatening messages without regard to the source of the message. This is due in part to the more abstract types of threatening stimuli these works utilize like threatening words or pictures of threatening faces where political attitudes seem less important (Green, Williams, and Davidson 2003; MacLeod and Mathews 1986; Mogg et al 1990; Pratto and John 1991). It is not clear that partisanship of either the messenger or the recipient should affect how concerned individuals are when faced with socially threatening words such as "sadist" (Pratto and John 1991). However, even literature on the threat of terrorism pays very little attention to how partisanship might shape perceptions of threat (Landau et al 2004; Lizotte, Lodge, and Taber 2006). Ridout, Grosse, and Appleton (forthcoming) and Huddy et al (2005) do take partisanship into account in their empirical analyses by controlling for the effect of partisanship on threat, but this modeling implies that the effect of partisanship is linear, when Democrats and Republicans may not react to a threatening environment by the same magnitude or even in the same direction. While terrorism itself is fundamentally threatening, terrorism and the War on Terror are now intertwined with the political parties, allowing partisan identification to serve as a powerful cue, as demonstrated by Tables 5.1 and 5.2.

How news stories are structured may also make partisanship salient when people form their perceptions of how threatening the political environment is. Elite cues in the news come not only from actual statements made by political elites but also through the visual information in the story. Sets of images combine to form "scripts" that quickly inform the viewer how he/she should understand the main theme of the story without having to verbally explain it. In this way, images may serve as frames that identify an

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issue to be addressed and propose a solution to it (Kinder 1998). Mendelberg (2001) shows that images can be powerful cues that politicians use to speak to members of the public implicitly. Politicians can and do use visual cues such as images of African Americans to communicate policy preferences to the public.

Of course politicians have little control over the visuals used in news broadcasts, but this does not mean that the visuals employed by news stories are without partisan meaning. Viewers may still associate particular visual cues with policies endorsed by politicians, particularly when the news story pairs the image with a quote from a politician. As mentioned, George W. Bush's speeches on national security policy and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq allude to the 9/11 attacks, meaning that the images associated with 9/11 and terrorism are connected to Republican counterterrorism policies. To the extent that the images of terrorism are connected to particular policies on which the parties disagree, then the visuals in the news stories may divide partisans' threat perception.

In my view, threat perception is a mediating step between elite/media messages and opinion on foreign policy. Using Zaller's framework, I can then predict that when threat is politicized or alternatively, when the parties diverge, the acceptance of threatening messages should be contingent on partisanship. Since the War on Terror is a centerpiece of the Bush administration, messages about the threat of terrorism will generally originate from the administration. Republicans should be inclined to accept messages about the threat of terrorism from the media, particularly if they are connected to the president. We should see variation in threat levels particularly among Democrats. Democrats should be less likely to accept threatening messages than Republicans when

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the messages appear to originate from the president or Republican elites. This leads to the hypothesis:

> *Partisanship Hypothesis: Acceptance of threatening messages and subsequent perceptions of threat depend on the source of the message and the partisanship of the recipient. (Ex. Republicans should perceive more threat if threatening messages originate from Republican leaders than if they do not.)*

The partisanship hypothesis is somewhat contradictory to the media hypothesis for certain portions of the public. That is, the media hypothesis suggests that the more frightening the coverage of terrorism, the more that the public should feel threatened by it. In contrast, the partisanship hypothesis suggests that citizens should weigh their perceptions of the threat of terrorism against elite cues that they receive from media coverage of terrorism. It is possible that both of these hypotheses might be true under particular circumstances of the political environment. When threat is new and not yet captured by the parties, then media coverage might convince all citizens of the severity of the situation. On the other hand, when threat is politicized, then it will be much harder to convince citizens, particularly members of the out party, that threat is imminent. This is because perceptions of threat will be associated with policies that members of the out party would not normally prefer or because citizens can more easily use cues from their party members (Lupia 1994).

The Threat Experiment – Study 1 – Laboratory Sample

To test the effect of threatening media content on threat perception, I designed and ran a media experiment using a sample of 246 undergraduates at Princeton University. Experiments provide a way to determine the causal impact of media exposure on attitudes in a way that secondary survey data cannot, making an experiment a better methodology to test the effect of media content on threat perceptions and attitudes. Using

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survey data by themselves, it is not possible to determine whether individuals who perceive more threat do so because of media exposure, that is, whether media cause feelings of threat, or whether pre-existing threat determines attention to news in general and threatening information in particular. Additionally, it is not clear whether exposure to news is caused by other variables of interest.

In order to more precisely pinpoint the causal relationships between threat perception, media exposure, and foreign policy opinion, an experiment is a better methodological choice. In Chapter 4, I attempt to take the endogeneity between threat and media consumption into account by exploiting the National Election Studies 2000-2002-2004 panel design and using Two-Staged Least Squares (2SLS) as my empirical model. Even though the 2SLS model can give me better leverage on the issue of endogeneity than OLS alone, the instruments are not perfect. Good instruments for media exposure in 2002 are available, but previous measures of threat perception are not. For obvious reasons, the NES did not ask respondents how likely they believed a terrorist attack was in the near future in 2000, meaning that there is no similar or identical measure of threat perception that may serve as an instrument for 2002 respondents. What that means that is that the 2002 threat perception item picks up both reactions to event of 9/11 and the act of terrorism as well as the effect of media on threat perception. In addition, measuring media exposure using self reports poses another set of problems.

Using survey data to measure media exposure presents problems on both conceptual and theoretical levels. First, it is not clear that survey respondents are able to accurately recall news exposure. Media exposure in the NES is operationalized as the self-reported of number of days in the past week that the respondent watched national

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news, local news, and read a newspaper. Prior (2008) notes that these self-reports are flawed and prone to severe over-reporting mostly because citizens have a difficult time recalling and estimating their news exposure. Survey estimates of news exposure are about three times larger than Nielsen ratings, and the extent of the over-reporting bias is not constant over individuals or over time (Prior 2008). Additionally, this exposure variable might actually measure a number of concepts other than mere exposure to news such as attention or the propensity to watch/read. A related problem is that even if this variable only measures exposure to television news it is a blunt instrument since the unit of analysis is days, which provides no way to distinguish between those who watch one news program per day and news junkies who watch multiple hours per day. In addition, since the question only asks about generally about "national" and "local" news, it is not possible to distinguish whether watching different news channels with varying presentation styles matters for perceptions or attitudes. Lastly, even with a perfect measure of media exposure, secondary data would not be able to distinguish the effects of information from the effect of emotion.

On a theoretical level, the exposure questions are problematic as well. Media exposure is potentially both a cause and a result of threat perception. That is, people who feel threatened by terrorism might watch more TV news to cope with their anxiety about terrorism, but that information might increase threat perception, leading to more TV news watching, etc. Scholarship in cognitive psychology finds that threat generally leads to perceptual hypersensitivity to information concerning threat. Individuals who feel threatened attend to threatening information more than non-threatening information (Mathews and MacLeod 1986; Mogg et al 1990). Clinically anxious individuals shift

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attention toward danger-related cues whereas non-anxious subjects turn attention away from danger-related cues – both auditory and visual cues (Mathews and MacLeod 1986; Mogg et al 1990). Anxious individuals are less able to ignore irrelevant terms with a potentially threatening meaning when their attention is supposed to be focused on a cognitive task (Wood, Mathews, and Dalgleish 2000). The anxious are also less able to disengage from threatening pictures while non-anxious subjects do not show this same pattern (Yiend and Mathews 2001). This attentional bias toward threat is related to state stress rather than trait anxiety, meaning that high stress is associated with the shift toward threatening stimuli, regardless of whether subjects are naturally prone to anxiety (Mogg et al 1990).

Most of the work noted above comes from experiments on clinically anxious populations; however, the same vigilance to threatening information is found among non-clinical subjects as well. In color naming experiments based on Stroop tests[16], Pratto and John (1991) found that subjects shown words associated with undesirable personality traits (ex. sadistic) had slower reaction times in naming the color than subjects shown desirable personality traits, even when subjects' attention was deliberately focused elsewhere. Green, Williams, and Davidson (2003) demonstrated that subjects were more likely to employ a vigilant style of scanning and attention when viewing threat-related facial expressions (anger, fear) than when viewing non-threat related faces (sad, happy, neutral). These findings show that vigilance to threatening information is not contingent on actual physical threat from the environment but rather can be triggered by a representation of the threat.

[16] Stroop tests are a test of automatic processing. In a traditional Stroop test, a word is printed in a color and the experimental subject is asked to name the color rather than say the word. This demonstrates the brain's ability to make an appropriate response (here, saying the color) when it receives conflicting signals.

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Because anxious and non-anxious people process threatening information differently, measures of news exposure might actually capture different concepts for individuals with different baseline levels of threat. For those who felt threatened beforehand, exposure could measure attention to threatening information; while for those who did not feel threatened, exposure might mean attention to neutral or non-threatening information.

Given these problems with simply asking respondents about how much media they consume, an experiment provides the advantage of control over both exposure and content. Respondents are randomly distributed to experimental conditions and exposed to the same information within each experimental condition. This means that the selection mechanism for exposure is random rather than determined by subjects' characteristics. The randomization enhances the ability to make inferences about the type and amount of information that affects perceptions and attitudes.

Experimental treatments

The experimental treatments manipulated both the amount of threat (threatening v. non-threatening) and the presentation of threat in television stories about recent terrorist attacks (threatening visuals v. non-threatening visuals). The experiment took place during the fall of 2005 and spring of 2006 in a laboratory on the Princeton campus with a sample of Princeton undergraduate and graduate students. The set-up provides a way to evaluate whether exposure to threatening media content affects partisans in the same way, and whether once threatened, partisans prefer similar or divergent types of foreign policy. There are of course problems with using college students as subjects since students tend to have more cognitive skills than older adults but less crystallized attitudes

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and they comply more easily with authority (Sears 1986). While the fluidity of students' attitudes may make affecting attitudes easier in this experiment, their stronger cognitive skills may act as a countervailing force since they are more able to guess the purpose of the experiment and not react naturally. Additionally, cognitive ability is correlated with political knowledge and more consistent preferences, meaning that affecting perceptions and attitudes may be more challenging among students who have stronger political identities.

Subjects were assigned to either the control group or one of two treatment groups. The news stories used in the study aired on the national news in early fall 2005. Subjects in the treatment conditions watched two stories: one about the potential for a new wave of terrorism and one on a diplomatic breakthrough with North Korea. All subjects in the treatment conditions received exactly the same information about terrorism - that government authorities were troubled by the increase in smaller-scale terrorist attacks such as the ones in London, Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt, and Madrid and the attacks might signal a new wave of terrorism.

What differed between the treatment groups was the visual imagery – the "scary visuals" group viewed the terrorism story with evocative imagery of terrorism while the "neutral visuals" group viewed the same story with neutral imagery instead. In the high threat- "scary visuals" treatment, the terrorism news story was edited to enhance the threatening nature of the visual imagery. This editing added video such as the burning World Trade Center and bloodied victims of the London bombings. In the high threat-neutral visuals condition, subjects watched the same story on terrorism with the visuals replaced by less violent imagery. For example, in place of the London victims, the neutral

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condition included maps of the London subway system. Control subjects only received the North Korea story, which outlined North Korea's agreement to halt production of nuclear weapons in exchange for aid from the United States. Table 5.3 summarizes the design of the experiment and Appendix 5.D provides the full text of the experimental treatments as well as a comparison of the types of images seen in each of the treatment conditions.

All of the images were pre-tested ahead of time to confirm that those images considered threatening by the author were also threatening to a larger sample. Each "threatening" image (World Trade Towers, victims of 9/11 and the London bombing, exploded bus from London attack etc) was also considered threatening by a separate sample of 79 undergraduates, measured by their emotional reactions to the images. Respondents viewed a series of photos in random order and answered how afraid, hopeful, and angry each photo made them, on a scale from 1 "not at all afraid/hopeful/angry" to 10 "very afraid/hopeful/angry". The neutral images were of a double-decker London bus, a flower, football player, a British flag, sunshine, flames, and a map of the London subway system. The images of terrorism included a picture of the double-decker bus blown apart by terrorists on July 7th, survivors of the London explosions, a picture of a man of Middle Eastern descent with his face covered holding an automatic weapon, the Twin Towers on fire on 9/11, survivors from the 9/11 attacks, and a picture of Osama bin Laden. The picture battery also included a picture of President Bush and a shot of the Homeland Security advisory system.

All of the images associated with terrorism evoked more anxiety than the neutral images. On average, the score for fear on the seven neutral images on a 1 to 10 scale was

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1.60 while the average fear score for the terrorism pictures was 4.84 ($p<.01$). The image considered most fearful was the masked man with the gun (terrorist) with a score of 5.80. The clearest comparison is to compare respondents' reported level of fear when viewing the neutral image of a double-decker London bus ($M_{bus} = 1.70$) to the fear induced by seeing the iconic image of the London bus attacked on July 7, 2005 ($M_{explosion} = 4.91$). Respondents rated the exploded bus as inducing significantly more fear ($p<.01$). Overall, the pre-test revealed that images of terrorism do significantly increase respondents' fear, even when the images are familiar.

It should be noted that each respondent watched a single 2 ½ minute video that contained only some of these images, all of which were familiar features of national television news since the 9/11 attacks. In all, experimental subjects received a relatively minor dose of threatening information and fear inspiring images, so the fact that the experimental treatments do in fact affect how threatened respondents feel is remarkable given how common these types of stories are.

Why did the treatments vary the visual imagery rather than simply expose the treatment groups to different stories that varied in the coverage of the same event? Setting up the experiment this way more clearly pinpoints what particular aspects of media coverage affect threat perception – story content or visual content. Across the conditions, the *message* is same while the *presentation* differs. If the randomization is successful, differences in opinion that occur can be attributed to differences in the imagery/emotion rather than to differences in verbal content or other dimensions such as framing. If there are differences in threat level only between the control group and the treatment groups but not between the neutral visuals condition and the scary visuals condition, we can

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conclude that threatening story content influences threat perception but not how the content is presented. If there are differences between the neutral visuals condition and the scary visuals condition, we can conclude that presentational factors like the visual content affects opinion.

If viewers do in fact react to media coverage of terrorism based on emotional reactions to the story, then *threat perception will be greatest in the scary visuals condition and there will be no significant differences between Democrats and Republicans*. This hypothesis is related to the media hypothesis from above that specifies that exposure to threatening news coverage will increase threat perception broadly. This hypothesis emphasizes that news coverage can increase threat through increasing viewers' emotions, particularly fear, and that the specific mechanism for increasing emotions is the visual imagery.

In my experimental set-up, testing the partisanship hypothesis is not entirely straightforward because is not totally clear which of the treatments in the experiment has the clearest partisan cues. Only the North Korea story contained any pictures or clips from the president and the presidential administration. *If subjects react to these overt cues, then there should be differences in threat perception among Democrats and Republicans in all of the conditions, since all subjects saw this story.* Yet only the scary visuals condition contained any visuals clearly associated with 9/11 and the War on Terrorism. *If the visuals in the scary visual condition (i.e. the burning Trade Towers and terrorism victims) cue viewers to think about antiterrorism policies, then there should be greater polarization in the scary visuals condition.* In both cases, *Republicans will be more likely to accept threatening messages than Democrats.*

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We can test these two hypotheses against each other by looking at subjects' threat perception in the experiment. Figure 5.3 presents the mean threat perception scores by partisan identification and treatment group.[17] Threat perception is operationalized as the likelihood of a terrorist attack in the next 12 months and scaled from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating that a terrorist attack is very likely and 0 indicating that terrorism is very unlikely. Across the three experimental groups, the mean threat perception hovers around the midpoint of the scale. This seems to indicate that the experimental story did not have a large effect on threat perception, but by breaking subjects apart by partisanship, it becomes clear that the treatments did influence perceptions.

Overall it appears that Republicans are unresponsive to the information or visual content of the news stories. Republicans are as likely to accept threatening messages and perceive threat in either of the treatment conditions. Republicans' threat perception does not vary by condition; threat perception in the two experimental groups is identical ($M_{nv} = M_{sv}$=.54) and is not significantly different from threat in the control group (M_c =.60). We might expect that Republicans do not need the extra information contained in the visuals to perceive that terrorism is threatening since both Republican political

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[17] There are several things to note about the number of subjects within each treatment group. First, the experiment was randomized by group rather than by subject. Subjects came to the lab in batches and were all shown the same treatment story within each batch. Subjects were unaware of which treatment they would receive, but some groups had more subjects than others for exogenous reasons (weather, time of day, exam schedules etc). Secondly, there are a disproportionate number of Democrats in the sample due to the make-up of the undergraduate population. A survey by the campus newspaper conducted in September 2006 found that 55 percent of undergraduates identify as Democrats, 22 percent as Republicans, and 22 percent as Independents. Given these figures, the Princeton experimental sample was quite representative of the undergraduate population on partisanship. In the second round of experiments, I did solicit participation from campus groups that might be more Republicans (campus religious organizations, Princeton Pro-Life, business organizations, and Princeton Republicans) without mentioning that I was seeking their participation because of their partisanship. Participation among Republicans did increase in the second round, but Republicans were still outnumbered by Democrats. Lastly, there are only 164 subjects in this figure, but there were a total of 246 subjects. The difference is made up of participants in an additional treatment group and Independents. The first round of experiments included a newspaper treatment, which is not considered here (n=41), and there were 39 Independents. Two subjects either did not answer the PID question or the threat perception question, totally 246.

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leaders and media coverage frequently remind the public of this fact. While Republicans' threat perception was relatively stable across the control and experimental stories, Democrats reacted to the scary visuals condition by *decreasing* their threat perception.

Democrats' reactions in the scary visuals condition appear to be a counter-reaction to the threatening visuals. That is, Democrats react to the vivid visual content by reporting that terrorism is *less* likely. Democrats in the scary visuals condition (M_{sv} = .41) report significantly less threat than Democrats in the neutral visuals (M_{nv} =.56) or control condition (M_c =.57). All subjects watched the control story, so the fact that Democrats perceive no more threat in the scary visuals condition than the control condition suggests that they discounted the threatening message in the "Wave of Terror" story. When the threatening message was accompanied by frightening visual imagery, many Democrats rejected the message. This reaction makes sense if Democrats respond not to the images themselves but to a perception that the presidential administration uses this kind of imagery, both literally and in presidential rhetoric, to promote its foreign policy agenda, an agenda with which Democrats disagree. It appears that *Democrats understood the scary visuals as partisan cues* rather than simply images with no political meaning.

One thing that is striking about Figure 5.3 is how similar perceptions are across treatment groups and the parties, except in the scary visuals condition. But perceptions of threat might differ not only along the dimensions of partisanship but also based on subjects' baseline level of threat. Anxious individuals are particularly sensitive to threatening information, so we can expect the effects of the treatments to be largest for those who were anxious about terrorism before the experiment (Mathews and MacLeod 1986; Mogg et al 1990; Wood, Mathews, and Dalgleish 2000).

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Dividing the subjects by previous anxiety also provides an ideal way to test the media hypothesis that predicts that threatening imagery can increase all subjects' threat perceptions. Scholarship on the role of emotion in political decision-making finds that anxiety decreases citizens' reliance on partisanship (Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000; Brader 2006). When anxious, citizens will be much more motivated to learn, pay more attention to news coverage, and will base candidate evaluations and voting decisions on contemporary information rather than partisanship. The Affective Intelligence theory suggests that partisan subjects made fearful about terrorism as a result of the experimental treatment should be more alike in their perceptions and attitudes than less fearful subjects. In fact, this is the opposite of what occurs in the experiments. Even though the scary visuals condition makes Democrats and Republicans equally *fearful*, threat perception is the most polarized in the scary visuals condition. Democrats react emotionally to the media treatments by becoming increasingly fearful of terrorism but when asked to evaluate how likely a terrorist attack is, they react to the frightening treatments by reporting a lower likelihood, a point that I will return to in the next section.

Therefore, if there is support for the hypothesis that threatening media stories can increase threat perception, we should see it most clearly among the anxious. Anxiety here is measured as a two item index. Subjects were asked in two separate questions how worried and how afraid they felt when they thought about recent terrorist attacks, high values indicating more anxiety.[18] I split subjects into high and low anxiety groups based

[18] There are of course problems with self-reported measures of anxiety and emotions generally, since it's not clear that all respondents are self-aware enough to be able to map their emotional states on to the choices presented. This question is also not able to differentiate well between trait and state anxiety. I do have measures of general state and trait anxiety for respondents from the second wave of the survey but not for earlier respondents. Additionally, it would have been nice to have identical pre-test and post-test measures of threat. However, given the short amount of time (3-7 minutes) between the pre-treatment and post-treatment surveys, I thought it best to have slightly different measures. In surveys, the question of

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on the mean. Subjects reported their anxiety prior to watching the treatment stories. Figure 5.4 presents mean threat perceptions respondents by anxiety level.

Perceptions of threat among high anxiety and low anxiety subjects do not differ substantially except in the scary visuals condition. Among low anxiety subjects, there are no significant differences in threat perception either between partisans or within partisan groups across the treatment groups. In addition, low anxiety subjects perceive as much threat in the control and neutral visuals condition as high anxiety subjects. This is somewhat surprising, but the similarity of perceptions between anxiety levels may reflect the ingrained nature of perceptions of terrorism and the current information environment. This experiment was certainly not the first time that subjects saw media coverage of terrorism. Moreover, the "Wave of Terror" story provided very little new factual information about terrorism but rather tied together several stories into a theme of future terrorism. It may simply take a stronger and more sustained treatment to alter threat perceptions based on pre-existing levels of anxiety.

If the media hypothesis is correct, then the perceptions of highly anxious Democrats and Republicans should be closer in the scary visuals condition than in the two other conditions. Yet, looking at the right side of Figure 5.4, we see that the polarization pattern is even stronger among high anxiety subjects in the scary visuals condition than among the subjects in general. Twenty-nine percent of anxious Democrats respond that threat is likely while 71 percent of anxious Republicans considered a terrorist attack to be likely in the next year. Republicans in the scary visuals condition have the highest average threat of the three groups, but the number subjects within each

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whether a respondent worries about another attack on the US tracks very closely to how likely respondents think another response is, so this makes for a fairly good measure of threat.

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group makes it difficult to determine whether this is a real pattern with any confidence. The difference between partisan groups in the scary visuals condition is substantively and significantly large. Republicans perceive significantly more threat ($p < .01$) in the scary visuals condition (M_{sv} =.64) than do Democrats, and the difference in partisans' perceptions in this condition are .31 or almost one-third of the threat scale.

Highly anxious Democrats in the scary visuals condition (M_{sv} = .33) are the least likely of the three experimental groups to answer that terrorism is likely in the near future. Comparing Democrats in the control condition to those in the neutral visuals condition, there are no significant differences between these groups. Taken together, these patterns again suggest that threatening news coverage does *not* increase Democrats' threat perception. In fact, a particular form of media coverage, threatening stories coupled with frightening visuals, actually leads Democrats to discount the information and *decrease* their threat perception. These figures provide support for the partisan hypothesis. Rather than increasing threat perception for everyone, shocking news coverage of terrorism causes a polarization in perceptions based on partisanship. This pattern is exacerbated for Democrats who are already anxious about terrorism.

To this point, I have interpreted Democrats' lower threat perception in the scary visuals as a counter-reaction to the presentation of the terrorism story, where Democrats explicitly rejected the story because they felt that it was manipulative. Yet I have presented no direct evidence on how Democrats interpreted the story. Fortunately, in the second round of the experiment (N=89), I included an open-ended question designed to unobtrusively measure how subjects interpreted the experimental stories. Respondents in the experimental conditions were asked separately what they thought the goal of the

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Wave of Terror and the North Korea stories were and whether the stories succeeded in those goals. Each question had a text box for typing a response and subjects had unlimited time to answer. A total of 61 respondents answered about what they thought the goal of the Wave of Terror was (6 respondents chose not to answer and 22 saw only the North Korea story). Answers ranged from subjects saying that the story aimed to simply inform the public about the continual threat of terrorism to subjects offering more political goals such as "turning the nation against President Bush" or giving the "government an excuse to take action". Of the 61 respondents, 19 (12 Democrats, 7 Republicans) mentioned that the goal of the terrorism story was to scare/frighten the public about terrorism, which I coded with a dummy variable indicating that the respondent mentioned "scare" as a goal. In the scary visuals condition, the correlation with threat perception and this "scare" variable is negative for Democrats (Pearson's $r = -.31$) and positive for Republicans ($r = .38$).[19] This gives the clearest indication so far that Democrats do reject threat when they are suspicious of the intent of the communication while Republicans do not. These results imply that information about terrorism is not accepted unconditionally. Citizens use partisanship as guide in interpreting and sometimes counter-arguing the information they receive.

Study 2 – Online Study - National respondents

While the evidence of partisan polarization in the scary visual condition is suggestive and interesting, certainly Princeton students are not a representative sample of the U.S. population, meaning that the results are not widely generalizable. Perhaps students are more sensitive to perceived manipulation than the public as whole or the lab

[19] As always, the results need to be interpreted with caution since there are only 15 Democrats and 13 Republicans in the scary visuals condition.

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setting made subjects vigilant for partisan cues. Additionally, political sophistication is an important moderator of motivated reasoning, biased information processing, and polarization. Political sophisticates are more likely to seek out information that conforms to prior beliefs and denigrate information that disagrees with beliefs. Lodge and Taber (2006) find significant evidence of attitude polarization among politically knowledgeable experimental subjects but not among those with lower levels of knowledge. To the extent that political sophistication is correlated with education, politically savvy university students may be particularly motivated by partisan goals, thus rejecting information that does not follow prior beliefs. If this is the case, then looking at only university students may overestimate the tendency of Democrats to reject fear-inspiring media images.

In order to make more generalizable claims about how citizens evaluate political information based on partisanship, I ran the 2006 Threat Experiment, a modified version of the Princeton experiment with a nationally representative adult sample through the polling firm YouGov/Polimetrix. YouGov/Polimetrix recruited 1,229 respondents to take the survey experiment over the Internet in December 2006. The sample is composed of 52 percent female respondents, 80 percent white respondents, 23 percent with bachelor's degrees or higher, and an average age of 46 years old. Table 5.5 provides a more detailed look at the demographics of the experimental sample. Participants answered a variety of attitudes and perceptions questions and were randomly assigned to watch one of three videos. In the control condition, participants watched a news story on India's booming

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economy while participants in the treatment conditions watched the same terrorism story as the Princeton subjects with either the neutral or frightening visual imagery.[20]

Since the experimental design required subjects to watch a news segment, the survey experiment was run on-line. YouGov/Polimetrix maintains a panel of respondents, which it recruits through a polling website, Polling Point. Once individuals agree to become part of the YouGov/Polimetrix panel, they provide demographic information and are offered opportunities to participate in surveys. Since recruitment into the panel is voluntary, this means that the larger panel is an opt-in sample that may be unrepresentative of the larger population. Opt-in Internet samples tend to be more interested in politics as well as composed of more white respondents than the general public (YouGov/Polimetrix 2006). In order to draw a nationally representative sample from a larger, non-representative sample, YouGov/Polimetrix uses a method called sample matching. It draws a random sample from the 2004 American Community Study run by the Census Bureau and then matches a respondent in the opt-in panel who is the closest to the Census respondent based on the joint distribution of age, race, gender, education as well as imputed values of partisanship and ideology. The purpose of the matching is to find an available respondent who is as similar as possible to the selected member of the target sample, which results in a sample of respondents who have the same characteristics as the target sample. By matching respondents in the YouGov/Polimetrix panel to those in the larger target population, YouGov/Polimetrix samples become representative or close to representative. For more details on the sample matching technique, see Appendix 5.A.

[20] In pre-tests with separate respondents, the India story failed to arouse emotion or threat among participants, making it an ideal choice for a control story because it is neutral in tone but its content is about foreign policy.

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Malahotra and Krosnick (2007) raise concerns that relying on opt-in Internet panels will lead researchers to draw to different conclusions about the distributions of variables and voting behavior than if they used well-validated face-to-face samples like the National Elections Studies. In their study comparing the 2000 and 2004 NES samples to Internet panels from YouGov and Harris, they find that sampling effects appear in some analyses of voting behavior but not uniformly across all models and differences in demographic distributions were not eliminated by using weights. While these differences between face-to-face surveys and Internet panels may lessen the generalizability of findings from this study, the dissertation as a whole relies on data sources with a variety of sampling techniques: face-to-face surveys, telephone surveys, lab experiments with students, in addition to a survey based experiment with an opt-in Internet sample. To the extent that the findings across all of these modes and samples are consistent, then we can be less concerned about the generalizability of this sample in particular. Additionally, recent research validates that the YouGov/Polimetrix sample is generally representative of the general public and may be preferable to phone surveys in some instances for both statistical and cost reasons. In a study comparing the samples from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study run through YouGov/Polimetrix to random digit dialing (RDD) phone surveys as well as multi-stage probability face-to-face surveys like the NES, Hill, Lo, Vavreck, and Zaller (2007) conclude that the bias in the YouGov/Polimetrix sample may be of similar magnitude to the bias in RDD surveys. Both methodologies produce samples that are biased by respondents who are more ideological and more knowledgeable than the general public. However, the authors

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conclude that a mildly biased but large Internet survey may produce more reliable estimates than an unbiased small survey.

Given that theories of persuasion suggest that more knowledgeable respondents will be less susceptible to opinion change and persuasion, the bias toward higher knowledge within the YouGov/Polimetrix sample should make it more difficult to move respondents' opinions and threat perception. Additionally, since knowledge is correlated with media exposure, it is very likely that a majority if not all of the respondents in the study received at least some of the messages and images in the experiment's media treatments prior to watching the video in my study, again making it more difficult to affect opinion in the way that I would expect. Since all of the biases work against my hypotheses, if the experimental treatments are able to affect respondents at all, the effects may be a conservative estimate of the effects in the general public as a whole.

This set-up actually provides a harder test than the previous study for the hypothesis that partisanship can override the evocative imagery. The North Korea story that the students viewed contained several partisan reminders – the president appeared in the video as well as members of his cabinet. However, none of the stories that the national subjects watched even mentioned the president. If the same polarization in the scary visuals condition occurs, we can more strongly conclude that the terrorism images themselves are perceived as partisan rather than an interaction of those images with images of the president. Table 5.4 visually represents the experimental design.

The threatening information about terrorism contained in the scary visuals and neutral visuals story increased Republicans' and Independents' sense of threat and the fear-inducing visuals significantly influenced Republicans but not the other partisan

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groups. Figure 5.5 presents the average threat perceived by the sample broken down by partisanship and treatment condition. There are no significant differences by treatment group among Democrats, meaning that exposure to threatening information did not move Democrats to be more threatened. However, exposure to the threatening visuals significantly increased Republicans' threat perception in comparison with the neutral visuals condition ($p < .03$), meaning fear has an independent effect on perceptions of threat. Independents were more threatened by the neutral visuals story than the control story but the visuals did not add to the sense of threat elicited by the neutral visuals.

To facilitate a comparison between the Princeton and the national samples and to test for the role of political sophistication in partisan motivation, I split the national sample by whether participants had a bachelor's degree or not. Rather than use the common measure of political sophistication – answers to factual questions about politics – I use education as a proxy. Because subjects took the survey online, answering factual questions may reflect the ability to find the answer on the Internet as much as stored political knowledge, so I rely on the education measure as a more reliable proxy of sophistication. More politically informed citizens might more readily interpret terrorism imagery as partisan since they would be more aware of the partisan splits on issues of terrorism and foreign policy. Among less sophisticated citizens, the scary visuals condition might serve to increase threat across all partisan groups.

Figure 5.6 presents threat perception for the 77 percent of the sample without a bachelor's degree. The graph also divides participants by their baseline levels of threat perception as well as partisan identification. Threat perception was measured both prior to and after exposure to the video with the usual question of how likely they believe a

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terrorist attack is in the next year. So that respondents did not answer the same exact question several minutes apart, two versions of the question appeared with different response options and each respondent randomly received one wording prior to the video and one wording after the video. Respondents falling above the overall mean pre-test threat level of .5, were placed in the "high threat" group and those below the mean were placed in the "low threat" group.

Overall this figure provides support for the first experimental hypothesis – exposure to threatening media stories increases threat perception, but these findings show that respondents with less political knowledge became more threatened as a result of exposure to the *information* contained in the stories rather than exposure to threatening visuals. Low threat respondents are somewhat more threatened in both the neutral visuals and scary visuals condition than the control condition, but the differences are not significant. However, respondents low in political sophistication who were concerned about terrorism prior to the experiment react to the neutral visuals and scary visuals condition about equally, meaning that the threatening news content rather than the emotion in the news stories influenced perceptions. These people do not necessarily need the emotion contained in the frightening visuals in order to believe that the United States is at risk for a terrorist attack.

There is no evidence of polarization among low knowledge partisans; in fact, all respondents are slightly more threatened in the scary visuals condition than in the neutral visuals condition (with the exception of low threat Independents). Only Republicans already threatened by terrorism are more threatened in the scary visuals condition than the neutral visuals condition ($p < .08$). These findings suggest that for less politically

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involved citizens, exposure to news that contains frightening information about terrorism will increase their sense of vulnerability. Less knowledgeable respondents appear to take the visuals contained in the news stories at face values rather than as partisan cues or instruments of manipulation designed to pull at their emotions.

Among politically sophisticated respondents high in threat prior to the experiment, there is more evidence of partisan polarization. Figure 5.7 displays threat perception among respondents with a bachelor's degree or higher. Similar to low threat, less educated participants, low threat, highly sophisticated respondents are unresponsive to the media treatments. However, there is evidence of polarization among high threat respondent. The scary visual condition causes Republicans to believe that terrorism is more likely ($p<.02$) than the neutral visuals condition, while Democrats have the opposite reaction and have substantially lower threat perception compared to Democrats in the neutral condition ($p<.02$). If fact, among all high threat respondents, Democrats in the scary visuals condition perceive the *least threat* from terrorism. Even though Democrats and Republicans literally watched the same news story, they gleaned different information and implications from the video about the probability of a terrorist attack.

Why do politically sophisticated Democrats downplay the likelihood of terrorism in the scary visuals condition? The open-ended answers from the Princeton experiments suggest that Democrats feel manipulated by the sensationalism of the terrorism story, but there are alternative explanations for this finding as well. Perhaps politically sophisticated respondents understand how improbable the likelihood of a terrorist attack is and subsequently discount information that would imply that terrorism is likely (Mueller 2006). Yet this reasoning fails to explain why Republicans would increase their threat

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perception given the same exact information and sophistication level. Is it possible that Democrats are simply not as frightened by the visual content as Republicans? If the news story simply failed to induce an emotional reaction from Democrats, then the low threat perception is understandable. While fear and threat perception are distinct concepts, they are logically related to one another. We might think that citizens unaffected emotionally by terrorism might also not perceive a great deal of risk from terrorism (Brader 2002). Immediately after watching the video, respondents answered a series of questions tapping their emotional reactions to the story they viewed.

There is no evidence the evocative imagery simply arouses less fear in Democrats than among Republicans. Figure 5.8 presents respondent's mean level of fear, which is measured by an index of how worried, anxious, and fearful the video made the respondent feel (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$). Respondents rated each emotion on a 9 point scale from "did not feel the emotion at all" to "felt the emotion very strongly" and these items were weighted equally in an index and re-scaled to range from 0 to 1, higher values indicating more fear. Among high threat respondents, both politically sophisticated and less sophisticated Democrats are significantly *more* fearful in the scary visuals condition than in the neutral visuals condition. In fact, in the scary visuals condition, college-educated Democrats and Republicans express similar levels of fear even though Democrats perceive significantly less threat. The same pattern emerges among the Princeton subjects, as seen in Figure 5.9. High threat Democrats are significantly more fearful in the scary visuals condition than in the neutral visuals condition ($p < .03$). It is not the case that politically sophisticated Democrats are simply less emotionally affected by the evocative imagery than Republicans. Rather, there appears to be a disconnect

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between how much fear Democrats feel when faced with terrorism and how they translate that fear into threat perception.

Democrats are not simply cold-hearted in their reactions to threatening information, but when they believe the information to be manipulative, they refuse to comply by also perceiving threat in the environment. This appears to be true only among the politically sophisticated. Why might political sophistication moderate this negative persuasion, where Democrats react against the media message? Politically sophisticated Democrats are more likely than less sophisticated Democrats to process media messages by thoughtfully considering the merits of the information rather than simply accepting information uncritically (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). In addition, college-educated Democrats in the national sample are more significantly more liberal than Democrats without a college degree. Counterterrorism policies such as wire-tapping or overseas combat might be particularly odious to liberal Democrats and political sophistication should allow these Democrats to draw a link between the likelihood of a terrorist attack and the implementation of these types of policies.

This logic would suggest that among Democrats, liberals would react the most negatively to the scary visuals condition and that pattern would be particularly strong among politically sophisticated respondents. Figure 5.10 displays Democrats' average threat perception across experimental conditions by previous threat level, education level, and ideology.[21] For less sophisticated Democrats, previous threat level is a determinant of post-test threat but neither ideology nor treatment group affect the level of threat perception. Among the politically sophisticated, both low-threat ($p<.03$) and high-threat

[21] The figure only includes liberal and moderate Democrats as there were too few conservative Democrats to include in each group.

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(p<.06) liberal Democrats are significantly *less* threatened in the scary visuals condition in comparison with the neutral visuals condition. Moderate Democrats high in threat are less responsive to the media treatments compared to low threat moderates who are more threatened by the scary visuals condition than the neutral visuals condition (p<.04). It should be noted that threat perception in the control group was quite similar between liberals and moderates across both sophistication levels, meaning that there is no inherent difference in how threatening these groups perceive the world to be. Figure 5.11 presents threat perception for liberal and moderate Democrats in the Princeton sample. Among Princeton participants, both high anxiety liberals and moderates express significantly less threat in the scary visuals condition over the neutral visuals condition.

Politically sophisticated liberals resist rather than are persuaded by shocking media coverage of terrorism in both the national and the Princeton studies. The take away from these two figures is that political sophistication helps liberal Democrats to recognize and resist messages about terrorism when they consider those messages to be sensationalistic. However, the broader point is that the majority of respondents who came into the experiment concerned about terrorism only became more concerned after watching the news stories about terrorism.

Conclusion

Two major findings emerge from this chapter. The first finding is that among a majority of respondents, media stories about terrorism increased threat perception. This finding is especially striking given that in the years since 9/11, the vast majority of American citizens saw frequent news stories about terrorism and presumably had stored knowledge and beliefs about terrorism. Even though 88 percent of the public in the July

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2005 Pew poll mentioned previously said that they paid close or very close attention to news coverage of the July 7th London terrorist bombings, exposure to the experimental story that featured that bombing more than a year later had a significant effect on threat perception. Providing low knowledge respondents with information about terrorism, even information that does not relate to a specific event like a particular bombing, increases how at risk they feel. One may conclude then that threatening television news profoundly influences most citizens' level of threat.

The other major conclusion of this chapter is that exposure to media coverage of terrorism does not automatically increase threat perception. Because terrorism is now politicized, media coverage of terrorism does not easily "leave a mark" on perceptions. Perceptions are shaped not only by media exposure but also by partisanship. Rather than increasing threat perception, sensationalistic television coverage of terrorism polarized some Democrats' and Republicans' perceptions. This polarization is especially interesting given that there were no traditional partisan cues within the treatment stories at all. There were no quotes from political elites or the president in the terrorism story and only one still image of the president in the North Korea story. The president did appear briefly in the North Korea story, but only Princeton respondents watched that story, while the polarization pattern appeared in both the Princeton and the national data. Contrary to expectations from the Affective Intelligence literature, watching threatening media stories led sophisticated subjects to rely *more* rather than less on their partisan predispositions. This evidence suggests that subjects interpreted the threatening images as cues and signals of current policies to fight terrorism rather than as simply

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representations of the threat of terrorism. Even though the terrorism images increased fear, Democrats did not translate that fear into threat.

For those concerned about the power of television news or elites to manipulate the public using emotional rhetoric and imagery, these findings should provide some relief (Fischoff et al 2003; Mueller 2006). Politicians who invoke terrorism or 9/11 in order to promote policies run the risk of appearing manipulative to the public, particularly to members of the opposing party. The risk of using terrorism images was demonstrated during the 2004 presidential campaign when the Bush campaign was criticized for running ads that used visuals of the wreckage of the Twin Towers. Critics objected to the use of the images for political gain calling them "unconscionable" and in poor taste (Associated Press, March 4, 2004). Using real news stories, this chapter demonstrates that while news stories may influence citizens' emotions, citizens are not all equally persuaded that threat is imminent. In fact, Democrats show evidence of *negative persuasion*, reacting in the opposite way intended by the communication when they interpret the message as pushing them toward policies they dislike (Lupia 2002). This reaction is similar to the social psychological concept of reactance, which is a reaction that is directly opposed to warnings or rules that are seen to impede on one's personal freedom.

In the days and months after 9/11, the concern about coercion of the public might have been justified, but more than five years after the terrorist attacks, it seems to be the case that at least some of the most fear inspiring kinds of media are neutralized by partisan identification. It is not at all clear though that the influence of partisan identification on threat perception is in itself normatively positive. Will liberal Democrats

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be just as skeptical of threatening messages if the next president is a Democrat? If liberals do accept a threatening messages from Democratic leaders but not Republican leaders, are the messages themselves somehow less coercive? It would seem not. It is also an open question whether or not partisanship might fade in the event of another terrorist attack on U.S. soil that provided new frightening imagery. In this sample, Democrats in the Northeast do not show the same negative persuasion as Democrats outside the Northeast; this suggests that when terrorism touches more closely, the force of partisanship may be blunted and media coverage may influence politically-consequential attitudes.

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Table 5.1: Effect of PID and TV watching on threat

	Threat 2002	Threat 2002	Threat 2002	Threat 2004	Threat 2004	Threat 2004	Threat 2006	Threat 2006	Threat 2006
TV news	**0.12**	**0.13**	**0.14**	**0.09**	0.07	**0.09**	**0.13**	**0.13**	**0.13**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Education	0.02	0.01	0.03	-0.05	-0.06	-0.06	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Female	**0.12**	**0.10**	**0.11**	**0.08**	**0.07**	**0.08**	**0.06**	**0.06**	**0.06**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
PID 2000	0.02			**-0.12**			**0.21**		
	(0.03)			(0.04)			(0.03)		
Strong Dem		**-0.12**			**0.12**			**-0.06**	
		(0.03)			(0.05)			(0.03)	
Weak Dem		**-0.11**			0.00			**-0.02**	
		(0.03)			(0.05)			(0.03)	
Lean Dem		**-0.17**			0.08			**-0.09**	
		(0.03)			(0.05)			(0.03)	
Lean Rep		**-0.08**			0.01			**0.14**	
		(0.04)			(0.05)			(0.03)	
Weak Rep		**-0.14**			-0.04			**0.08**	
		(0.04)			(0.05)			(0.03)	
Strong Rep		**-0.11**			-0.02			**0.13**	
		(0.04)			(0.05)			(0.03)	
Democrat			**-0.11**			**0.08**			**-0.05**
			(0.03)			(0.04)			(0.02)
Republican			**-0.09**			-0.01			**0.12**
			(0.03)			(0.04)			(0.02)
Constant	**0.48**	**0.61**	**0.57**	**0.51**	**0.45**	**0.44**	**0.33**	**0.41**	**0.41**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
N	1087	1102	1087	672	682	672	1189	1189	1189
R^2	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.08	0.10	0.10

Source: NES 2000-2004 panel and 2006 Threat experiment. Threat is measured by how likely a respondent believe another terrorist attack to be, ranging from 0 (not at all likely) to 1 (very likely). Threat is measured prior to media exposure in the 2006 experiment. Bold coefficients are significant at $p < .05$

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Table 5.2: How government is handling threat of terrorism

	How well is government reducing the threat of terrorism? 2005			Ability of terrorists to launch another attack on US, less, same, or greater than time of 9/11? 2005			Approval of Bush's handling of terrorism 2002		Approval of Bush's handling of terrorism 2004	
	Dems (%)	Reps (%)		Dems (%)	Reps (%)		Dems (%)	Reps (%)	Dems (%)	Reps (%)
Not at all well	13	4	Less	16	45	Disapprove strongly	19	5	52	7
Not too well	28	10	Same	47	41	Disapprove	10	3	10	4
Fairly well	47	62	Greater	36	14	Approve	23	15	17	15
Very well	10	24				Strongly approve	48	77	22	73
Mean	**0.47**	**0.27**	Mean	**0.60**	**0.35**	Mean	**0.68**	**0.89**	**0.37**	**0.85**
	t = 8.85	p<.00		t = 9.28	p<.00		t =9.96	p < .00	t = 17.77	p < .00

Sources: Pew News Interest Survey, July 2005 and NES 2000-2002-2004 panel.
Note: All percentages are rounded to the next highest number, so totals might not equal 100. The two variables about terrorism are scaled 0 to 1 so that higher values indicate more threat (i.e. there is a greater risk for terrorism), while the presidential approval variable is scaled 0 to 1 so that higher values indicate more approval for the president's handling of terrorism.

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Table 5.3: Princeton lab experiment design

	Story watched	Story content	Visual content
Control condition	North Korea	Neutral "There was a possible breakthrough this week involving the nuclear threat from North Korea."	Neutral
Neutral visuals condition	Wave of Terror North Korea	Threatening "Is this the beginning of a wave of attacks?"	Neutral
Scary visuals condition	Wave of Terror North Korea	Threatening "Is this the beginning of a wave of attacks?"	Threatening

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Table 5.4: National online experiment design

	Story watched	Story content	Visual content
Control condition	Indian economy	Neutral “This is India booming.”	Neutral
Neutral visuals condition	Wave of Terror	Threatening “Is this the beginning of a wave of attacks?”	Neutral
Scary visuals condition	Wave of Terror	Threatening “Is this the beginning of a wave of attacks?”	Threatening

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Table 5.5: Demographics of 2006 National Threat Experiment

	All respondents	Low threat	High Threat
Age	48.1	46.7	49.2
Female	52.6	47.8	56.4
Region			
North	4.2	3.8	4.4
NE	26.0	25.1	26.8
South	30.3	29.4	31.0
Plains	15.6	15.5	15.7
West	23.9	26.2	22.1
Race			
White	80.3	79.8	80.7
Black	5.7	6.5	5.0
Latino	5.8	5.8	5.8
Partisanship			
Democrat	43.2	53.4	34.8
Independent	22.5	23.8	21.3
Republican	34.3	22.7	43.9
Education			
Less than College	78.5	73.4	79.9
College/Post-grad	21.5	26.6	20.1
N	1229	554	675

Source: 2006 Threat Experiment.

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Figure 5.1: Measures of terrorism attitudes

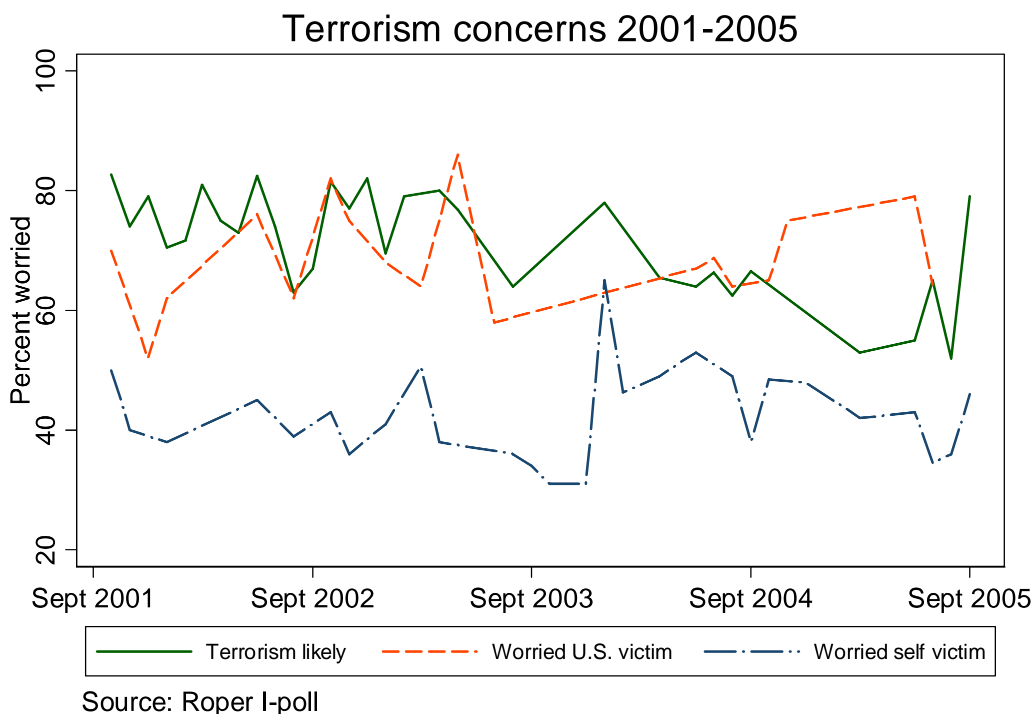

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Figure 5.2 Terrorism concerns over time by party

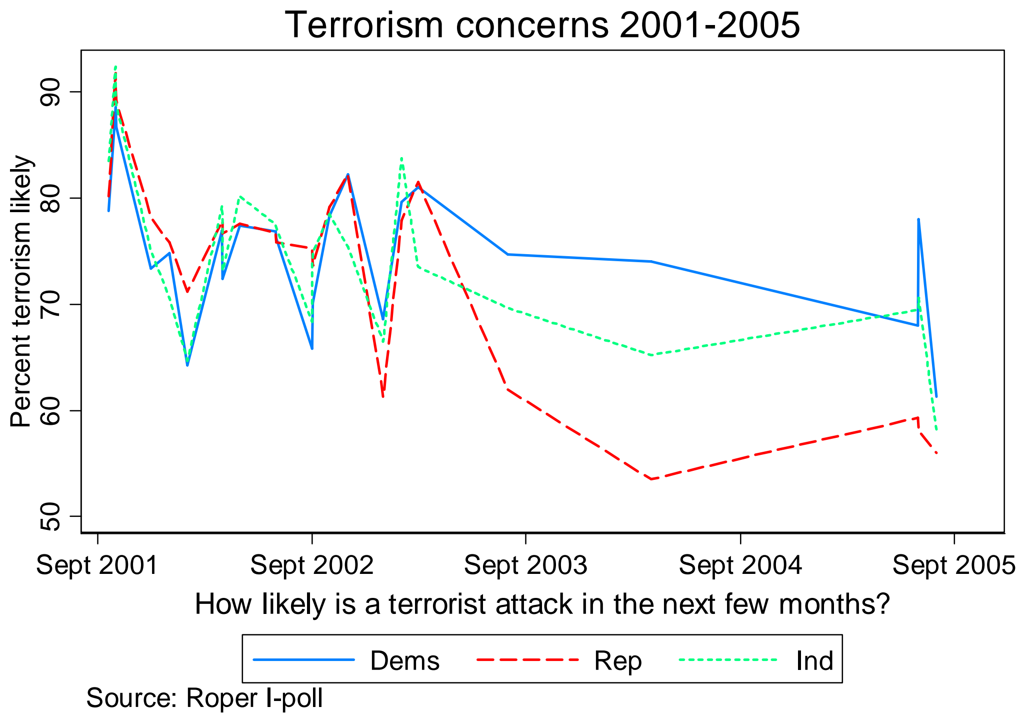

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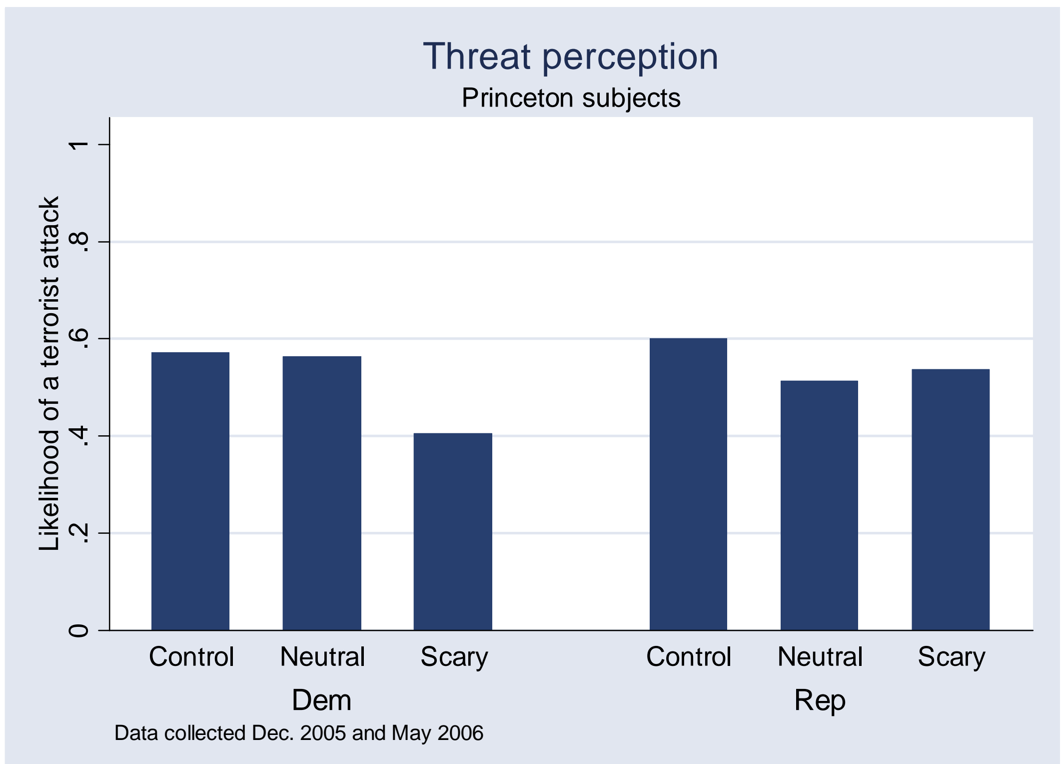
Figure 5.3: Average effect of treatment group on threat perception



Source: 2005 Princeton Experiment. Threat perception is subjects' perception of the likelihood of another terrorist attack in the next 12 months (0= very unlikely, .25 = unlikely, .75 = likely, 1 = very likely). Threat is measured after exposure to the treatments.

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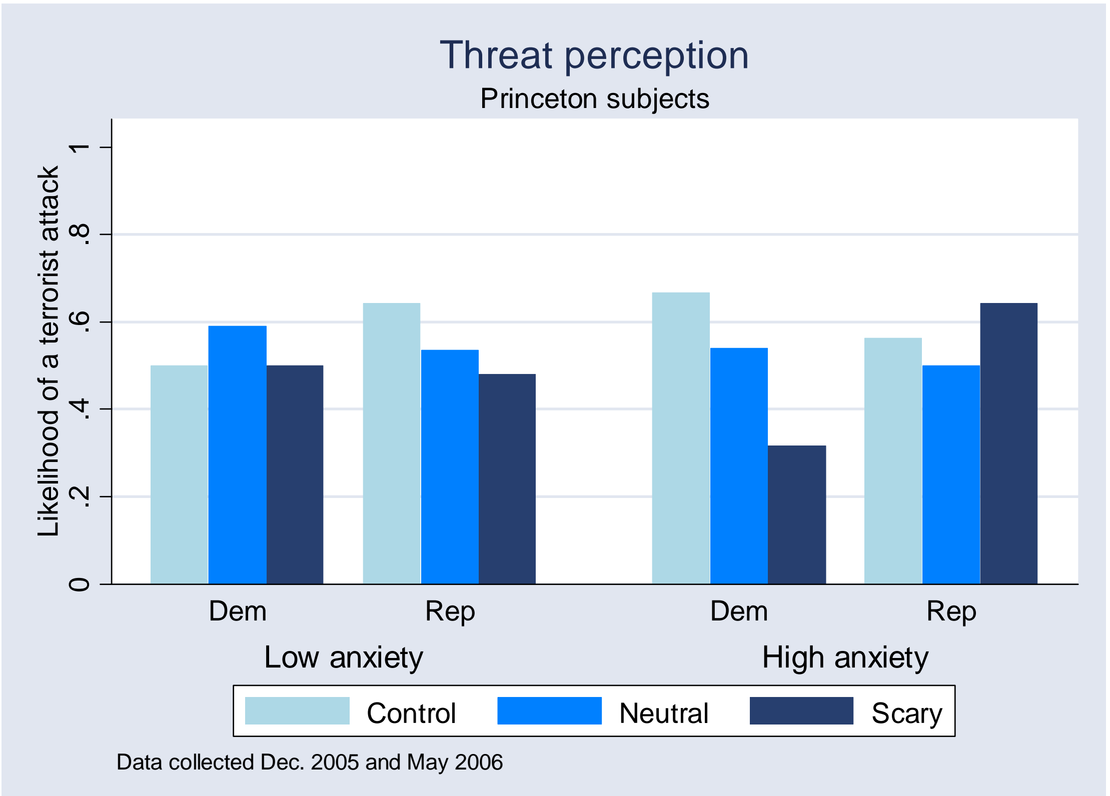
Figure 5.4: Average threat perception based on anxiety



Source: 2005 Princeton Experiment. The effect of scary visuals condition is significantly different on worried Republicans and Democrats at $p<.01$. Threat perception is subjects' perception of the likelihood of another terrorist attack in the next 12 months (0 = attack very unlikely, .25 = unlikely, .75 = likely, 1 = very likely). It is measured after exposure to the treatments. Anxiety is measured prior to exposure to experimental conditions (0 = not at all worried about terrorism, .25 = not worried about terrorism, .75 = somewhat worried about terrorism, 1 = very worried about terrorism).

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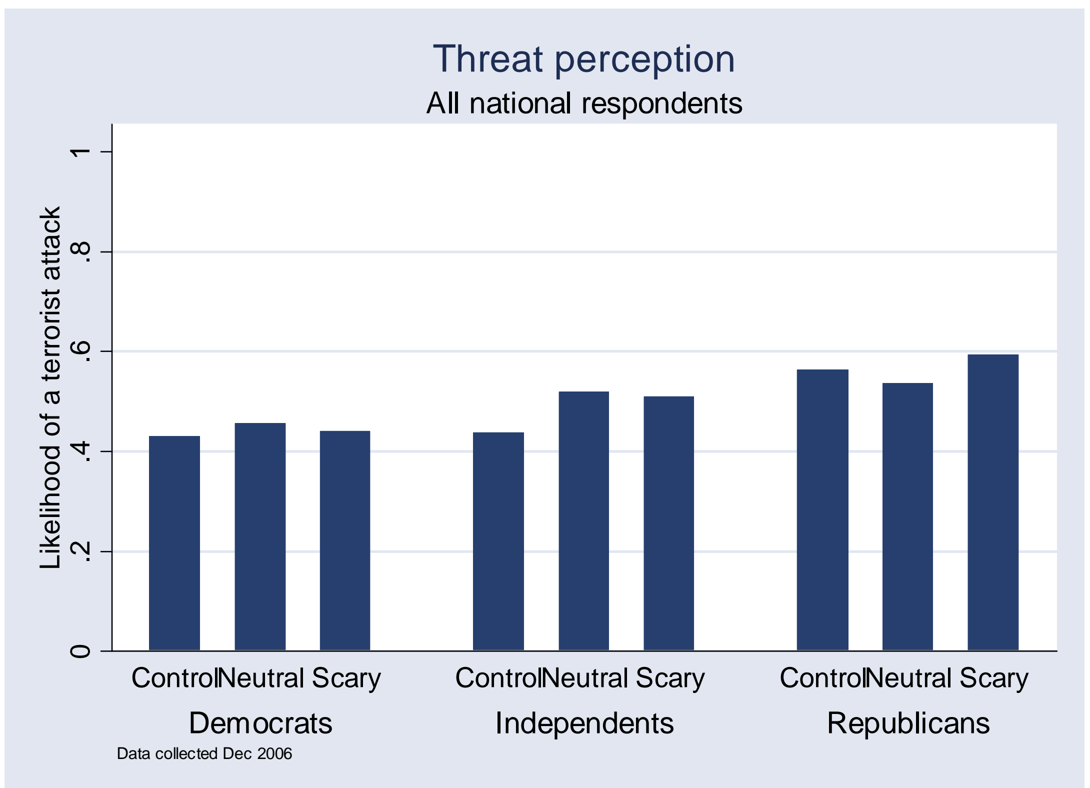
Figure 5.5: Average threat perception in the national sample



Source: 2006 Threat Experiment. Threat perception is subjects' perception of the likelihood of another terrorist attack in the next 12 months ranging from 0 (very unlikely) to 1 (very likely). Threat is measured after exposure to the treatments.

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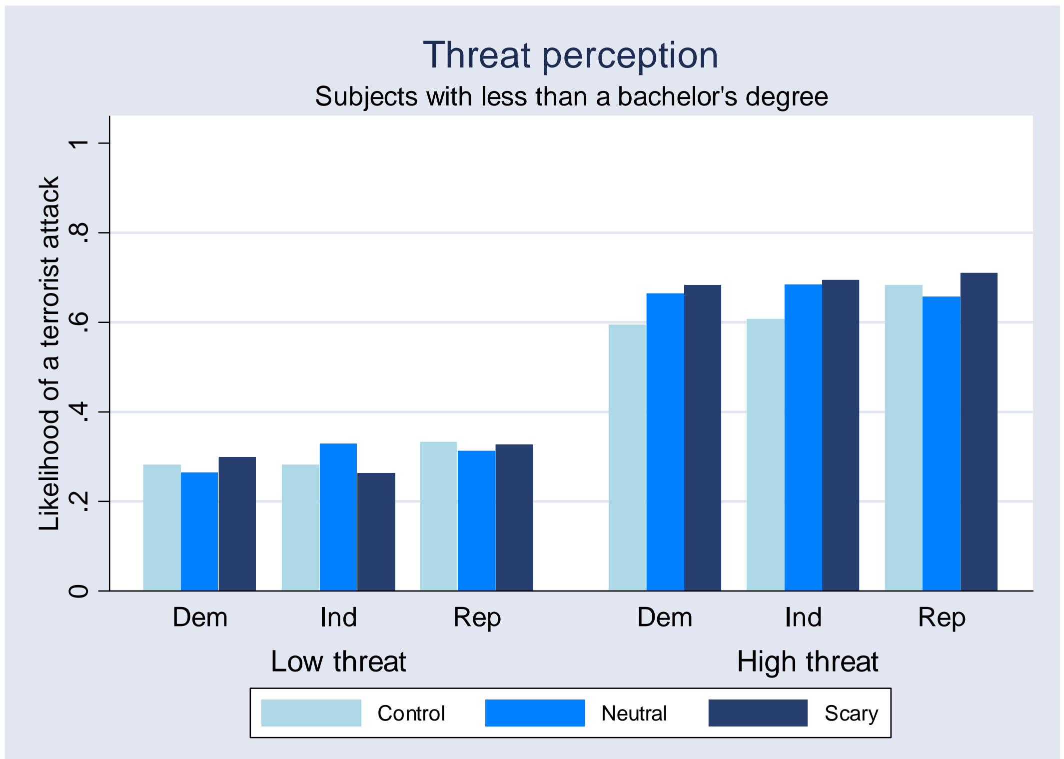
Figure 5.6: Average threat perception by partisanship and previous threat level: Participants with less than a bachelor's degree



Source: 2006 Threat Experiment. The effect of scary visuals condition is significantly different from the neutral visual condition for threatened Republicans at $p < .08$. Threat perception is subjects' perception of the likelihood of another terrorist attack in the next 12 months (0 = attack very unlikely to 1 = very likely). It is measured after exposure to the treatments. Pre-test threat is measured prior to the treatments and is scaled from 0 (terrorism not at all likely) to 1 (terrorism very certain), and is divided into low and high by the mean of .5.

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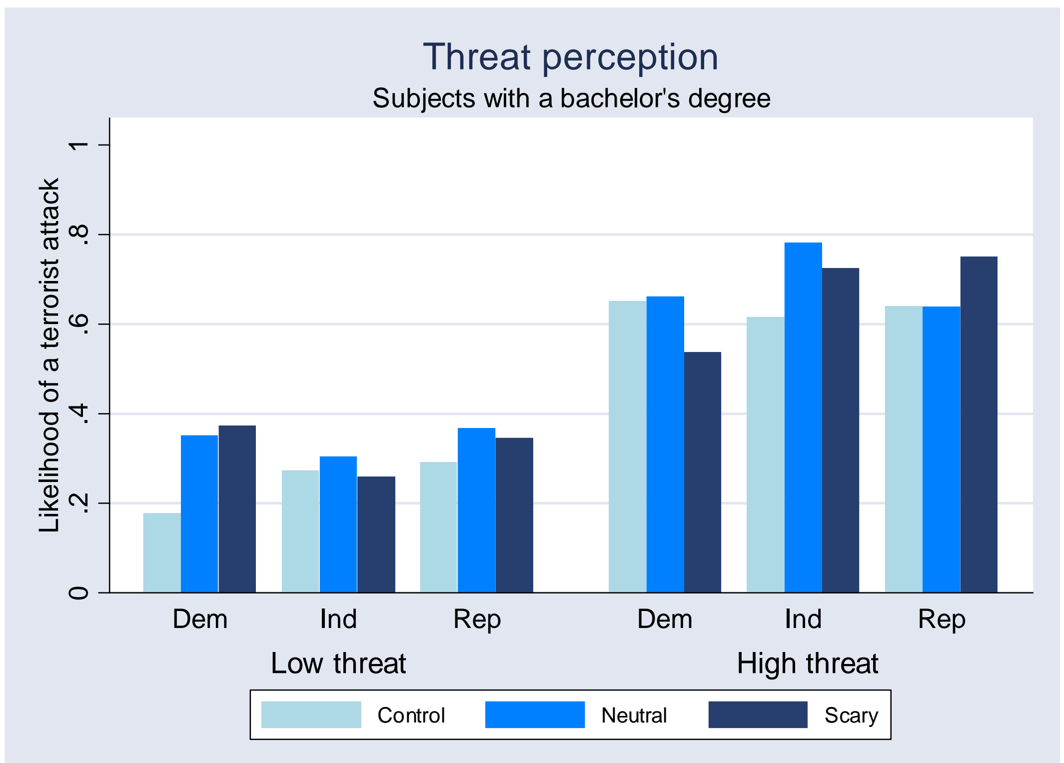
Figure 5.7: Average threat perception by partisanship and previous threat level: Participants with a bachelor's degree



Source: 2006 Threat Experiment. The difference between scary visuals and neutral visuals condition is significant among high threat Dems and Reps at $p < .02$. The difference between high threat Dems and Reps in the scary visuals condition is significant at $p<.01$ Threat perception is subjects' perception of the likelihood of another terrorist attack in the next 12 months (0 = attack very unlikely to 1 = very likely); it is measured after exposure to the treatments. Pre-test threat is measured prior to the treatments and is scaled from 0 (terrorism not at all likely) to 1 (terrorism very certain), and is divided into low and high by the mean of .5.

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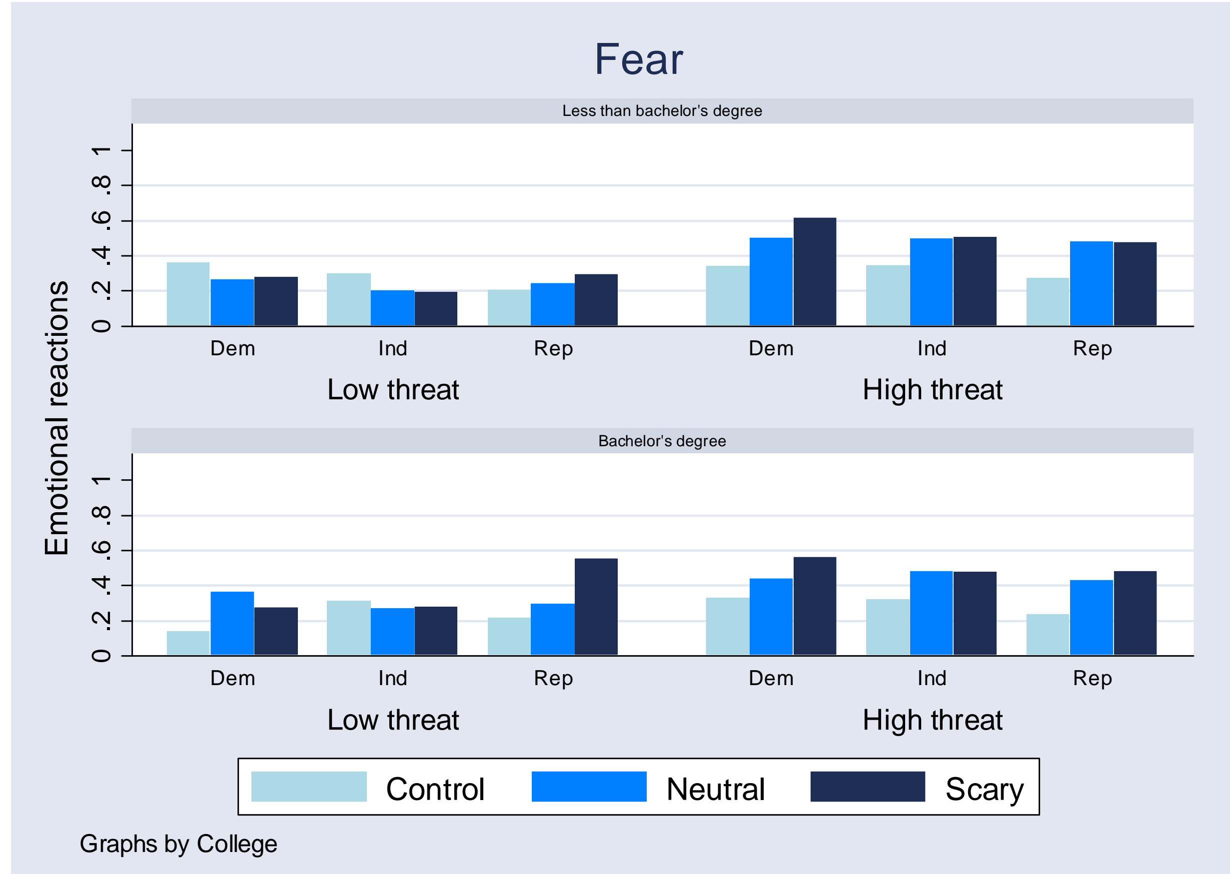
Figure 5.8: Emotional reactions the video treatment



Source: 2006 Threat Experiment. The difference between the scary visuals condition and the neutral visuals condition is significant for Democrats without a bachelor's degree high in threat ($p < .02$), high education Democrats low in threat ($p < .10$), high education Republicans low in threat ($p < .01$) high education Dems high in threat ($p < .01$)
Fear is a 3-item index of reactions to the video that each respondent watched (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$). Respondents answered how worried, how anxious, and how fearful the videos made them feel immediately after watching the video. The index ranges from 0 to 1, with 0 meaning "did not feel the emotion at all" to 1 meaning "felt the emotion very strongly"

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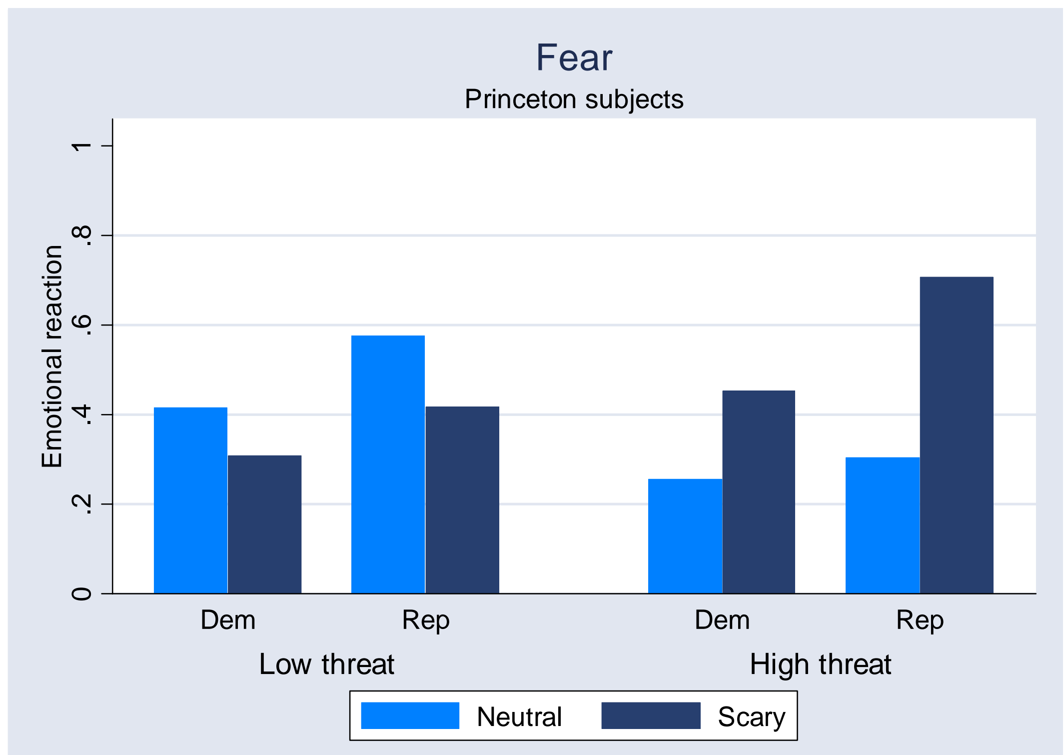
Figure 5.9: Emotional reactions to the media treatments – Princeton subjects



Source: 2005 Princeton Experiment. The difference between the scary visuals and neutral visuals condition is significant for high threat Democrats ($p < .03$) and high threat Republicans ($p<.01$) Fear is a 5-item index of reactions to the video that each respondent watched (Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$). Respondents answered how worried, how anxious, how unpleasant, and how nervous, and how fearful the videos made them feel immediately after watching the video. The index ranges from 0 to 1, with 0 meaning "did not feel the emotion at all" to 1 meaning "felt the emotion very strongly"

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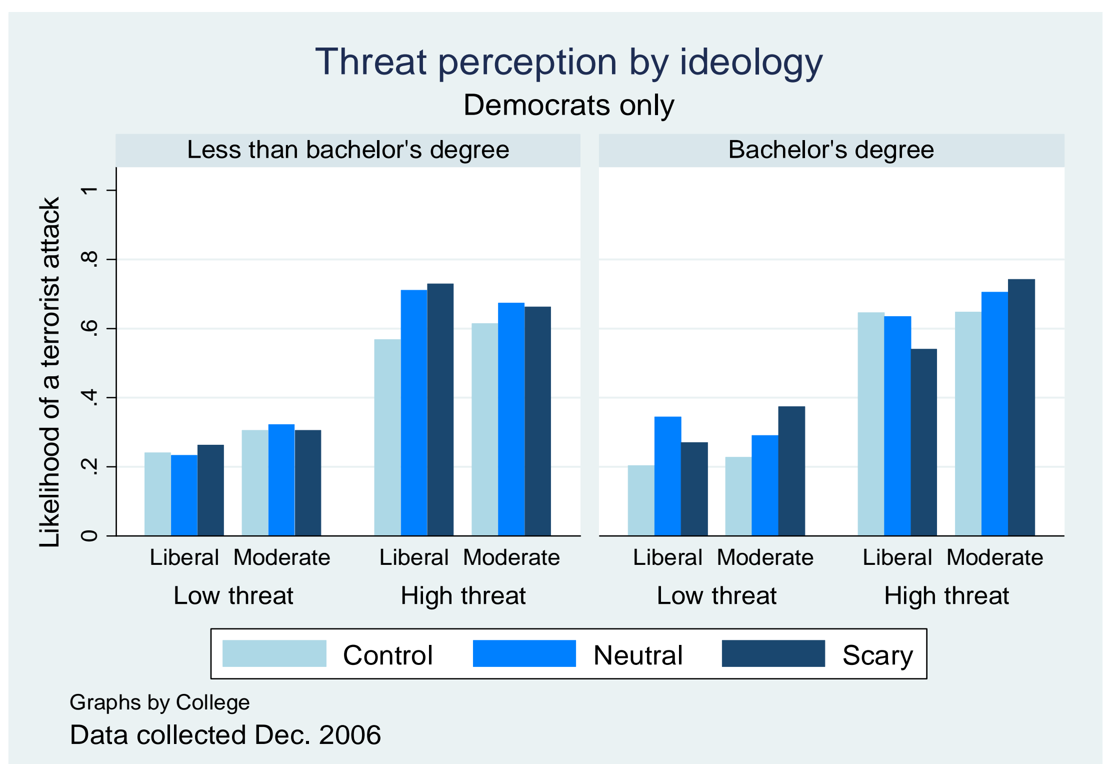
Figure 5.10: Average threat perception by ideology – National participants



Source: 2006 Threat Experiment. The difference between the scary visuals condition and the neutral visuals condition is significant for low threat college educated liberals ($p<.03$), low threat college-educated moderates ($p < .04$), and high threat college-educated liberals ($p<.06$). Threat perception is subjects' perception of the likelihood of another terrorist attack in the next 12 months (0 = attack very unlikely to 1 = very likely). It is measured after exposure to the treatments. Pre-test threat is measured prior to the treatments and is scaled from 0 (terrorism not at all likely) to 1 (terrorism very certain), and is divided into low and high by the mean of .5.

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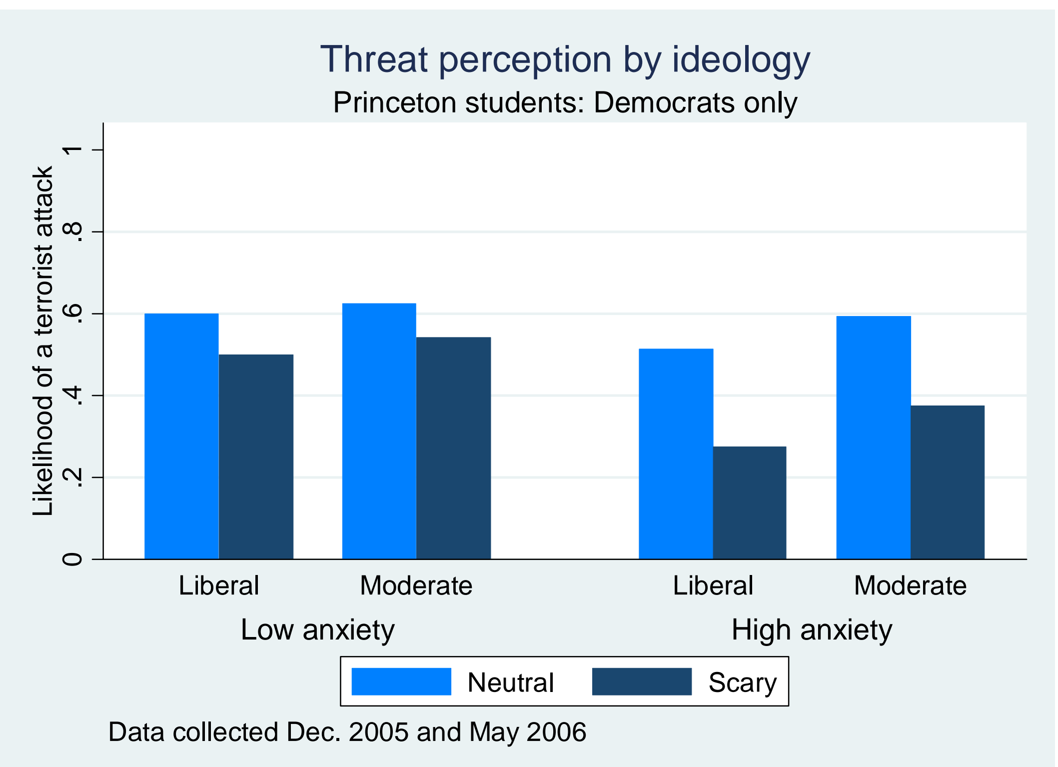
Figure 5.11: Average threat perception by ideology – Princeton participants



Source: 2005 Princeton Experiment. The difference between the scary visuals condition and the neutral visuals condition is significant for high anxiety liberals ($p<.02$) and high anxiety moderates ($p < .10$). Threat perception is subjects' perception of the likelihood of another terrorist attack in the next 12 months (0 = attack very unlikely to 1 = very likely). It is measured after exposure to the treatments. Pre-test anxiety is measured prior to the treatments and is scaled from 0 (not at all worried about terrorism) to 1 (very worried about terrorism), and is divided into low and high by the mean of .5.

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APPENDIX 5A:
Comparing the NES sample to the experimental samples

Ideology in the experimental samples and the NES

	National experiment	**Princeton experiment**		**NES**	
			2000	2002	2004
Liberal	22.00%	43.04%	20.00%	23.00%	23.00%
Moderate	40.00%	37.13%	23.00%	22.00%	26.00%
Conservative	33.00%	19.83%	30.00%	35.00%	32.00%
Apolitical/DK	5.00%	4.66%	27.00%	22.00%	20.00%
N	1229	246	1767	1503	1204

Partisan identification on the experiments and National Election Studies

	National experiment	**Princeton experiment**		**NES**	
			2000	2002	2004
Strong Dem	12.00%	19.11%	19.00%	17.00%	17.00%
Weak Dem	11.00%	24.39%	15.00%	17.00%	16.00%
Lean Dem	13.00%	10.57%	15.00%	15.00%	17.00%
Independent	25.00%	19.11%	12.00%	8.00%	10.00%
Lean Rep	13.00%	7.72%	13.00%	13.00%	12.00%
Weak Rep	13.00%	11.79%	12.00%	16.00%	12.00%
Strong Rep	14.00%	7.32%	12.00%	14.00%	16.00%
Apolitical/DK	1.00%	0.00%	1.00%	1.00%	0.00%
N	1229	246	1797	1488	1197

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APPENDIX 5B:

Question wording and response codes for Experiments 2005-2006.

Anxiety about terrorism: Now we are interested in the feelings you might have had after the terrorist attacks on London and Sharm el Sheik, Egypt last summer. Thinking about those attacks, how afraid do they make you feel? Do you feel very afraid, somewhat afraid, not very afraid or not afraid at all? 1=Very afraid, .75 = Somewhat afraid, .25 = Not very afraid, 0 = Not afraid at all

Liberal/Conservative Ideology – Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a liberal, a conservative, a moderate, or what? 0 = liberal, .5 = moderate, 1 = moderate. Respondents who expressed no preference or refused to choose were placed in the ideological category closest to their stated party preference.

Iraq: Taking everything into account, do you think that the war in Iraq has been worth the cost or not? 1 = Worth the cost*,* 0 = Not worth the cost

North Korea – aid: To get North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons, would you support or oppose offering it financial incentives such as aid money or more trade? 1 = Support, 0 = Oppose.

North Korea – military action: Would you favor or oppose the United States taking military action to stop North Korea's nuclear program, if necessary? 1 = Favor, 0 = Oppose.

Party Identification – 7 point branching question ranging from Strong Democrat (scored 0) to Strong Republican (scored 1).

Patriot Act: The USA Patriot Act, passed in the month after 9/11, is up for renewal this year. The Act gives the federal government powers to investigate individuals and groups suspected of terrorism. Critics claim that some of the powers, such as the ability of federal investigators to view library and bookstore records, infringe upon civil liberties too much. Do you favor or oppose the renewal of the Patriot Act? 1 = Favor Renewal, 0 = Oppose renewal.

Presidential approval: All things considered, do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the war on terrorism? 0 = Strongly disapprove, .25 = Disapprove, .75 = Approve, 1 = Strongly approve.

Threat of terrorism – "How likely to you think it is that the US will suffer an attack as serious as the one in New York and Washington some time in the next 12 months? Would you say very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely?" 0 = Very unlikely, .25 = Unlikely, .75 = Likely, 1 = Very Likely.

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APPENDIX 5C: Sample matching: The YouGov/Polimetrix sampling technique YouGov/Polimetrix draws its sample from a panel of respondents who have opted-in after using the company's polling website, www.PollingPoint.com. Opt-in samples are not representative of the public on the whole though – they tend to be more interested in politics as well as whiter than the general public. To make the samples more representative, YouGov/Polimetrix draws a target sample from the general population which it then uses to match respondents from its panel to members from the target sample. The matching takes place on a number of demographic characteristics using a new methodology called sample matching.

YouGov/Polimetrix uses a sampling technique called sample matching to select study samples from pools of opt-in respondents. As described above, YouGov/Polimetrix recruits subjects through its web community of PollingPoint.com. PollingPoint offers citizens the opportunity to take on-line surveys and become part of the YouGov/Polimetrix panel by providing their demographic information. Once individuals opt-in to being a part of a panel, they are offered the opportunity to take surveys and studies. No panelists are asked to take more than 6 surveys a year.

Sample matching works by matching respondents in a target sample with members of the YouGov/Polimetrix panel. This methodology allows researchers to draw representative samples from non-randomly selected pools of respondents. Sample matching starts with the enumeration of the target population or sample frame. For general population studies, the target population is all adults as enumerated in consumer databases maintained by commercial firms.

What is unique about the sample matching methodology is that the sample is not actually drawn from the frame. Ideally, YouGov/Polimetrix would be able to interview respondents within the target sample, but that is not feasible since most people in the target sample have not
provided the company with their email addresses or phone numbers. Instead, for each member of the target sample, the company selects one or more matching members from the pool of opt-in responses. The purpose of the matching is to find an available respondent who is as similar as possible to the selected member of the target sample, which results in a sample of respondents who have the same characteristics as the target sample. Respondents are matched on a variety of characteristics, such as age, years of schooling, location, income, etc to those in the sample target.

Not all respondents in a matched sample will respond to a survey invitation, so YouGov/Polimetrix uses two procedures to deal with non-response: multiple matching and rematching. Instead of selecting a single match for each member of the target sample, they choose multiple matches. The number of matches is based on the estimated response probability that a panelist responds by the end of the survey field period. In addition, they use a second round of matching when respondents begin an interview. The best matching respondent is assigned to the matching target element if that element has not already been matched. A more detailed version describing the sampling technique can be found at www.YouGov/Polimetrix.com/learn/

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APPENDIX 5D:
Transcripts of Experimental Stories
and Comparison of visuals in two threatening conditions

THREATENING STORY – NATIONAL AND PRINCETON EXPERIMENTS
WAVE OF TERROR (ABC News, July 25, 2005)
ELIZABETH VARGAS: (Off Camera) The investigations of London and Sharm el-Sheikh attacks are massive, involving intelligence agencies on four continents. As we said at the beginning of the broadcast, there is a real urgency. Intelligence officials are deeply worried that global terrorism has entered a dangerous, new phase. Here's ABC's Pierre Thomas.

PIERRE THOMAS, ABC NEWS : (Voice Over) US officials say al Qaeda is evolving. Now relying on largely independent, regional groups to launch smaller-scale attacks designed to produce huge international aftershocks.

ROGER CRESSEY, TERRORISM EXPERT: The intelligence community believes there was a terrorist summit in 2004 in Pakistan, where targets were approved by the al-Qaeda leadership or people representing them.

JACK CLOONAN, ABC NEWS CONSULTANT: If you looked at this as bin Laden, as the chief executive, he has franchised a lot of this stuff out. And now, you have his acolytes around the world carrying out his mission statement.

PIERRE THOMAS: (Voice Over) Al Qaeda's mission statement has consistently called for attacks against the US and its allies. April 8th, 2003, a month after the US invaded Iraq, Osama bin Laden called on extremists to "get up and raise your weapons against America and Britain." Five months later, bin Laden warns, "we reserve to ourselves the right to respond against all the countries participating in this war, especially Britain, Spain." Six months later, Madrid was bombed. In February, al Qaeda number two in command, Ayman al Zawahiri, criticized Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak "and his gang" for pursuing a "policy of normalization with Israel." Five months la
linking the recent bombings, they are worried about the frequency of the attacks, one after another, and that the attacks appear to exploit specific political events. The 2004 Madrid train bombing came on the eve of the Spanish national elections. The July 7th London bombing coincided with the G-8 summit of western leaders. The Egyptian bombing came the same weekend as their independence day.

PIERRE THOMAS: (Off Camera) Tonight, intelligence officials around the world are sharing information, trying to figure out if this is only the beginning of a wave of attacks. Elizabeth?

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CONTROL STORY – PRINCETON EXPERIMENT
NUCLEAR DEAL NORTH KOREA TO ABANDON NUCLEAR PROGRAMS (ABC News, September 19, 2005).

CHARLES GIBSON, ABC NEWS : (Off Camera) There was perhaps very possibly a breakthrough today involving the nuclear threat from North Korea. That country has promised to drop its nuclear weapons program. In exchange, the US has promised, one, that it will not attack North Korea and, two, that the US will provide the North Koreans the economic assistance they desperately need. Seemingly a breakthrough, but will the North Koreans follow through? Here is ABC's Jonathan Karl.

JONATHAN KARL, ABC NEWS: (Voice Over) The agreement, announced with fanfare, marks a major turnaround for both the United States and North Korea. The talks had been deadlocked, and there were fears North Korea would soon test one of its nuclear weapons. Now Kim Jong-Il's government promises to dismantle its entire nuclear weapons program and to let UN inspectors, whom he had thrown out of his country two years ago, back in.

CHRISTOPHER HILL, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE : By this agreement, they are going to get out of these nuclear programs. They are going to get out of the business of producing nuclear weapons.

JONATHAN KARL: (Voice Over) The agreement was welcome news at the White House.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH, UNITED STATES: What we have said is, great. That's a wonderful step forward. But now we got to verify whether or not that happens.

JONATHAN KARL: (Voice Over) The Bush administration made concessions, too. Under the agreement, North Korea gets energy assistance, including oil and electricity from South Korea. A written promise from the United States that it won't invade North Korea and the agreement leaves open the possibility that North Korea could build a light water nuclear reactor to generate electricity, something the Bush administration had adamantly opposed. For the past four years, the White House has insisted North Korea would get no rewards for stopping a nuclear weapons program the US said they shouldn't have in the first place. That, officials said, would be blackmail.

SCOTT MCCLELLAN, WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY: What we won't do is let North Korea blackmail us.

COLIN POWELL, SECRETARY OF STATE: We will not yield to threats and blackmail.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: We will not give in to blackmail.

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JONATHAN KARL: (Voice Over) Under this agreement, North Korea would start receiving incentives even before it fully dismantles its nuclear weapons program. The specifics of how and when North Korea gives up its nuclear weapons are left to future talks.

JONATHAN KARL: (Off Camera) The big question here is whether North Korea can be trusted to keep its word. Kim Jong-Il agreed to give up his nuclear weapons program back in 1994, only to break his promise. And even officials who welcome today's news, are not at all certain, Charlie, that North Korea can be trusted this time.

CONTROL STORY – NATIONAL EXPERIMENT
INDIA, INC (ABC News, March 1, 2006)

DIANA SAWYER: Tonight, we begin a special series on this seismic rumble half a world away. ABC's Jim Sciutto is in India.

JIM SCIUTTO: This is India booming. Western culture and technology coming East. Indian know-how going West, by high-speed connection. And it's not just call centers feeding the surge, but accountants in New Delhi preparing US tax returns. Radiologists in Bangalore reading MRIs for doctors in Texas.

DOCTOR ARJUN KALYANPUR (RADIOLOGIST)
One occasion, he asked me, he said, "Just where are you, anyway?" And I said "I'm in Bangalore." And he said, "Bangor, Maine?" I said, "No, Bangalore, India." He said, "Get out of here."

JIM SCIUTTO (ABC NEWS): (Voiceover) Today, more than half of Fortune 500 companies outsource some work to India, to an educated, English-speaking workforce, at a fraction of US salaries.

SUHEL SETH (MARKETING EXECUTIVE): I think what America and India have found in each other are enduring partners who can trust each other.

JIM SCIUTTO (ABC NEWS): (Voiceover) US exports to India have doubled in the last two years. And US firms have become market leaders by adapting, such as McDonald's, which now sells vegetarian hamburgers here. Today, there are more middle-class Indians with buying power than the entire US population.

JIM SCIUTTO (ABC NEWS): (Off-camera) The challenge for India is spreading the new wealth from the cities to rural areas like this one, where nearly 80% of the population lives. It's coming, but slowly.

JIM SCIUTTO (ABC NEWS): (Voiceover) In a village in northwest India, we found a new cleaners, a new private doctor. An old saying goes here, India seems to live in several centuries at once. But it's educating itself for the 21st. Vesting small town students with big-city career plans.

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STUDENT (FEMALE): Accountant.
STUDENT (MALE): Doctor.
STUDENT (FEMALE): I want to be a broadcast journalist.

JIM SCIUTTO (ABC NEWS): (Voiceover) Like many Indians, Elangovan left a high-tech job in America for high-tech in India, and now lives in one of the many new gated communities that bring a touch of California to Calcutta.

ELANGOVAN KULANDAIVELU (IGATE CORPORATION SOFTWARE EXECUTIVE): I think the same kind of opportunities that you would find in the US, you know, you could find very similar or even better opportunities out here in India.

JIM SCIUTTO (ABC NEWS): (Voiceover) For some Americans, as well. India's rapidly-expanding airlines are now hiring out-of-work American pilots, outsourcing in reverse. The next step for an India on the move. Jim Sciutto, ABC News, Jakhauli, India.

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TEXT	NEUTRAL VISUALS	SCARY VISUALS
Al Qaeda's mission statement has consistently called for attacks against the US and its allies		
April 8th, 2003, a month after the US invaded Iraq, Osama bin Laden called on extremists to "get up and raise your weapons against America and Britain." Five months later, bin Laden warns, "we reserve to ourselves the right to respond against all the countries participating in this war, especially Britain, Spain."	Text: "we reserve to ourselves the right to respond against all the countries participating in this war, especially Britain, Spain."	
Six months later, Madrid was bombed		
In February, al Qaeda number two in command, Ayman al Zawahiri, criticized Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak "and his gang" for pursuing a "policy of normalization with Israel."		
Five months later, an Egyptian resort was attacked. Officials say while there is no direct evidence linking the recent bombings, they are worried about the frequency of the attacks,		

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one after another, and that the attacks appear to exploit specific political events.

The 2004 Madrid train bombing came on the eve of the Spanish national elections.

The July 7th London bombing coincided with the G-8 summit of western leaders.

The Egyptian bombing came the same weekend as their independence day.

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Chapter 6: The Fire Next Time: How Threatening News Influences Foreign Policy Attitudes

God gave Noah the rainbow sign, No more water, the fire next time.
– O, Mary Don't You Weep (spiritual)

Are citizens persuaded to change their foreign policy attitudes when confronted with news that terrorism is likely? If that information was presented in a particularly evocative, sensationalistic way, does the extra emotional component affect how citizens evaluate the government or their willingness to send troops overseas? Theories of public opinion and persuasion focus on how the amount, type, and sources of political information influence attitude formation. Yet, when information about a topic is plentiful, it seems likely that information by itself may be less persuasive than information matched with feelings of fear or anger. This chapter explores how media coverage of crisis affects the type of foreign policy preferred by American citizens and particularly, how information and emotion influence attitudes together and separately. Utilizing the 2006 Threat Experiment, this chapter demonstrates that when threatening information is paired with fear cues in news stories that those respondents concerned about terrorism are significantly more likely to support militaristic foreign policy than respondents who only receive the threatening information. When citizens concerned about terrorism hear that a terrorist attack is likely and will bring fire and destruction worse than 9/11, they adopt hawkish policies. When citizens actually see the fire, they react even more strongly.

As shown in Chapter 4, those citizens concerned about terrorism were the most responsive to television news and those threatened individuals exposed to the most television news adopted the most hawkish attitudes. Media coverage of the War on Terror tends to focus on threatening events (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2007) and reflect

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the Bush administration's framing of events through the sources and images chosen by journalists (Boydstun and Glazier 2008; Entman 2004; Griffin 2004). The more respondents watched television news, the more often they faced threatening information and hawkish policy cues. However, the survey data in Chapter 4 cannot entangle exactly why the television news exposure so effectively influenced attitudes - whether the threatening information or the emotionally evocative presentation of the news increased support for hawkish policy. Using the experiment described last chapter, this chapter will test the hypothesis that threatening news stories will increase support for hawkish policy over non-threatening stories. The chapter will also test whether a sensationalistic news presentation designed to evoke viewers' emotions is more effective at persuading respondents to update their foreign policy attitudes than the information on its own.

The fire next time: An experiment

Consistent with expectations of the threat theory, Chapters 2 and 4 showed that a threatening political environment and individual perceptions of threat led to high levels of support for militaristic foreign policy as well as increased support for defensive measures such as increasing funding for border security. As Chapter 5 establishes, though, the meaning of threat perception in 2002 differed from the same threat perception measured in 2006. Over time, partisanship and other political criteria began to shape individuals' perceptions of how likely terrorists attack is in the near future. While a majority of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans believed terrorism to be likely, deep divisions began to form. Threat perception reflected not only an evaluation of the risk of terrorism but also an evaluation of the government's efforts to thwart terrorism. Although the origins of threat perception have changed over time, the relationship between threat and

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policy attitudes may be the same. That is, although there may be fewer people who believe that terrorism in imminent in 2006 than in 2002, those people high on the threat perception scale may still prefer more hawkish policy than those less concerned about terrorist attacks.

To establish that individuals' concern over terrorism shaped their preferences over foreign policy in 2006, Figure 6.1 shows the mean attitudes of high and low threat respondents from the 2006 Threat Experiment on a set of 5 dependent variables that will be used throughout this chapter. These dependent variables represent the diplomacy/militarism foreign policy dimension discussed in previous chapters, attitudes on foreign policy spending as well as attitudes on military action in two specific countries and evaluations of the government's handling of terrorism. All dependent variables were measured after exposure to the experimental treatments. The *militarism* measure is a dichotomous measure of whether respondents thought that the United States should solve international problems only with diplomacy and pressure or whether the U.S. must be ready to use military force in international affairs. The measure is scored from 0 to 1, with higher values representing the hawkish position. The *spending index* is a four item index about whether the federal government should increase, decrease, or keep funding levels the same on foreign aid, defense, border security, and homeland security. Each question weighed equally in the index (Cronbach's α= .70), which was scaled from -1 (spend less) to 1 (spend more), and foreign aid was reverse coded. These measures are identical in wording to the measures from the NES utilized in Chapter 4.

In order to test whether threat has broad consequences on foreign policy, respondents answered several questions on their attitudes about specific military

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engagements. In 2002, Americans who perceived a high threat of terrorism were supportive of using the United States military to destroy terrorist groups across the globe, including Sudan (Pew 2002). Using Sudan as an example provides a way to test the threat theory's implication that when threatened, individuals will prefer hawkish policy to dovish policy. Respondent's reaction to humanitarian situation in the Darfur region of Sudan provides a way to measure whether, given limited resources, citizens want the United States to spend funds for military or humanitarian means. The *Sudan* measure is a combination of two questions that asked respondents about hypothetical actions that the U.S. government could take in Sudan – military action to destroy terrorist groups and sending foreign aid to help with the humanitarian situation in the Darfur region. The Sudan measure categorized respondents who wanted to send aid but not troops as doves with a score of 0 and respondents who wanted to send troops but not aid as hawks with a score of 1. Respondents who preferred a combination of dovish and hawkish action were excluded from this measure. In addition to the Sudan measure, respondents also answered another question about foreign policy in a specific country – Iraq. The *Iraq* measure asked respondents to evaluate retrospectively whether they believed that the war in Iraq was worth the cost, and is scored from "strongly disagree" at 0 to 1 "strongly agree". Not surprisingly, the responses to the Iraq question were significantly skewed toward the "disagree" end, with 63 percent of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the war was worth the cost, 23 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing, and 14 percent neither agreeing or disagreeing. Lastly, the *Government approval* measure is a three item index (Cronbach's $\alpha = .70$) that asked respondents to evaluate how well they believed the government was doing in reducing the threat of terrorism, how much they approved of

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the president's handling of terrorism, and whether they believed that the ability of the terrorists carry out terrorist attacks was greater, less, or the same than before 9/11. The government evaluation measure and the Iraq measure are an attempt to capture not only the broad type of policies that the public may want under times of crisis but also how the public may evaluate the leaders and the policies of leaders when threat is high.

Respondents are broken up into "low" and "high threat" groups by their answers to the *pre-test* threat perception question, "Just using your best judgment, how likely do you think a terrorist attack is in the United States is in the next year?". Low threat respondents placed themselves at the "unlikely" or "very unlikely" end of the scale while high threat respondents said that terrorism was "likely" or "very likely". Five-hundred fifty four respondents or 45 percent of respondents were low in threat according to this definition while 675 respondents were high in threat. Table 5.5 from Chapter 5 provides details on the demographic breakdowns of each group. Respondents in the high and low threat categories shared many demographic characteristics and differed only in two significant ways – gender and partisanship. Respondents in the two groups were of similar ages (M_{low} = 46.7 years, M_{high} = 49.2), came equally from all regions of the country, had similar educational backgrounds (M_{low} = 26.6 percent college graduates, M_{high} = 20.1 percent), and had equal percentages of whites, blacks, and Latinos. However, the high threat group has significantly more female respondents ($p<.04$) and more Democrats ($p<.01$) than the low threat condition. Overall, the high and low threat groups look quite similar demographically, but their political attitudes are significantly different.

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High threat respondents took significantly more hawkish positions and also evaluate the government and its actions in Iraq more positively than the low threat group ($p<.01$). Figure 6.1 shows the mean attitude and 95 percent confidence interval for each group; the high threat group is represented by the open white circles while the low threat group is represented by the black circles. All of the dependent variables are scored with higher values indicating more hawkish attitudes, 4 of the 5 variables are scored to vary between 0 and 1 and the spending index varies between –1 and 1. Overall, this figure demonstrates that respondents who consider terrorism imminent are much more supportive of using the military in general, are more supportive of specific military action to destroy terrorists in Africa, and also prefer increased spending on the border, homeland security, and defense. In addition, those people who came into the experiment concerned about terrorist attacks are more supportive of the war in Iraq and are significantly more supportive of the government's handling of the War on Terrorism than those unconcerned about terrorism, suggesting that a public concerned about terrorism is a public more supportive of the Bush administration and their policies. This support for hawkish policy is even true among high threat Democrats, who are significantly more supportive of militarism generally ($p<.01$), hawkish foreign policy spending ($p<.01$), pursuing terrorists in Sudan ($p<.03$), and even the War in Iraq ($p<.02$) than low threat Democrats.[22] Although fewer people believed that terrorism was likely in 2006 than in prior years, this figure shows that the relationship between threat and policy remains the same. The higher the threat, the more likely a respondent is to take hawkish positions. The remainder of the

[22] These results are not shown in Figure 6.1. Democrats' mean attitudes for each dependent variable are – Militarism: $M_{lowthreat} = .13$ v. $M_{highthreat} = .24$; Government approval: $M_{lowthreat} = .13$ v. $M_{highthreat} = .09$ Foreign policy spending: $M_{lowthreat} = -.05$ v. $M_{highthreat} = .11$; Sudan: $M_{lowthreat} = .01$ v. $M_{highthreat} = .08$; Iraq worth cost: $M_{lowthreat} = .05$ v. $M_{highthreat} = .09$

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chapter explores how media coverage of terrorism helps individuals to match their sense of threat on to a set of policy options.

Emotion and information

As we saw in Chapter 4, television watching and newspaper reading affected individuals' foreign policy attitudes quite differently in 2002. While watching television news increased support for hawkish policy among high threat respondents, newspaper reading did not significantly impact attitudes in either direction but by 2004, the information in newspapers did increase support for hawkish policy. In 2002, individuals fearful of future terrorism were 10 percentage points more likely to strongly support military action in Iraq if they watched more than the average amount of television news, yet newspaper reading did not increase the tendency to support the war. From Boydstun and Glazier (2008) and Entman (2004), it is clear that both sources of news, newspapers and the national news, reflected the administration's War on Terror frame that argued that militaristic policy would most effectively lower the threat of terrorism. Newspaper readers are more able to tailor what type of stories they consume than television watchers, and Feldman, Huddy, and Marcus (2007) find evidence that newspapers did reflect more opposition voices about the War on Terror than television stations, so it is possible that newspaper readers did not receive the same amount of threatening information that television watchers did. Other than differences in the ability to opt out of information, one of the other obvious differences between newspapers and television news is television's ability to induce emotions through story tone, journalists' inflections, and well as the imagery chosen to accompany stories. While the survey data do not allow us to investigate whether newspaper readers and television watchers received the same

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information or even whether television watchers saw the same types of stories, the Threat Experiment allows a test of the effects of threatening v. non-threatening information as well as emotional presentation on policy opinions.

The imagery used in TV news stories about terrorism have particularly powerful effects on Americans' attitudes because they invoke emotions but also because those images are so closely intertwined with feelings about 9/11 as well as the political responses to terrorism. Brader writes, "Emotional appraisals rely on a store of innate and learned associations of the significance of stimuli and their contexts" (Brader 2006, 62). Thus, the images of terrorism used in the treatment story may prime respondents' innate reactions and induce negative emotions such as fear, anger, or sadness since the images themselves are linked to negative memories (Entman 2004). These images, though also have a learned association through their connection to the War on Terror frame and hawkish policy cues (Griffin 2004). To the extent then that experimental respondents receive a threatening message about terrorism paired with emotional imagery, these respondents should be the most likely to support hawkish foreign policy.

It is worth noting that the Threat Experiment provides a hard test for demonstrating that in fact news stories can increase support for hawkish policy and in pinning down the mechanism by which the media matter. The *Wave of Terrorism* story that respondents in the neutral visuals and scary visuals conditions watched contained threatening information about potential terrorist attacks but did not contain overt policy content in it. The story itself did not advocate hawkish policies or quote sources arguing for more homeland security funding or sending more troops abroad. Only if that type of threatening terrorism story is tied to a set of hawkish policies should respondents move in

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that direction. In addition, the experimental treatment was also only one, 2 ½ minute story about terrorism abroad in the midst of more than 5 years and literally thousands of other news stories about terrorism. Even though respondents were asked their reactions and attitudes directly after the story, thus making the "treatment" clear, the treatment was relatively mild compared to the vast amount of information on the topic available to American citizens. Lastly, while the scary visuals condition was edited to add emotive imagery to increase the emotional impact, by the nature of its content, the neutral visuals condition was quite threatening on its own and may induce emotional responses by increasing a sense of impending threat.

As a manipulation check to confirm that the threatening treatments did in fact evoke emotion in the respondents as anticipated and that the scary visuals condition did increase negative emotions, respondents answered a series of questions about their reactions to the news stories. This manipulation check is separate from the pre-test of emotional reactions to only the images, which occurred with a separate student sample. Respondents in the national experimental sample answered questions tapping their reactions to the experimental treatments as a whole after they watched either the India video in the control condition or the terrorism video in the neutral visuals and scary visuals conditions. Each respondent received a set of 9 questions designed to tap into particular negative emotions; respondents rated how Fearful (worried, fearful, anxious), Sad (sad, depressed, grief stricken), and Angry (angry, mad, and furious) they felt after watching the news story. Respondents rated their emotional reactions on a 10 point scale from "did not feel the emotion" at the low end to "felt the emotion very strongly" at the high end of the scale, and which I rescaled to vary between 0 and 1. All of these negative

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emotions loaded strongly onto a single dimension in a factor analysis (Eigenvalue =2.00, Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$) although there is psychology research to suggest that these various negative emotions have a variety of antecedents and effects on attitudes (Lerner and Keltner 2000; Marcus et al 2000). When looking at the negative emotions together, respondents in the scary visuals condition felt significantly more emotional ($M_{sv} = .43$) than subjects in the control condition ($M_c = .27$, $p<.01$) and marginally more emotional than respondents in the neutral visuals condition ($M_{nv} = .40$, $p<.11$). Looking at the separate dimensions of emotion, it is clear that on average, respondents in the scary visuals condition were significantly more fearful, angry, and sad ($p<.01$ for all variables) than respondents in the control condition, yet respondents in the scary visuals condition were only significantly more sad than those in the neutral visuals condition ($p<.01$) but not significantly more fearful ($M_{nv} = .38$ v. $M_{sv} = .41$) or angry ($M_{nv} = .49$ v. $M_{sv} = .51$). On average, the scary visuals condition induced more negative emotion than the other two conditions but the primary driver of those emotions seems to be sadness.

The threat theory proposes that the media effects will be concentrated among respondents already concerned about terrorism, so it is important to establish whether threatened respondents are significantly more emotional in the scary visuals condition than the neutral visuals condition. Unlike low threat respondents, who are not significantly more emotional in the scary visuals condition than in the neutral visuals condition ($p<.75$), high threat respondents report feeling significantly more negative emotions in the scary visuals condition than either of the other two conditions ($M_c= .28$, $M_{nv}= .48$. $M_{sv} = .54$, $p<.02$ both differences). High threat respondents also feel significantly more fearful in the scary visuals condition than in the control condition but

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are not significantly more fearful than respondents in the neutral visuals condition (M_c= .30, M_{nv}= .40. M_{sv} = .42, p<.01 scary v. control, p<.20, scary v. neutral). On the whole then, the scary visuals condition did induce more negative feelings than the control condition and marginally more negative feelings than the neutral visuals condition. Among those most concerned about terrorism, the versions of the Wave of Terrorism story with the evocative visuals succeeded in evoking more negative emotions than the neutral version, signaling that images of the burning Twin Towers and bleeding victims of terrorist attacks can influence emotions above that of the information that accompanies them but that threatened respondents are mostly likely to be emotionally affected.

From Figure 6.1 we know that respondents concerned about future terrorism before the experimental treatment were significantly more likely to support a range of militaristic policies and to evaluate the government's handling of terrorism more positively. To test the hypothesis that high threat respondents should be especially likely to support hawkish policy when exposed to threatening news, Table 6.1 displays respondents' mean attitudes on the dependent variables described above (militarism, spending, approval of the government's handling of terrorism, support for military action in Sudan, and approval of the Iraq war) by respondents' level of threat as well as experimental condition. Consistent with the findings from the NES panelists, low threat subjects are unresponsive to both the messages and the presentation of television news, with the exception of the decision to send troops versus aid to Sudan. While subjects unconcerned about terrorism are no more likely to support hawkish policy in the treatment conditions than in the control condition across 4 of the 5 dependent variables, low threat subjects in the scary visuals condition actually adopt a more dovish position

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than respondents in the neutral visuals condition. While 26 percent of low threat respondents in the neutral visuals condition preferred sending troops to fight terrorism in Sudan rather than send humanitarian aid, only 13 percent of those in the scary visuals condition. This move toward the dovish direction suggests that the imagery associated with terrorism may not automatically be associated with hawkish policy outcomes. Terrorism in Sudan and the Darfur situation are not salient issues closely associated with the War on Terror, meaning that the threatening imagery may easily sway respondent to support a variety of positions, including dovish positions. While it is possible that low threat respondents rejected the emotional content in the scary visuals condition and moved away from its message, it seems unlikely since this pattern is only found on the Sudan measure.

If threatening information about terrorism alone affected attitudes, then support for hawkish policies should be equal in the neutral visuals and scary visuals condition. Figure 6.2 displays the mean foreign policy attitudes for high threat respondents by condition. The upward movement from the neutral visuals condition to the scary visuals condition suggests that emotional imagery increased hawkishness above the impact of the information about further terrorism. In contrast to low threat respondents unmoved by either information or emotion, high threat respondents react to the threatening information and emotional imagery by supporting increasingly more militant foreign policy. Compared to respondents who watched the Wave of Terrorism story sans the emotional imagery, respondents in the scary visuals condition are significantly more supportive of military means of solving international problems by .07 ($p<.08$), prefer more spending on areas such as defense and border security by .09 ($p<.02$), rate the

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government's handling of terrorism more positively by .06 ($p<.07$), and a larger percentage of respondents prefer to send troops to Sudan rather than foreign aid by .11 ($p<.06$). Although high threat subjects are more supportive of the Iraq war than low threat subjects, the experimental treatments failed to increase support for the war among those high in threat. Twenty-seven percent of high threat respondents in the control condition agreed or strongly agreed that the Iraq war was "worth the cost", compared with 33 percent in the neutral visuals and 32 percent in the scary visuals condition. Watching one news story about potential terrorist attacks that included sensational, emotion-inducing imagery increased support for a variety of militaristic policies, although the story was not enough to affect respondents' ingrained positions on the Iraq war.

As another way to compare the effect of the experimental treatments on attitudes, Figure 6.3 shows the differences in means between the treatments and the 95 percent confidence interval around the differences. This figure allows a comparison of the treatment effects on all foreign policy measures for all respondents. The black circles represent the differences in attitudes between respondents in the neutral visuals condition and the control condition, and the white open diamonds represent the differences in opinion between the scary visuals condition and the neutral visuals condition. Movements in a hawkish direction are shown to the right of the vertical dotted line while movements toward the dovish end appear to the left of the line. The low threat figure reveals that there is no real pattern to the effects of the Wave of Terrorism story. For some attitude measures, there is no effect at all of watching either version of the Wave of Terror story. For the spending index measure and the Sudan measures, though, the neutral visuals seems to move respondents in a hawkish direction while the same story with emotional

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imagery moves respondents away from the story's message, although the difference is only significant for the Sudan measure. In contrast, among high threat respondents, the neutral visuals condition causes more hawkish attitudes on 4 of the dependent variables (although not significantly) while the scary visuals condition moves attitudes even more in the hawkish direction. Although not all of the differences are significant, this pattern suggests that threatening media content may be able to increase hawkishness but that the most powerful effects from television news comes from stories that utilize emotional presentations. On the whole, the scary visuals condition has a fairly strong and consistent effect on attitudes among those respondents high in threat while the neutral visuals condition does not.

Within subjects analysis

As the previous section demonstrates, the scary visuals condition led high threat subjects to take more hawkish positions than respondents in the other treatment groups. This between-subjects design allows for inferences about the average effect of the treatment, but the design of the Threat Experiment also allows for a within subjects analysis. Subjects answered 3 questions both before and after the experimental treatments – views on how the government should solve international problems, through diplomatic or militaristic means, how the federal government should adjust the level of defense spending, and presidential approval, although the post-test measure is an evaluation of the president's handling of terrorism while the pre-test measure is general approval. We can then look at how responses to these questions change as a function of pre-existing threat perception and exposure to the experimental treatments. Table 6.2 shows the percentage of respondents who took a hawkish position both prior to and after the experimental

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treatment. Respondents who answered that the government should increase defense and use the military to solve international problems are considered to take the hawkish position as well as respondents who approve or strongly approve of George W. Bush's handling of the presidency since the president is a clear advocate of hawkish foreign policy. Since threat level is such a strong determinant of foreign policy views, the table breaks respondents down by prior level of threat. Significantly more high threat respondents took a hawkish position on the general foreign policy dimension ($p<.01$) and approved of the president's handling of terrorism after viewing the treatments ($p<.01$). The presidential approval measure should be interpreted with caution since general approval is usually lower than terrorism approval. For example, in an Oct 2006 Gallup poll, 46 percent of people approved of the president's handling of terrorism while only 38 percent of the public approved of his job handling generally. With this caveat in mind, it is worth noting that high threat respondents are much more likely to adopt a more hawkish attitude after the treatments than to move in a dovish direction. When reminded of foreign affairs through the experimental treatments and through answering a series of questions about terrorism, 38 percent of all respondents who originally disapproved or strongly disapproved of the president moved to approve of the president while only 8 percent who originally approved said that they disapproved. In addition, of the 280 respondents who said in the pre-test militarism question that the best way to ensure peace was through diplomacy and negotiations, 30 percent switched to take a more hawkish position the treatments, while only 3 percent of high threat respondents who took the hawkish position in the pre-test switched to the take the dovish position.

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This analysis can also inform us whether high threat respondents simply updated their foreign policy views in a more hawkish direction as a result of answering multiple questions about terrorism and foreign policy. It may be the case that the survey instrument primed feelings of threat and thus increased support for hawkish attitudes; however, if this were the case then equal numbers of respondents within each condition would switch to the more hawkish position. Table 6.3 displays the percentage of respondents in each condition who switched their foreign policy positions in one direction or another after viewing their assigned news story. Subjects who took the same position before and after the treatment are excluded from this analysis, so the rows will not equal 100 percent.

Table 6.3 demonstrates that high threat respondents were significantly more likely to switch from a pre-test dovish position to a post-test hawkish position than vice versa. Additionally, the table shows that respondents in the scary visuals condition are more likely to switch to a more hawkish position on the post-test on the diplomacy-militarism scale ($p<.07$) and presidential approval ($p<.09$) than respondents in the control group. In turn, watching the scary visuals condition also lessened respondents' tendency to switch from the hawkish position to the dovish position on the militarism question, in comparison with respondents in either the control ($p<.01$) or neutral visuals condition ($p<.04$). The scary visuals condition did increase hawkishness on the post-test measure more than the control condition, yet respondents in the control condition were also more likely to switch from being doves to hawks than vice versa. This tendency of all high threat respondents, regardless of experimental condition, to become more hawkish over

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the course of the experiment indicates that the survey instrument itself may have caused some of the movement in the hawkish direction.

All together, the within subjects analysis demonstrates that the scary visuals condition led subjects concerned about terrorism to adopt attitudes significantly more hawkish attitudes than their original foreign policy attitudes and marginally more hawkish attitudes than respondents in the neutral visuals condition. This analysis adds more evidence that the emotion added by the scary visuals condition increased hawkishness over only the information provided by the neutral visuals condition.

Beyond the water's edge: Partisan differences in foreign policy attitudes

One of the major findings that emerges from Table 6.2 and Figure 6.3 is that media exposure does not affect foreign policy attitudes directly but does so through moderating the influence of threat on policy attitudes. If media matter on its own, then the experimental conditions should increase hawkishness among all respondents rather than only among those already concerned about terrorism. This may not be surprising considering that respondents came into the experiment after exposure to 5 years worth of threatening stories on the news and had well-formed perceptions of threat based on prior experiences. Respondents who were still concerned about terrorism were more willing to accept threatening messages and reacted especially to the extra dose of threatening information and emotion in the scary visuals message. Figure 6.1 and Table 6.1 offer evidence that threat does increase hawkishness and the effect of threat is greatest under the conditions where respondents watch threatening terrorism stories with a frightening presentation.

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The question remains, though, whether the threatening terrorism stories affected all high threat respondents in the same way. In 2002, television news exposure affected Independents and Democrats more than Republicans, but the fractious political climate surrounding the War on Terror in 2006 differed drastically from the more unified public in 2002. In an environment where terrorism is more politicized, Democrats and Independents may be unwilling to adjust their foreign policy opinions in light of one additional news story, particularly when the story employs imagery so tied to policies with which they generally disagree. In a polarized political environment, partisanship will influence whether a citizen accepts a foreign policy frame in part or as a whole; that is, whether citizens will accept the problem definition as well as the remedy. If citizens believe that the frame's remedy is incorrect or if the emotional language or imagery is no longer congruent with the message for the individual, then we may expect some citizens to be unresponsive to the frame.

Given that the issues of terrorism and foreign policy were highly politicized by 2006, threatening news stories may not cause all partisans to support hawkish foreign policy. There may be a political limit on how effective threatening stories are in persuading the public to support hawkish policies. To the extent that the stories and images of terrorism became associated with particular types of policies that respondents may not approve of (i.e. hawkish policies proposed by a Republican president), then these messages may lose their power to persuade individuals to prefer hawkishness. *If this were true, then the effect of references to 9/11 should decrease over time among Democrats and Independents as they begin to reject the terror messages themselves as well as the policies.* However, it may be the case that terrorism messages may lose their effect on

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policy attitudes over time and become less powerful for Republicans. *As partisanship becomes a larger determinant of foreign policy attitudes over time, then Republicans may rely less on new information and more on partisanship in forming opinions.* In contrast, the foreign policy views of Democrats and Independents may still be influenced by new information since their attitudes on foreign policy have more room to move toward the hawkish end of the spectrum. As Republicans continue to support the president's policies due to their partisanship, the effect of additional information and emotion will necessarily be smaller. However, as Democrats and Independents began to turn away from hawkish policies due to their partisanship, then exposure to images of terrorism may be effective in moving foreign policy attitudes toward the hawkish end, particularly if those images evoked anxiety.

In order to evaluate whether partisans exposed to the same information reacted similarly, I ran all five of the models separately for Democrats, Independents, and Republicans; the results are presented in Table 6.4. The models look at the effect the treatment conditions on foreign policy attitudes, conditional on threat level and controlling for respondents' baseline level of hawkishness. Of the groups, Republicans are *least* affected by the media stories while Democrats are the *most* affected by threatening information and the threatening visuals. It appears that Republicans in the experiment do not need the threatening information or emotion contained within the media stories in order to support hawkish policies. In fact, the intercept in the Republican models indicate that even Republicans who believe that terrorism is very unlikely take positions close to the hawkish side of the scale. For Republicans, pre-existing threat leads respondents to want more hawkish policy, regardless of the news story they received,

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consistent with the findings from Chapter 5 that Republicans were unmoved to update their threat perception after watching the treatment story. Like Republicans, the attitudes of Independents were not significantly moved in a more militaristic direction after watching the treatments; however, Independents' sense of prior threat increased support for hawkish policy for four of the five dependent variables.

In contrast, the Democrats in this sample are not predisposed to support hawkish foreign policy, yet they reacted to the terrorism story by adopting significantly more hawkish general foreign policy views as well as attitudes toward Iraq. In a pre-test measure, only 8 percent of Democrats agreed with the assessment that the best way to ensure peace was through the military while 92 percent agreed that diplomacy would ensure peace. Given this predisposition toward more dovish policy, the media treatments had more room to modify attitudes among Democrats. Democrats in the scary visuals condition preferred the use of the military to negotiations in foreign affairs and approved more strongly of the Iraq war than Democrats in the control condition. In addition, threatened Democrats in the scary visuals condition are also more approving of the government's handling of terrorism and prefer to spend more money on defense and the War on Terror than respondents in the control condition, although the interaction terms just miss statistical significance at the $p<.10$ level. Although we saw in the previous chapter that some Democrats dismissed the scary visuals condition as manipulative and adjusted their threat perception in the opposite direction as the news story, the emotional content of the news story nevertheless pushed Democrats to support more hawkish foreign policy generally. The scary visuals condition also increased the probability that Democrats said that the war in Iraq was worth the cost. In a 2006 Pew survey, 61 percent

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of Democrats supported an immediate withdrawal of American troops in Iraq, but the results of these models demonstrate that Democrats still concerned about terrorism in 2006 were likely to take more hawkish attitudes when exposed to news stories that hyped the threat of terrorism.

Figure 6.4 illustrates that the media treatments had quite different effects on the partisan groups, suggesting that, in the area of foreign affairs, the adage that "politics stops at the water's edge" no longer applies. Not only does politics influence the type of foreign policy that citizens desire from government, but politics also shapes how citizens interpret media messages and apply that information to their preferences. Figure 6.4 displays the regression coefficients and confidence intervals from the militarism and foreign policy spending models shown in Table 6.4. The black circles represent the coefficients for Democrats, the open-circles represent Independents, and the Republican coefficients are represented by crosses. Positive coefficients are to the right of the horizontal dashed line while negative coefficients are to the left of the line. The figure shows that neither the neutral visuals condition nor the scary visuals condition significantly increased support for hawkish policy among respondents low in threat.

Among high threat respondents, the figures reveal that the neutral visuals condition did not have a consistent effect on attitudes. The neutral visuals condition either had no effect or a slightly negative effect on the attitudes of high threat Democrats and Republicans. However, among Independents, the neutral visuals condition increased support for militarism but decreased support of spending compared to the control condition.

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This figure also reveals that the scary visuals condition increased hawkishness among high threat Democrats. Despite pre-existing attitudes that were quite dovish and despite explicitly considering the Wave of Terror story to be manipulative, Democrats high in threat were moved to update some of their fundamental foreign policy attitudes as a result of the emotionally-laden news story in the scary visuals condition. The effect of threatening terrorism news is strongest among those respondents most disinclined to support hawkish policy – Democrats, 47 percent of whom indicated support for isolationism and only 15 percent of whom wanted to increase defense spending in the pre-test. This implies that the emotional content of the news may influence consumers' views below awareness or even despite respondents' preferences.

Conclusion

Terrorism is newsworthy because it is timely, sensational, and novel, and it is covered extensively by the news media (Gans 1979). In the years following the 9/11 attacks, television broadcasts increasingly focused on terrorism and war related stories, and the stories themselves focused on the threatening aspects of events more than the reassuring aspects. Events that increase feelings of insecurity are given greater press time and attention than events that signal security such as lowering of the threat color level (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2007). This chapter demonstrates that emotive, threatening news coverage moves parts of American public in a more hawkish direction – increasing support for militant foreign policy, up to and including war - among those people concerned about future terrorism. Citizens concerned about terrorism are affected both by exposure to varying amounts of threatening news, as evidenced by the NES results, as well as by exposure to particularly threatening presentations of terrorism

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stories, as evidenced by the experimental results in this chapter. Consistent with findings from previous chapters, this chapter also shows that certain Americans are not moved either by the information that terrorism is likely or by emotional, visual reminders the costs of terrorism. When individuals who rejected the argument that a terrorist attack was likely in the near future watched another terrorism news story, these low threat people were unmoved to suddenly become more threatened or to adopt foreign policy attitudes in line with the story's message. However, among the majority of citizens who accept that terrorism is likely, the emotionally laden news story had a profound effect on their attitudes.

The experiment demonstrates that more than 5 years after the 9/11 attacks, exposure to a single terrorism story led high threat respondents to prefer more hawkish types of foreign policy when the story presented both a threatening message and threatening presentation. What makes this finding especially striking is that in the years since 9/11, American citizens saw frequent news stories about terrorism and presumably had stored knowledge and beliefs about counter-terrorism policy. Equally remarkable is the fact that even though the public is both interested and knowledgeable about terrorism, watching one more frightening terrorism story significantly influenced attitudes of high threat respondents, particularly those of Democrats. Democrats were more affected by the scary visuals condition than either Republicans or Independents even though some Democrats rejected the news story for being manipulative.

Issues of war and peace are fundamental to democracy, and this chapter reveals the conditions under which the mass public will support the use of force overseas. In addition, the chapter outlines how the media play a role in convincing parts of the some

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members of the public to support different policies than they otherwise might. Coming into the experiment, Democrats supported relatively dovish foreign policy, but when Democrats worried about terrorism watched an emotionally powerful reminder about terrorism, they wanted the government to pursue more hawkish policy. While respondents high in threat adopted significantly more hawkish attitudes after watching the scary visuals condition than the control condition, these findings should also provided some relief to those concerned about the unchecked power of fear to adulterate the public's attitudes on foreign policy and war. Emotion did alter some respondents' attitudes, but the largest effect was on individuals open to the threatening messages in the treatment conditions, suggesting that people can rely on mechanisms such as denying the threat of terrorism to cope with threatening news.

Classic theories of democracy demand that the populace base decisions on information more than emotion. However, it is clear that emotional, shocking news can affect foreign policy attitudes even when parts of the public recognize and outwardly reject the emotional content. In *Toward Perpetual Peace,* Immanuel Kant argues that once elites need the consent of the governed to engage in war, war will be less likely. If the media can activate citizens' sense of impending danger and thereby increase support for punitive policies, my findings imply that when political leaders use the right images and trumpet the right threatening message, war may be quite likely in a republic, even when a citizenry with more information and less emotion may have chosen otherwise.

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Table 6.1: Mean attitudes by experimental condition and threat level

	Low threat (N=554)			High threat (N=674)		
	Control	Neutral visuals	Scary visuals	Control	Neutral visuals	Scary visuals
Militarism	0.33	0.35	0.35	0.68	0.71	0.78*
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Approval of gov'ts Handling of terrorism	0.32	0.34	0.31	0.40	0.39	0.45*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Foreign policy spending	0.19	0.24	0.19	0.54	0.49	0.58*
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Sudan - support for troops, not aid	0.20	0.26	0.13*	0.34	0.32	0.43*
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Iraq war worth cost	0.21	0.20	0.20	0.39	0.43	0.42
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)

Source: 2006 Threat experiment. Responses with an asterisk are significantly different from the neutral visuals condition at $p<.10$. Weighted standard errors are in parentheses.

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Table 6.2 Percent of respondents taking the hawkish position (within subjects)

	Hawk (pre-test)	Militarism (post-test)		Defense spending (pre-test)	Defense spending (post-test)		Presidential approval – general (pre-test)	Presidential approval – terrorism (post-test)	
Low threat	20.51	29.42		25.45	24.17		19.02	22.02	
High threat	43.71	68.63	p<.01	55.56	55.67	ns	43.52	48.36	p<.01

Source: 2006 Threat Experiment. Low threat respondents said that a terrorist attack was "unlikely" or "very unlikely" in the pre-test threat measure while high threat respondents said that terrorism was "likely" or "very likely" in the next year. Respondents were considered to take the hawkish position on the militarism question if they answered that the U.S. should use the military to solve international problems (militarism) or that the best way to ensure peace was through the military (hawk). Respondents taking the hawkish position on the defense spending question were considered to be hawkish if they thought that the federal government should "spend more" on defense, and respondents approving or strongly approving of the president generally and his handling of terrorism were considered to take the hawkish position.

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Table 6.3 Percent of high threat respondents who switched positions

	Militarism		Defense spending		Presidential approval	
	Dove to Hawk	Hawk to Dove	Dove to Hawk	Hawk to Dove	Dove to Hawk	Hawk to Dove
Control	51.69	12.00	63.92	4.84	9.6	4.35
Neutral	51.52	10.00	59.26	3.42	12.7	3.13
Scary	62.70	2.94	70.53	0.00	10.32	1.94
N	280	275	139	375	379	292

Source: 2006 Threat Experiment. For the militarism question, respondents who took the "negotiations and diplomacy" position in the pre-test question and then took the middle position or higher on the 7-point diplomacy/militarism scale are considered hawkish switchers. Respondents who took the position of "spend less" or "keep the same" on defense spending were considered dovish and were considering switchers in the hawkish direction if they took the "keep the same" position or higher if they answered "spend less" or "spend more" position if they took the "keep the same position" in the pre-test. Respondents who took the "disapprove" or "disapprove strongly" position in the pre-test and the "approve" or "approve strongly" position in the post-test were considered to be switchers in the hawkish direction.

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Table 6.4: Effect of experimental treatments on foreign policy attitudes, by PID

	Democrats					Independents				
	Militarism	Foreign policy spending	Approval of gov'ts handling terrorism	Sudan (troops, not aid)	Iraq worth the cost	Militarism	Foreign policy spending	Approval of gov'ts handling terrorism	Sudan (troops, not aid)	Iraq worth the cost
Hawkishness	**0.35**	**0.38**	**0.31**	**2.28**	**0.28**	**0.40**	**0.39**	**0.34**	**2.11**	**0.37**
	(0.05)	(0.11)	(0.08)	(0.50)	(0.045)	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.48)	(0.05)
Scary visuals	-0.08	-0.06	-0.11	0.70	-0.05	-0.03	-0.01	0.08	**-1.96**	-0.01
	(0.05)	(0.13)	(0.07)	(0.47)	(0.04)	(0.08)	(0.16)	(0.10)	(1.12)	(0.09)
Neutral visuals	-0.02	0.18	0.05	0.46	-0.03	**-0.13**	0.09	0.00	0.37	-0.02
	(0.06)	(0.12)	(0.07)	(1.13)	(0.04)	(0.08)	(0.18)	(0.12)	(0.65)	(0.07)
Threat perception	**0.18**	**0.43**	**-0.20**	**1.48**	0.00	0.11	**0.47**	-0.15	-1.25	0.15
	(0.09)	(0.17)	(0.11)	(0.39)	(0.06)	(0.14)	(0.23)	(0.13)	(1.22)	(0.12)
Scary * Threat	**0.28**	0.37	0.21	0.02	**0.13**	0.11	-0.10	0.03	**4.92**	0.07
	(0.12)	(0.24)	(0.13)	(0.85)	(0.07)	(0.18)	(0.30)	(0.20)	(2.35)	(0.16)
Neutral * Threat	0.03	-0.37	-0.09	-0.75	0.11	0.24	-0.22	0.00	0.54	0.09
	(0.13)	(0.24)	(0.14)	(1.91)	(0.08)	(0.17)	(0.30)	(0.21)	(1.38)	(0.14)
Constant	**0.22**	**-0.18**	**0.20**	**-3.12**	**0.06**	**0.30**	0.06	**0.23**	**-1.18**	**0.06**
	(0.04)	(0.09)	(0.06)	(0.25)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.14)	(0.07)	(0.35)	(0.06)
N	523	523	524	292	524	270	271	271	103	271
R^2	0.26	0.12	0.10	0.41	0.21	0.44	0.21	0.17	0.38	0.36

Source: 2006 Threat Experiment. Model specification: OLS (with robust standard errors), Probit (Sudan model). Bold coefficients are significant at p<.10. Dependent variables are scaled from 0 to 1 with higher values indicating more hawkishness, except foreign policy spending, which is scaled -1 (spend less), 0 (spend the same), 1 (spend more). Independent variables are also scored from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating more threat and hawkishness (pre-test).

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Table 6.4: Effect of experimental treatments on foreign policy attitudes, by PID, cont.

	Republicans				
	Militarism	Foreign policy spending	Approval of gov'ts handling terrorism	Sudan (troops, not aid)	Iraq worth the cost
Hawkishness	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.20**	**1.41**	**0.19**
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.32)	(0.04)
Scary visuals	0.00	0.04	-0.08	-0.40	0.03
	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.82)	(0.10)
Neutral visuals	0.06	0.11	-0.01	0.78	-0.01
	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.79)	(0.11)
Threat perception	**0.21**	**0.48**	**-0.19**	0.72	**0.21**
	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.77)	(0.11)
Scary * Threat	0.06	-0.02	0.19	0.53	-0.01
	(0.11)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(1.19)	(0.15)
Neutral * Threat	-0.01	-0.17	0.00	-1.15	0.05
	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.17)	(1.26)	(0.17)
Constant	**0.45**	**0.23**	**0.63**	**-1.25**	**0.32**
	(0.05)	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.54)	(0.07)
N	416	416	416	154	416
R^2	0.33	0.24	0.10	0.19	0.15

Source: 2006 Threat Experiment. Model specification: OLS (with robust standard errors), Probit (Sudan model). Bold coefficients are significant at p<.10. Dependent variables are scaled from 0 to 1 with higher values indicating more hawkishness, except foreign policy spending, which is scaled -1 (spend less), 0 (spend the same), 1 (spend more). Independent variables are also scored from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating more threat and hawkishness (pre-test).

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Figure 6.1 Threat increases support for hawkish policy

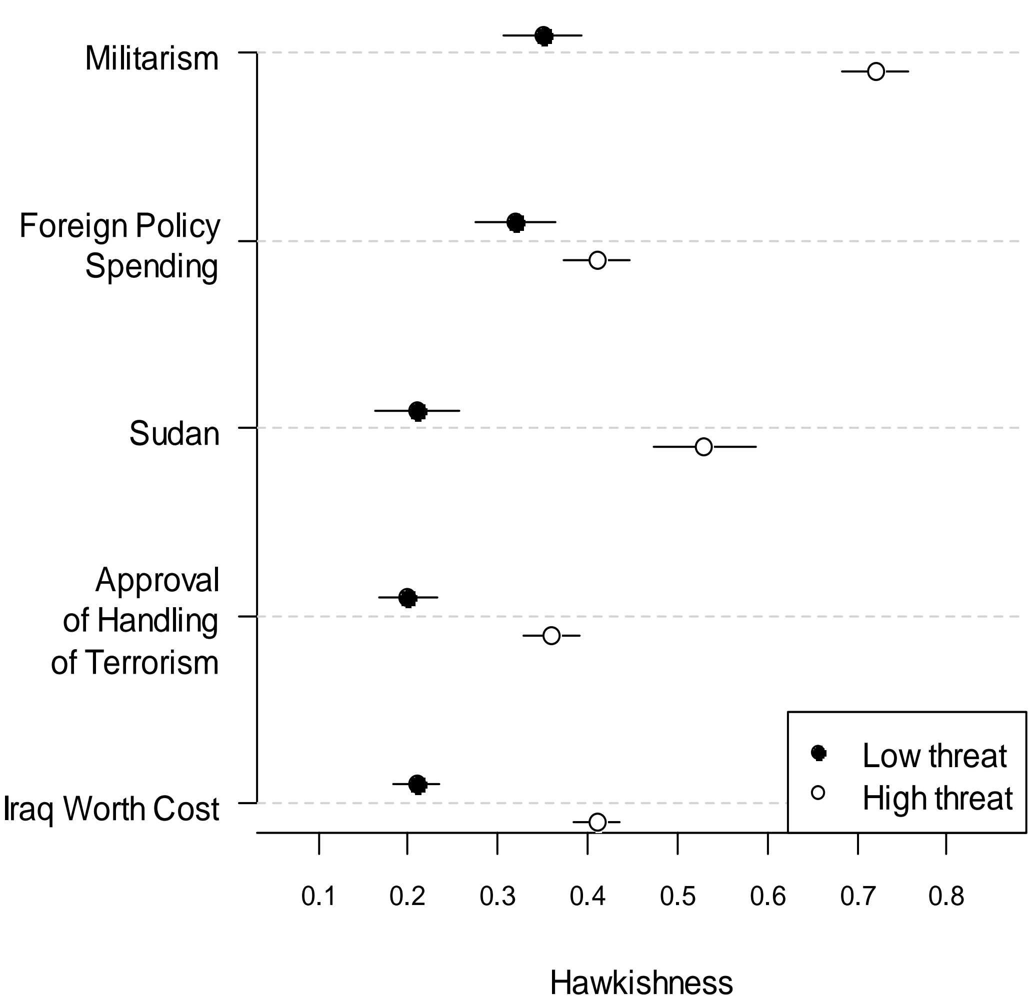

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Figure 6.2: Foreign policy attitudes for high threat respondents

Militarism attitudes

Effect of exposure to threating news

.3 .4 .5 .6 .7 .8

Control | Neutral visuals | Scary visuals

Experimental condition

Source: Polimetrix experiment

Foreign policy spending

Effect of exposure to threating news

.3 .4 .5 .6 .7 .8

Control | Neutral visuals | Scary visuals

Experimental condition

High threat respondents

Willingness to send troops to Sudan

Effect of exposure to threating news

.3 .4 .5 .6 .7 .8

Control | Neutral visuals | Scary visuals

Experimental condition

Source: Polimetrix experiment

Iraq worth cost

Effect of exposure to threating news

.3 .4 .5 .6 .7 .8

Control | Neutral visuals | Scary visuals

Experimental condition

High threat respondents

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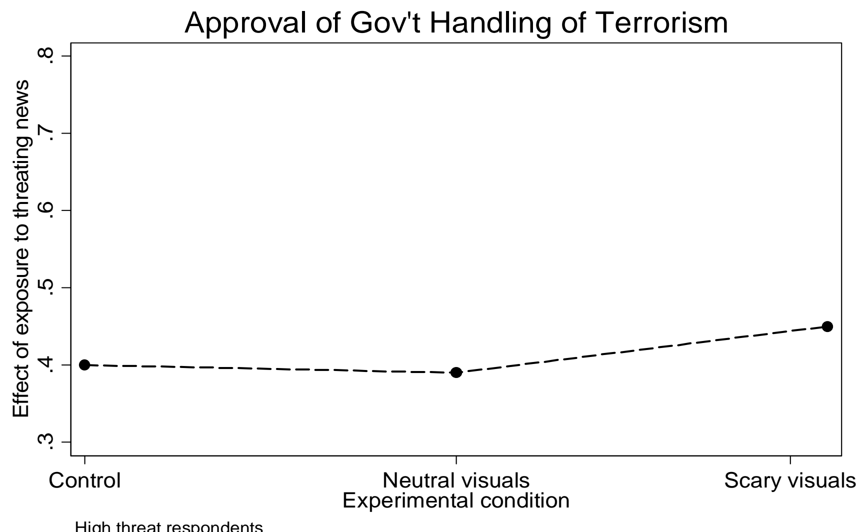

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Figure 6.3: Scary visuals condition increases hawkishness among high threat respondents

Militarism
Foreign Policy Spending
Sudan
Approval of Handling of Terrorism
Iraq Worth Cost

Diff(Neutral-Control)
Diff(Scary-Neutral)

-0.5 -0.4 -0.3 -0.2 -0.1 0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4

Hawkishness

LOW THREAT RESPONDENTS

Militarism
Foreign Policy Spending
Sudan
Approval of Handling of Terrorism
Iraq Worth Cost

Diff(Neutral-Control)
Diff(Scary-Neutral)

-0.4 -0.3 -0.2 -0.1 0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5

Hawkishness

HIGH THREAT RESPONDENTS

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Figure 6.4: Democrats' attitudes most affected by scary visuals condition

Militarism attitudes

Foreign policy spending attitudes

Hawkishness

Threat perception

Scary visuals condition

Neutral visuals condition

Scary x Threat

Neutral x Threat

Constant

Dem

Ind

Rep

-1 0 1

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Chapter 7: Terror at the Ballot Box: The Electoral Consequences of Foreign Policy Attitudes

"If we do go to war in Iran, the election will indeed be a referendum on the results, which the Republican Party will own no matter whom it nominates for president."
– Frank Rich

"I listened to Kerry, and he speaks very well. But Bush is good at fighting."

– New Jersey voter, 2004

Elections are the clearest mechanism for accountability in American democracy. The rest of this project sheds light on the process by which citizens form their foreign policy attitudes, and the role of this chapter is to illuminate the consequences of those attitudes in the voting booth. If it is the case that elites or the media can persuade the public to support more hawkish types of foreign policy, then we may wonder what the effect of those subsequent attitudes is on elites' electoral fortunes. Is there an incentive for elites to send threatening messages about terrorism and foreign policy so that citizens throw support behind the candidate making the threatening appeals? Was George W. Bush served well by ads in the 2004 election that had subtle visuals references to the ruins of the World Trade Center? Did Hillary Clinton's "3 A.M" ad win her votes in the Texas primary by playing on fears of terrorism?

The past several chapters demonstrated that individuals' views on terrorism and exposure to mass media coverage of terrorism influence attitudes toward foreign policy. The more threatened people feel because of terrorism, the more hawkish their attitudes become, particularly among those people exposed to frightening media coverage of terrorism. Although understanding the effect of the mass media and individual predisposition on public opinion is an important substantive question in and of itself, the question also arises whether foreign policy attitudes affect broader political outcomes

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such as evaluations of the political parties and voting. If foreign policy attitudes do not have political consequences, that is, if citizens do not ultimately connect their opinions about foreign policy to political decisions such as voting, then how those attitudes are structured or whether those attitudes are malleable may be less important in the grand scheme of politics. If citizens have foreign policy attitudes but do not connect those views to their voting decisions or demands for policy action, then these attitudes are not politically consequential. Yet this chapter reveals that citizens' foreign policy views are politically consequential in the voting booth but that citizens may not always choose representatives who share their own foreign policy preferences.

This chapter argues that foreign policy attitudes do affect voters' decisions and that there are strategic incentives for both Democratic and Republican candidates to take hawkish positions in order to gain votes in a time of threat. The rest of the chapter proceeds by demonstrating that foreign policy attitudes do affect vote choices as well as how citizens evaluate the president and the Republican and Democratic parties. The chapter then describes asymmetries in the way that voters use foreign policy attitudes. For example, voters rely more on foreign policy in rating Republicans than Democrats. Lastly, the chapter discusses the incentives that candidates face in taking positions on foreign policy.

Waltzing before a blind audience?

Early literature on public opinion implied that foreign policy attitudes should hardly matter for political behavior since the public tended to know very little about foreign policy and foreign policy attitudes were generally unstructured and found to oscillate based on "moods" and events (Almond 1950; Lippmann 1922). Almond

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theorized that the nature of foreign policy itself made it difficult to form opinions. In particular, he argued that three facets of national security policy put a strain on the public's ability to form sensible opinions – the technical nature of security issues, the gravity of the issues themselves (e.g. life and death), and the secrecy that withholds much of the information that may be necessary to form an informed position. While it is true that the public is generally less informed about foreign affairs than domestic affairs (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), and portions of the public may actually be misinformed about specific foreign policy facts (Kull, Ramsay, and Lewis 2003), that does not preclude voters from using their foreign policy views as a basis for their vote choice, particularly when elections make those attitudes salient.

More recent literature finds not only that Americans' foreign policy attitudes are structured, meaningful, and accessible (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Richman et al 1997; Wittkopf 1990), but that foreign policy opinions influence presidential approval (Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002), presidential vote choice (Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989; Berinsky 2007; forthcoming), and may even influence foreign policy itself some of the time (Bartels 1991b; Page and Shapiro 1983). Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson demonstrate that when citizens judge the president, they factor in foreign policy events at about the same rate as domestic events and shocks (2003, 48-57). Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida (1989) find that the public possesses cognitively accessible attitudes about foreign affairs, perceives clear differences between the parties on those issues and uses these attitudes to vote for president. From a different scholarly perspective, the two presidency thesis argues that the president maintains more institutional power in the foreign policy domain than in domestic affairs and will therefore be blamed or rewarded

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more than Congressional actors for foreign policy (Wildavsky 1966; Canes-Wrone 2006; Canes-Wrone, Howell, and Lewis 2008). Canes-Wrone, Howell, and Lewis (2008) argue that the electoral incentives of the presidency encourage the president to maintain more control over foreign affairs since he is most clearly responsible for the nation's security and will be judged on the basis of foreign policy at election time. If the president does have an institutional advantage on foreign policy, then this theory implies that foreign policy is a policy domain that citizens can and should use for accountability. In other words, foreign policy attitudes are a legitimate basis for evaluating and choosing a president.

Foreign policy views mattered substantially in George W. Bush's re-election in 2004, more so than did prominent domestic issues such as gay marriage (Abramowitz 2004; Ansolabehere and Stewart 2005; Hillygus and Shields 2005). Contrary to journalistic reports that moral issues rather than security issues returned Bush to the White House in 2004, Hillygus and Shields (2005) find that opinions about gay marriage and abortion were less important in vote choice than attitudes about terrorism and the war in Iraq even in states that had gay marriage amendments on their ballots. Foreign policy was certainly a salient part of the 2004 campaign: the first presidential debate focused on national security and both candidates stressed foreign policy in their speeches and ads. Voters also counted issues of national security as one of the "most important problems" (MIP) of the past several years. In the 2004 NES, 43 percent of the 1,038 respondents named homeland security/terrorism as the MIP, with another 18.4 mentioning the war in Iraq. In comparison, Abramson et al (2007) find that only 18 percent of respondents named the economy as the biggest problem, demonstrating that foreign affairs dominated

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the agenda in 2004. In the year leading up to the 2004 election, Bush's approval ratings for foreign affairs and the war in Iraq averaged 47 percent in the Gallup poll while his approval rating for his handling of terrorism was significantly higher at 57 percent (Gallup polls Jan 2004-Nov 2004). In the 2004 NES, 64 percent of respondents said that they thought that "strong leader" described George W. Bush either quite or extremely well in comparison to only 53 percent of respondents who rated John Kerry as a "strong leader." Since foreign affairs and particularly the War on Terror were salient in the 2004 election, if voters relied on their foreign policy attitudes, we might expect that foreign policy was a net benefit for Bush's campaign.

While foreign policy did ultimately affect voters' choice for president, the public's foreign policy views did not always increase votes for Bush in the aggregate. The particular issues in the 2004 election, Iraq and the War on Terror, worked at cross-odds in Bush's re-election. While citizens' evaluations of the president on the War on Terror tended to increase Bush's vote share, discomfort with the Iraq war tended to depress votes for Bush (Abramson et al 2007; Karol and Miguel 2007; Weisberg and Christenson 2007). Foreign policy may not matter equally in all presidential elections, but foreign policy opinions and evaluations helped Bush edge out Kerry in 2004, even if Bush's margin of victory was smaller than expected due to disapproval of the Iraq war (Abramson et al 2007).

Did foreign policy attitudes increase Bush's approval?

Although previous literature establishes that foreign policy may matter in presidential elections and did in the 2004 election, this literature assumes that citizens utilize foreign policy attitudes equally in evaluating candidates regardless of the

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partisanship of voters and the partisanship of the candidates. In contrast to this view, this chapter reveals that Americans did rely heavily on their foreign policy attitudes in evaluating George Bush and the Republicans, these same attitudes were less powerful determinants of evaluations of Democrats and John Kerry. In addition, this chapter reveals another significant asymmetry ignored by previous scholars – in a threatening environment, Americans reward candidates and parties perceived to hold hawkish positions but even more severely punish candidates perceived to be dovish.

Since foreign policy was a salient aspect of the election and the Bush campaign primed national security considerations, I expect that citizens' foreign policy attitudes significantly shaped both presidential approval and presidential vote choice in 2004. Additionally, I expect that respondents with more hawkish policy preferences will evaluate the president more positively than more dovish respondents, since the president's positions on foreign policy are closer to the hawkish end of the scale. Americans' views on foreign affairs did substantially affect how much they approved of George W. Bush's job performance in 2004, and citizens with hawkish views approved highly of the president while more dovish respondents strongly disapproved.

To evaluate the magnitude and substantive impact of foreign policy attitudes on presidential approval, I modeled the impact of respondents' foreign policy attitudes on general approval of the president and approval of the president's handling of terrorism in 2004 using the 2000-2002-2004 NES panel study. In 2004, the average presidential approval rate in the NES was 52 percent for general job performance and 55 percent for handling of the War on Terror. Both types of presidential approval are highly correlated with vote choice in 2004 with correlations of .77 for general job performance and .88 for

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performance on terrorism. Respondents who voted for Bush in 2004 rated his job performance significantly higher than those who voted for John Kerry. Among Bush voters, approval of the president's handling of his job and the war on terror were almost unanimous – 96 percent of Bush voters approved or strongly approved generally of his job handling and 96 percent also approved of Bush's job performance on the War on Terror. In contrast, only 10 percent of Kerry voters approved of Bush's handling of the presidency and 25 percent approved of his handling of terrorism. Clearly presidential approval matters for voting, thus, if foreign policy affects approval ratings, these attitudes matter as well for vote choice.

In order to test the effect of foreign policy attitudes on presidential approval, I leveraged the panel structure of the data and modeled respondents' attitudes toward foreign policy in 2002 on their approval of Bush's general job performance and his handling of the War on Terror in 2004 using OLS. The dependent variables are two versions of presidential approval - whether respondents approved or disapproved of the way that George W. Bush was handling "his job as president" and the "war on terror." The approval measures are scaled to vary between 0 (strongly disapprove) to 1 (strongly approve), and all independent variables are scaled to vary between 0 and 1 unless otherwise noted. The regressions model presidential approval as a function of foreign policy opinions as well as partisanship, ideology, respondents' evaluations of the economy, gender, race, age, and political knowledge. Partisanship and ideology were measured in 2000 and are scaled such that higher values indicate more Republican and conservative. Gender and race were also measured in 2000 and are indicator variables for whether a respondent is female and African-American. Political knowledge was

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measured in 2000 and is operationalized as the interviewer's rating of a respondents' knowledge, with higher values indicating more political knowledge. Respondents' evaluation of whether the economy got better, worse, or stayed the same was also included in the model since presidents are frequently judged on how well the economy performs during their term in office (Fiorina 1981; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002). The economy variable is scaled from -1 to 1, with higher values indicating a more positive outlook on the economy.

The variable of most interest is foreign policy attitudes, which is measured using an index of questions from the 2002 NES that ranges from respondents preferring the government to pursue more dovish policy at the low end of -1 to respondents preferring the government to pursue a more hawkish, militaristic foreign policy at the high end of 1. This foreign policy index is labeled "hawkishness" in the table, and the expectation is that hawkish respondents will approve more strongly of the president than dovish citizens. The major benefit of relying on the panel data is that by using respondents' views on foreign policy from 2 years prior to the election, the concern about endogeneity in their views is lessened. That is, there is less worry that voters simply updated or formed their own foreign policy attitudes to be in line with those of their preferred candidate. Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McKee's work in *Voting* (1954) demonstrated that citizens are willing to adopt their preferred candidate's policy positions as their own and distance themselves from the positions of the candidate they opposed. In 2004, citizens who intended to vote for President Bush may have taken foreign policy positions that they believed were in line with the president's, but it seems less likely that these same

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respondents took their foreign policy positions in 2002 based on who they would vote for in 2004.

All respondents, regardless of their partisan views, evaluated the president more favorably in 2004 if they preferred hawkish policy two years earlier. Table 7.1 presents the results from the models of presidential approval for all panel respondents and then separately by partisanship of the respondent. It may be the case that Democrats and Republicans do not rely on the same types of attitudes when evaluating the president, so the models look separately at how partisans weight foreign policy in their presidential evaluations. Among all respondents, hawkishness significantly increases presidential approval for both general approval and the war on terrorism question. As respondents moved from one standard deviation below the mean on the hawkishness score to one standard deviation above the mean, overall approval of the president increased by .26 points and approval of his handling of terrorism increased by .23 points, or about one-quarter of the approval scale. Foreign policy views influence citizens' evaluations of George W. Bush's presidency, and the effect of foreign policy on presidential approval is 3 times larger than the effect of respondents' views on how well the economy fared in the past several years.

As mentioned above, partisans may not equally weight foreign policy attitudes in evaluating the president, that is, partisanship may condition the effect of foreign policy on their evaluations of the president. Overall levels of presidential approval varied dramatically by party; Republicans overwhelmingly approved of Bush while Democrats evaluated him quite negatively, with Independents falling in the middle. While 22 percent of Democrats and 51 percent of Independents approved of Bush's job performance, 84

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percent of Republicans approved. This massive polarization of approval is unusual by historical terms; in 2004, Bush was more loved by his own partisans and more disliked by members of the other party than any other modern president (Jacobson 2005). However, partisanship may matter not just in determining the level of support individuals give to the president, but also in the types of issues that they use in forming their attitudes. If people have different reasons for identifying as one party over another, they may also use different criteria for judging political leaders. If one person chooses to identify as a Democrat for reasons of social policy and another person choose to identify as a Republicans because of the party's stance on defense and national security, then these two individuals may not rely equally on their foreign policy attitudes in assessing the president. The three columns under each dependent variable display the impact of foreign policy attitudes separately by respondents' partisanship, measured in 2000.[23] While the levels of support for the president differed significantly by party, all partisans seem to rely on foreign policy in forming their approval ratings of the president, although Republicans appear to rely on foreign policy more in evaluating the president. As Democrats, Independents, and Republicans grow more hawkish, they increase their approval of the president significantly; the size of the coefficients range from .23 to .54 and foreign policy is significant in 5 of the 6 partisan models. From these models of presidential approval, it seems clear that the president's approval rating in 2004 benefited from the distribution of hawkishness in the public.

[23] By using the 2000 partisanship measure, these models avoid the possibility that respondents change their partisanship to match their foreign policy views.

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Evaluations of the parties

Foreign policy may have long term consequences on how voters choose and evaluate their leaders beyond simply the Bush-Kerry election of 2004. As citizens preferred more militaristic foreign policy over dovish policy, the more positively they evaluated the Republican party as a whole and the more negatively they rated the Democratic party. In one sense, any evaluation that helps one party ultimately hurts the other, but individuals do not necessarily weight their attitudes equally in evaluating the parties, meaning that certain attitudes may help one party much more than they hurt the other. Figure 7.1 displays the influence of respondents' foreign policy views on how warmly they evaluate the Democratic and Republican parties using feeling thermometers. The figure demonstrates a strong positive relationship between citizens' views on the proper way to pursue foreign policy and their evaluations of the Republican party and a significant but weaker negative relationship between foreign policy views and ratings of the Democratic party. The upper panel of Figure 7.1 shows the effect of 2002 hawkishness attitudes (as defined in the previous section) on evaluations of the parties in 2004 while the lower panel displays the effect of contemporaneous foreign policy attitudes on party evaluations in 2004. As a robustness check and an assurance that the respondents left in four-year, five-wave NES panel by 2004 were not significantly different than the general public, the lower panel uses data from the NES's 2004 cross-sectional study and shows the effect of respondents' position on the 7-point diplomacy-militarism scale in 2004 on their evaluations of the parties.[24] The bottom panel shows a

[24] The diplomacy-militarism scale respondents to place themselves on a 7-point scale of how the United States should "solve international problems", through "diplomacy and other forms of international pressure" at the low end and "military force" at the high end. The hawkishness scale from 2002 and the militarism scale from 2004 are conceptually similar and are structured similarly.

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similar relationship as the top panel although the asymmetry is less apparent. What is striking about the relationship between foreign policy opinion and evaluations of the parties is that citizens rely much more heavily on foreign policy attitudes in evaluating the *Republican* party and Republican candidates than in evaluating *Democrats* and the Democratic party. Voters weigh the same foreign policy attitudes 2-3 times more in evaluating both Bush and the Republican party than in evaluating Kerry and the Democrats.

I argue that the effect of foreign policy attitudes on party evaluations is asymmetrical due in part to issue ownership, but that issue ownership only partially explains this relationship. The theory of issue ownership argues that the parties maintain strategic advantages on some policy areas over other due to the constituency of each party and the record of their incumbents (Petrocik 1996; Simon 2002). This history and record of each party confer a set of long-standing "handling advantages," whereby citizens believe that each party is more capable of enacting policies and managing certain set of issues. Petrocik (1996) argues that campaigns can be understood as an effort to prime owned issues and avoid issues that advantage the other candidate's party. In the issue ownership theory, the goal of an election is not to persuade voters to update their policy views but rather is more of a "marketing" effort whereby candidates stress areas where they are seen as strongest. Simon's (2002) model of issue ownership in a gubernatorial campaign predicts that candidates gain the most votes by emphasizing issues on which they are closest to the median voter. The Republican party typically "owns" the issue of national security (Petrocik 1996, Goble and Holm forthcoming), making national security both an issue on which it is legitimate to evaluate the

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Republican party and one that may advantage the party. Voters may then rely more heavily on foreign policy attitudes to evaluate Republicans than Democrats. Issue ownership implies that in so far as an election is about foreign policy and voters concentrate on foreign policy, Republican candidates should benefit.

Petrocik (1996) argues that the critical difference among elections is what voters are concerned about rather than their policy attitudes, meaning that voters' policy positions themselves are less important in determining who will win an election than knowing which issues are most salient. Yet the case of 2004 implies that despite issue ownership, the salience of foreign policy itself may not always be a net benefit for Republican candidates if the public disagrees with the candidate's performance on national security. Voters' concerns about foreign policy did not automatically translate into votes for Bush; as mentioned, worries about Iraq substantially decreased Bush's vote share (Karol and Miguel 2007). While issue ownership provides a starting point for understanding the asymmetrical relationship between foreign policy attitudes and evaluations of the parties, simply knowing that individuals use foreign policy may only be the first step in explaining vote choice and party evaluations. It is also important to know whether voters' attitudes are close to or far from the candidate's position (Campbell et al 1960).

An alternative reason that some attitudes may matter more for one party than other is that parties may vary in how clear their positions are. To the extent that one party has a clearer position on some issues than the opposing party, citizens may rely more on their attitudes in evaluating the party with the clear positions. For example, if foreign policy position of the Republican party under George W. Bush was clearer and more

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explicit than the position of the Democrats under John Kerry, voters may simply be more able to evaluate the Republican party based on foreign policy. This explanation is compelling, although if this were the case, we would expect the variance in the public's perceptions of the Democrats' foreign policy positions to be larger than the variance in the Republican's position. Respondents in the NES though are not significantly less sure in placing the Democrats than Republicans on the diplomacy-militarism scale. On the 7-point scale, the variance in Democrats' placement is 2.94 and the Republican variance is 2.45 (F = 1.20), which is not significantly different. While it may be the case that there is more variance on some more specific foreign policy attitudes, respondents were equally sure of their placement of the parties on the more general foreign policy dimension.

Both the voters' attitudes and the party's ownership of the issue may matter for how voters evaluate the parties and ultimately for which candidate they choose. Policy attitudes tell the voter whether to evaluate the party more positively or negatively and issue ownership provides information on how much to weigh the issue in relation to other issues. Issue ownership may provide voters a rationale to evaluate the parties; voters may believe that the party that owns national security would be more able to implement foreign policy effectively. It does not need to be the case that voters agree with the position of the Republicans on national security to use it as a basis for evaluating the party. If national security is a large issue in the campaign, then voters may weigh foreign policy attitudes more heavily in their evaluations of the Republican party than the Democratic party regardless of which party's position on national security they share. *This model would suggest that voters should evaluate parties that are closer to their policy attitudes more positively, but that they should weigh national security matters*

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more heavily when evaluating Republicans than Democrats. In the 2004 elections then, dovish voters should feel more warmly toward the Democratic party and John Kerry whereas more hawkish voters should prefer George Bush and the Republican party.

Table 7.2 presents an OLS model of NES panel respondents' evaluations of the Democratic and Republican parties as a function of their foreign policy attitudes, attitudes toward a general services-spending dimension, and demographics. The dependent variables in the models are feeling thermometers from 2004 that asked respondents how warmly they felt toward a number of political actors on a scale from 0 to 100.[25] The Republican thermometer is an additive index of thermometer ratings of George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, and "conservatives". The Democratic thermometer rating is made up of ratings toward Bill Clinton, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Al Gore, John Kerry, and "liberals".[26,27] Both party thermometers range from 0 to 100, with 100 meaning that respondents evaluate the parties positively or alternatively, that they feel

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[25] Generally the NES asks its respondents how warmly they rate "Democrats" and "Republicans" as a part of a list of other groups including "Catholics," "Jews," "liberals" etc, however, Democrats and Republicans were not included in the list of other groups in the 2004 panel study. The panel study did include a number of feeling thermometers about specific political leaders, which I then used to construct a general feeling thermometer about the parties that included the political leaders from that party as well as "liberals" and "conservatives" as appropriate. Both of the indices scaled extremely well; the 6-item Democratic scale had a Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$ while the 3-item Republican scale had a Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$. I also constructed the scales using factor scores from a factor analysis rather than weighing each item equally and the findings using those indices are substantively identical to those presented.

[26] The 2004 NES cross-section included "Democrats" and "Republicans" in their feeling thermometer groups. As a robustness check, I modeled the effect of foreign policy attitudes measured in 2004 on these party thermometers, as shown in Table A-1 in the appendix. These models use two measures of foreign policy attitudes, the diplomacy-militarism scale and an additive index made up of six foreign policy questions measured in 2004. The findings from the NES panel study using the 2002 foreign policy attitudes are robust using the cross-sectional sample; respondents rely on their foreign policy attitudes much more in rating the Republican party than the Democrats. The main difference between the panel results and the cross-sectional results is that while the effect of hawkishness on evaluations of the Democrats is negative in both samples, it is only significant in the panel study.

[27] I also created a Democratic thermometer that included only thermometers of John Kerry, John Edwards, and "liberals" to balance the Democratic and Republican scales. When using the 3-item Democratic scale, the effect of hawkishness on party evaluations was -7.75, compared to -7.62 for the larger Democratic scale. The major difference between the models was a decrease in the strength of partisanship on evaluations. In the shorter scale, partisanship had an effect of -25.15 degrees on evaluations, compared to -31.76 using the fuller Democratic scales.

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“warmly” toward them and 0 indicating a negative or “cold” evaluation of the party. The models also include demographic and political identity variables that may affect how positively respondents rate each party. Partisanship and ideology are measured in 2000; higher values indicate Republican and conservative. The models also include indicators for whether a respondent is African-American or female with the expectation that African-Americans will rate the Democratic party more favorable since more than 80 percent of African-Americans in the NES identified as Democrats. Foreign policy opinion is again captured by the hawkishness index measured in 2002 that varies from -1, where the respondent prefers the most dovish foreign policy to 1, where the respondent prefers hawkish policy like military action in international affairs. Lastly, the models include a measure of respondents’ attitudes about the spending-services trade-off that defines one of the domestic policy differences between the parties. The services variable is a 7-point scale of whether the respondent wants a government that taxes less and provides fewer services (0) or a government that taxes more but provides more services (1) or something in-between.

Foreign policy attitudes significantly influence evaluations of both the Democratic and Republican parties, although respondents give much greater weight to their foreign policy views in rating their feelings about Republicans than Democrats. On average, respondents rated the Democrats 51.6 on the feeling thermometer, close to the neutral point, and rated Republicans significantly higher, at 57 degrees ($p<.01$). As respondents preferred more militaristic foreign policy, the more positively they rated the Republicans and the colder they felt about the Democrats. Holding partisanship, ideology, and spending preferences at their means, a white male who moved from one

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standard deviation below the mean on hawkishness to one standard deviation above the mean felt significantly warmer toward the Republicans by 16 percentage points. In contrast, while this hawkish respondent felt quite warmly toward the Republicans, his response to the Democrats can be more adequately be described as lukewarm. Moving from one standard deviation below the mean of hawkishness to one standard deviation above the mean, this respondent feels cooler toward the Democrats, but only by 5 degrees. On average, the most hawkish voters felt about 30 percentage points warmer toward the Republican party than the Democratic party on a 100 point feeling thermometer, due to the approximately 23 point bump in evaluations of Republicans and the 8 percentage point decrease in evaluations of the Democratic party. To give a sense of the magnitude of this effect, the difference in evaluations of the Republican party between those who voted for George W. Bush in 2004 and those who did not was 41 percentage points. Voters who chose Bush in 2004 gave the Republicans an average feeling thermometer score of 76.9 degrees and while those who did not vote for Bush rated the Republicans quite coldly, with an average thermometer score of 35.1 degrees.

The asymmetrical effect of foreign policy attitudes suggests that while voters weigh foreign policy in their evaluations of the parties, the parties do not have equal incentives to mention foreign policy or try to persuade the public to change their foreign policy attitudes. A more hawkish public helps the Republicans quite a bit and hurts the Democrats, but only by several degrees, which suggests that the Republican party is much better off when the public is hawkish but that the Democrats are only a bit worse off.

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The benefit that the Republican party received from a hawkish public was not unique to the 2004 election. In the 1990s, Americans more willing to use the military in foreign affairs evaluated the Republican party substantially more warmly than the Democrats. The 1992 and 1998 NES surveys included a measure of respondents' opinion about how willing the government should be to use force to solve international problems, from never willing to extremely willing. Respondents most willing to send troops to solve international problems felt 28 degrees more warmly toward the Republican party than the most dovish respondents and 8 degrees cooler toward the Democrats, suggesting that even when a Democrat was Commander-in-Chief, citizens still weighed their foreign policy attitudes more than three times more in evaluating Republicans than Democrats.

One explanation for why voters relied much less on foreign policy attitudes in evaluating the Democrats than the Republicans is that respondents use the spending-services dimension as a basis to evaluate the Democrats much more so than the Republican party. Those people who want the government to provide more services rate the Democrats 8.8 degrees warmer than those who want a lower tax rate and fewer services while those who are the most hawkish rate the Democrats 7.6 degrees cooler than the most dovish respondents. In rating the Democrats, voters rely not on their foreign policy views but also on their domestic policy considerations, yet in evaluating the Republicans in 2004, citizens relied quite heavily on their foreign policy views to the exclusion of other considerations. This suggests that voters used a wider variety of issues to evaluate the Democratic party than the Republican party in 2004, and to the extent that the public became more hawkish, it benefited the Republican party and George W. Bush. The question remains though whether partisans rely on their foreign policy attitudes

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equally in rating their own party and the other party. Is it simply the case that foreign policy only matters to Republican voters and that other voters rely on other criteria to rate the parties?

Partisans all weighed their foreign policy views in evaluating the parties, with Republican voters relying on their foreign policy attitudes most heavily. Figure 7.2 displays the influence of partisans' foreign policy attitudes on their feeling thermometer ratings of the parties in 2004. This figure comes from the partisan models in Table 7.3. Partisans varied how much they weighted foreign policy in their evaluations of the Democrats, but they did not differ significantly in how much they relied on foreign policy in rating the Republican party. All partisans felt more warmly toward the Republicans as they grew more hawkish; the effect size ranged from 20.8 degrees for Independents to 29.9 degrees for Republicans but did not significantly differ between the groups. Republican respondents downgraded the Democratic party by 15.8 degrees as they grew more hawkish and grew warmer toward the Republican party by 29.9 degrees. In contrast, Democrats downgraded their own party by 7.2 degrees and grew warmer toward the Republicans by 23.9 degrees.

Clearly foreign policy attitudes shaped how voters evaluated the parties, but elections are ultimately contests between candidates. Thus, it seems important to know what role foreign policy played in how voters rated John Kerry and George W. Bush. Did citizens put even more weight on foreign policy opinions in rating Bush than Dick Cheney and "conservatives," the other portions of the Republican party index? Alternatively, did respondents disregard foreign policy in rating Kerry since he was neither a Republican nor the president? In fact, the public used their foreign policy

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attitudes to the same magnitude both broadly and narrowly to rate the parties and the particular presidential candidates. Hawkish respondents felt much more warmly toward Bush and a bit cooler toward Kerry, findings which are robust to the measure of foreign policy attitudes.

Table 7.3 displays a model of the effect of foreign policy attitudes, spending attitudes, and demographics on ratings of the candidates from both the 2004 NES cross-section and from the 2000-2002-2004 NES panel. The models are identical to the models in Table 2, which two exceptions. The dependent variables in Table 7.3 are respondents' ratings of John Kerry and George W. Bush, on the same 0 to 100 scale, with higher values meaning more warmth; respondents rated Bush significantly more warmly ($p<.01$) with a thermometer score of 58.4 compared to Kerry's score of 52.1 degrees. In addition, these models use three different measures of foreign policy attitudes to confirm that the findings are robust to different specifications. In the panel data, the foreign policy attitude is the same hawkishness index from 2002 used in Table 7.2. The models from the 2004 NES cross-section use two different measures of the same underlying concept of foreign policy attitudes. The first measure is an additive hawkishness index similar to the 2002 index, constructed from six items – respondents' preferences on spending for foreign aid, border security, defense, and the War on Terror, respondents' approval of Bush's handling of terrorism, and approval of the Iraq War – scaled from -1 to 1, with higher values indicating more hawkish preferences. The second measure of foreign policy views in the 2004 cross-section is the 7-point diplomacy-militarism scale described above, ranging from 0 at the dovish end to 1 at the hawkish end, labeled simply "militarism scale" in the table.

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Hawkish attitudes significantly increased respondents' warmth toward George W. Bush and decreased their warmth toward John Kerry. However, as in the party models, there is an asymmetry in the size of the effect that remains across the two samples and three measures of foreign policy attitudes. Foreign policy attitudes matter more for evaluating Bush than Kerry by a magnitude of 2 to 3 times. Hawkishness increases ratings of Bush by 21.9 to 28.8 degrees and decreases ratings of Kerry by 9.6 to 12 degrees. In the NES panel model, the most hawkish respondents like Bush more than Kerry by almost 40 degrees, due to the 28.2 degree increase in Bush's thermometer and 10.7 degree decrease in Kerry's rating. Figure 7.3 demonstrates the strong positive effect of foreign policy attitudes on Bush's ratings and the weaker negative relationship between hawkishness and Kerry's ratings.

Similar to the findings from the party models, respondents relied on their attitudes toward general governmental spending more in evaluating Kerry than Bush, again suggesting that the candidates benefited from different types of considerations. Since evaluations of Republican candidates and the party benefited so greatly from citizens' views on foreign policy, this created incentives for Bush and other Republican candidates to remind voters of terrorism both through speeches and visually through ads and other means.

Did foreign policy help Republicans get elected in 2004?

If elites and the media can persuade citizens or scare citizens into supporting more hawkish types of policies, the ultimate question for electoral accountability is whether these hawkish attitudes benefit certain elites more than others. Does foreign policy ultimately help Republican candidates and hurt Democrats? Is it the case that since the

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Republicans "own" the issue of national security, the party can win the White House again in 2008 by using the threat of terrorism to prime voting on the basis of national security? The sentiment that voters turn to the Republican party on issues of foreign policy is relatively long-standing and echoed in Richard Nixon's assessment in 1960 that the way for the Republicans to win the White House was to focus the campaign's attention on foreign policy issues: "If you ever let them [the Democrats] campaign on domestic issues, they'll beat us – our only hope is to keep it on foreign policy" (Kent and Albright 1960).

From the previous sections, it seems clear that hawkish citizens strongly approved of George Bush's handling of his presidency and felt much more warmly toward Bush and the Republican party than Kerry and the Democrats in 2004. However, it is less clear that foreign policy attitudes should also matter for voting for Congressional candidates, since models of congressional voting generally find that partisanship and familiarity and liking of the candidate are much larger determinants of vote choice than voters' issue positions (Jacobson 2001). In addition, each member of Congress has much less institutional power on issues of foreign policy than the president does, there may be less reason to use foreign policy to judge or choose representatives (Canes-Wrone, Howell, and Lewis 2008). Yet, the issue ownership perspective suggests that the parties rather than individual candidates that hold the issue advantage, so if an election focuses on an owned issue, it should benefit the stronger *party* on that issue rather than only the presidential candidate. In October 2006, Republican campaign consultant Vin Weber noted in an interview with CNN that a public on edge about terrorism would ultimately help Republican candidates because concerns about terrorism would lead citizens to vote

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based on national security issues. Clearly, candidates and consultants believe that, at least in the last several election cycles, citizens voted for Congressional and Senate candidates based on the foreign policy views.

In 2004 those citizens who preferred tanks to negotiations in foreign affairs were significantly more likely to vote for Bush over Kerry. Hawkish citizens were also more likely to vote for a Republican for their House and Senate seat, meaning that the public's foreign policy views not only helped determine the occupant of the White House but also the make-up of Congress. Table 7.4 presents probit models of the determinants of voters' choices on Election Day 2004, using the NES panel. The dependent variables are whether the respondent voted for Bush and Republican candidates for the House and Senate. The models control for partisanship, ideology, gender, race, and whether the respondent resides in the South. The independent variables of most interest are respondents' evaluations of the economy – whether it was better, worse, or the same as 2 years prior – and their views on foreign policy. These models demonstrate that voters use their foreign policy views broadly in choosing political leaders, but that these views are most important in determining presidential vote choice. While the influence of hawkishness is positive and significant in all three of the models, its effect on presidential vote choice is twice as large as the effect on Senate vote choice ($p<.01$) and four times as large as the effect on House vote choice ($p<.01$). For example, holding other variables at their means, a white male who is one standard deviation above the mean in hawkishness had between a 64 and 80 percent probability of voting for Bush in 2004, compared to his dovish counterpart one standard deviation below the mean who had only a 20 to 36 percent

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probability of voting for Bush.[28] While hawkishness increased the probability of voting for the Republican presidential candidate by about 45 percentage points, the comparable difference for the Senatorial and Congressional candidates was 20 and 10 percentage points, respectively. In addition, while growing more hawkish almost guarantees that our hypothetical moderate voter will vote for Bush for president, this voter has approximately a 52 percent (40 to 64 percent) probability of voting for the Republican Senate or congressional candidate. This suggests that hawkishness was a deciding factor in the election of many Republican members of Congress.

Partisanship plays a large role in determining which candidates voters choose; voters are significantly more likely to elect a candidate who shares their partisan affiliation than a candidate who does not (Campbell et al 1960). The election of 2004 proved no exception to that rule; only 18 percent of Democrats in the NES panel reported voting for Bush in 2004, while 64 percent of Independents did and 85 percent of Republicans pulled the lever for Bush. Yet even though the probability of a Democrat voting for Bush or other Republican candidates in 2004 was low, foreign policy attitudes served to increase this probability as Democrats grew more hawkish. Figure 7.4 presents the probability of voting for Bush in 2004 based on respondents' foreign policy preferences and their partisanship. The figure is based the presidential vote choice model in Table 7.4 and holds ideology and economic evaluations at their means and female, African-American, and South at 0. Republican respondents are represented by the red solid line, Independents by the green dashed line, and Democrats by the short-dashed

[28] These ranges are the probability of voting of Bush, taking into account the confidence intervals around the estimation. The mean probability of voting for Bush for the respondents one standard deviation above the mean is 72 percent, with a standard error of .04, while the mean probability one standard deviation below the mean was 28 percent with a standard error of .04.

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blue line. The Independent category includes only respondents who are “pure” Independents; that is, they disclaim any affiliation with either party and do not claim to lean toward either party. Independent voters are most moved by their foreign policy attitudes, as may be expected since Independents cannot simply rely on their partisan affiliations as cue for which candidate to choose. As Independents moved from the 25th percentile of the hawkishness scale to the 75th percentile, they were 29 percentage points more likely to vote for Bush. Although Democrats are unlikely to vote for Bush even at their most hawkish, as they prefer more assertive types of policies, their probability of voting for Bush increases by 10 percentage points across the inter-quartile range. Even at the lowest end of the hawkishness scale, Republicans are more than 50 percent likely to vote for Bush, but the same increase in hawkishness increases the probability of voting for Bush by 17 percentage points among Republicans. Overall, this figure demonstrates that a more hawkish public was more likely to return Bush to the Oval Office in 2004, and the effect of foreign policy attitudes was especially great among Independents. These findings again raise questions about the incentives that both presidential and congressional candidates face in taking foreign policy positions and/or persuading the public to support certain types of defense and security policies.

Implications for candidate strategy

If foreign policy attitudes lead citizens to prefer certain types of leaders over others (i.e. Republican over Democrats, hawks v. doves), there may be strategic incentives for elites trying to get elected to take more hawkish positions during the campaign as well as to persuade citizens to update their own foreign policy views in a more hawkish direction. The section argues that candidates may be better off taking

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foreign policy positions at least as hawkish if not more hawkish than the general public in order to win their votes. As discussed in the previous sections, there is an asymmetry in how the public uses its foreign policy views to evaluate and choose candidates – voters tend to rely much more on their own foreign policy views in rating Republican candidates than Democratic candidates and more hawkish individuals prefer the Republican party to the Democrats.

Evaluations of the parties may be a function of not only the respondents' own position on foreign policy, though, but also their position relative to the position of the parties. A voter may rate candidates more positively if the candidate's position on a policy is close to her own and rate a candidate more negatively if the candidate's position is far away from her own. This type of relationship would suggest that voters have single-peaked ideal points, that is, they strongly prefer candidates who share their policy positions and evaluate candidates more negatively as the candidates' positions are further away those attitudes are from their own, creating a bell-shaped relationship between voters' policy positions relative to the candidate's and evaluations of the candidate.

Yet, this section reveals that in fact, there is another asymmetry to the way that citizens' foreign policy attitudes influenced their ratings of the parties and presidential candidates in 2004. Rather than being bell-shaped, the relationship between respondents' positions on foreign policy and their evaluations of the Democrats and John Kerry is shaped more like a shepherd's crook, with a large punishment for being viewed as too dovish and a benefit for being perceived as hawkish. Voters punished both Kerry and the Democratic party less for being viewed as too hawkish on issues of foreign policy than for being too far to the dovish end. In fact, respondents rated Kerry and the Democratic

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party *more favorably* if they perceived that the Democratic party was more hawkish than they were themselves. The benefits of being too hawkish and the punishment to being too dovish may be somewhat unique to Democratic candidates though. Bush's evaluations gain less than Kerry's do when voters see the Republican party as being more hawkish than themselves and voters who perceive the Republican party as too hawkish significantly downgrade their rating of Bush.

Kerry and the Democrats are viewed positively if voters perceive them as strong on defense, yet there is disconnect between voters own positions on foreign policy and what they seem to want from political elites. Respondents in the NES actually saw themselves as closer to the Democrats on foreign policy in 2004 than the Republicans ($p<.01$), yet they rated Kerry and his party more positively when they perceived the party as moving to the right on defense. In 2004, the NES panel asked respondents to place themselves on the 7-point diplomacy-militarism scale and also to place the Democratic and Republican parties. I rescaled this 7-point scale to range between 0 and 1. On average, respondents placed themselves right in the middle of the recoded scale at .49 while they placed the Democrats to the left of them at .42 and Republicans at .70, significantly toward the hawkish end of the scale. This may indicate that voters wanted a president they perceived as strong (i.e. hawkish) on national security issues rather than one that shared their own ideal position on foreign policy.

Figures 7.5 and 7.6 demonstrate the way in which respondents utilized their foreign policy attitudes in evaluating the parties as well as Bush and Kerry in 2004. The graphs show the effect of the panel respondents' attitudes on the diplomacy-militarism scale *relative to* the parties' views on foreign policy on evaluations of the parties and the

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candidates. The evaluations are the feeling thermometers used in the previous sections – the feeling thermometer of each party is an index of thermometers of political actors, and the candidate thermometers asked respondents to rate Bush and Kerry on the 0 to 100 scale. The foreign policy attitudes in these graphs are the differences between respondents' placement of themselves on the militarism scale and their placement of the parties on the same scale. Negative values indicate that the respondent perceived the Democrats or Republicans as more dovish than himself and positive values indicate that the respondents perceived the parties as more hawkish than his own foreign policy attitude. It is important to note that these are the differences between respondents' own foreign policy positions and their *perceptions* of the positions of the parties rather than the actual positions of the parties.[29] The left panel of each figure shows respondents' evaluations of the Democratic party and John Kerry based on how far away the respondent believed the Democratic party was from his/her own foreign policy position. The right panel of each figure shows respondents' evaluations of the Republican party and George W. Bush based on how far away respondents believe the Republican party was from his/her own foreign policy position.[30]

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[29] There are reasons to believe that respondents do not simply project their own position on to their party of choice or adjust their perceptions based on their vote choice. The correlation between respondents' placement of the parties and vote choice is statistically significant but quite small; the correlation between voting for Bush and placement of the Democrats on militarism is -.27 and between voting and placing the Republicans is -.17. In addition, only 40 percent of Republicans and 27 percent of Democrats placed their party at the same exact position as themselves. While this is larger than the 14 percent one would expect by chance, the percentages are still far below 100 percent, indicating that respondents took in more information than simply their own foreign policy attitudes in placing the parties on the diplomacy-militarism scale.

[30] Both sets of figures use the difference from the party's position on foreign policy rather than substituting in the distance from the candidate's positions on foreign policy. The NES did ask respondents to place George W. Bush on the militarism scale, and the mean position was .76 on the 0 to 1 scale. However, respondents were not asked to place John Kerry, so it is not possible to make a similar difference variable on the Democratic side.

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The curved, asymmetrical relationship between foreign policy attitudes and evaluations of Kerry and the Democrats reveals that respondents evaluated John Kerry much more positively when they perceived the Democratic party as more hawkish than themselves. Those individuals who placed the Democrats at the same position or as more hawkish rated Kerry an average of 59 degrees, much more warmly than 40 degree rating among those who saw the Democrats as too dovish. Respondents rated the Democratic party similarly; those respondents who saw the Democrats as more dovish than themselves rated the party an average of 40 degrees while those who rated the party as more hawkish rated the party a warmer 57 degrees ($p<.01$). The sharp left tail of the Kerry graph demonstrates that respondents punished Kerry severely when they saw the party as too dovish and rewarded him moderately when his position matched their own or was slightly more hawkish. These findings imply that Kerry and the Democrats were significantly better off taking hawkish rather than moderate foreign policy positions during the campaign or at least positions that were more hawkish than the public's mean position. In contrast to the major benefit that Kerry received from being more hawkish than the public, Bush is rated significantly more negatively as individuals perceived the Republican party as being much more hawkish than them. Citizens evaluated the Republican party and George W. Bush most warmly when they perceived that the Republican party shared their own foreign policy positions and lowered the party's ratings as they perceived the Republicans as being too far toward the hawkish end.

One explanation for why Kerry benefited so much from perceptions of being hawkish than Bush did is simply that a hawkish position from a Democratic candidate is more unexpected and therefore an informative signal to the public about the "correct"

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foreign policy position. When political leaders advocate policies that are against their normal stance and are therefore costly, they are often considered quite persuasive, as demonstrated by the Nixon in China phenomenon (Gilens and Murakawa 2002). When even strong anti-communist Richard Nixon engaged with China, this sent a signal to the American public that it must have been the right policy and persuaded both Republicans and Democrats to support engagement with China. However, if it were simply the case that the public rewards parties and candidates with unexpected policy positions, then the Bush and Kerry graphs should be mirror images on one another and evaluations of Bush should be much warmer on the dovish side of the graph than they are. Rather, the graphs demonstrate that Kerry and the Democrats benefited from the perception of being *hawkish* rather than simply taking an unexpected position. Overall, the public's hawkish attitudes generally helped Republican candidates the most, but there seems to be a tipping point at which the Republican party started to lose votes by seeming too hawkish.

To estimate the position of that tipping point, I modeled respondents' ratings of the parties and presidential candidates in 2004 as a function of the distance between respondents' own foreign policy positions and those of the parties, controlling for partisanship, ideology, and spending attitudes. Since Figures 7.5 and 7.6 revealed a curvilinear relationship between foreign policy attitudes and evaluations of the parties, rather than use the absolute difference between respondents' own foreign policy position and those of the parties, I created a series of five categorical dummy variables to represent how far the respondent saw themselves from the parties. Table 7.5 shows the distribution of the five categories. If individuals placed the party at the same exact position on the diplomacy-militarism scale as themselves, there were categorized as being

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at the same position. Nineteen percent of respondents placed the Democrats at their own position while 27 percent shared their foreign policy position with the Republican party; it should be noted that 63 respondents, or 10 percent of all respondents placed both of the parties at their own position.[31] If respondents placed the party up to .5 units away to their right or left (corresponding to 3 points on the original 7 point scale), I placed them in either the category of the Democrats/Republicans were "more dovish/hawkish". If the difference between respondents' own position and their placement of the party was greater than .5 units away, then I place respondents into the category that the party was "much more" hawkish or dovish than the respondent. Overall, 31 percent of respondents thought that the Democrats were either more or much more hawkish than them while about 40 percent of respondent placed the Democrats as (much) more dovish than their own position. In comparison, 17 percent of respondents placed the Republicans to their left on foreign policy while 55 percent saw the Republicans as more hawkish than themselves.

Table 7.6 displays the results from the OLS models of evaluations of both the candidates and the parties as a function of respondents' relative foreign policy attitudes. The "same position" category is the excluded group in the models, so the dummy variables in the model can be interpreted as the bump or decrease that the candidates receive for being more or less hawkish than the respondent. Citizens rated Kerry 5 degrees warmer on the 101 point scale when they perceived a relatively more hawkish Democratic party but did not increase their evaluations when they saw the Democrats as

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[31] These respondents who placed both the Republicans and Democrats at their own foreign policy position can be described as conservative Independents. While their average partisanship was .47, their mean ideology score was .58, squarely on the conservative end of the scale. These conservative Independents rated the Democratic party at 53 degrees and the Republicans at 61 degrees.

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being much more hawkish than themselves. What this means is that Kerry had strategic reasons to project more hawkish policy positions than his perceived position and more hawkish positions than the public's position in order to increase his positive evaluations. This incentive to be hawkish is particularly strong because the punishment for being perceived as much too dovish was 17 percentage points, meaning that the net gain for a more hawkish position was more than 20 percentage points.

Unlike Kerry, Bush's evaluations are much more sensitive to the relative distance of respondents' foreign policy attitudes. Bush and the Republicans are never rewarded for being more or less hawkish than the respondent, and respondents significantly penalized both Bush and the party as the relative distance grew. The 20 percent of respondents who saw the Republican position as *much more* hawkish than their own felt 26 degrees cooler Bush and 23 degrees cooler toward the Republican party than respondents who shared the Republican party's position. In addition, those individuals who perceived the Republican party as somewhat more hawkish than themselves were 9 degrees cooler toward the party and 10 degrees cooler toward Bush. Overall, the public rated Kerry more positively when he was seen as hawkish on defense issues, but the public did not necessarily want their president to be too militant, as evidenced by the decrease in Bush's ratings when the Republicans appeared too far from the public's position. According to the models, the public's ideal candidate had a foreign policy position somewhere between .49, the mean for all respondents on the diplomacy-militarism scale, and .69, the mean placement for the Republican party.

The intriguing asymmetrical relationship between the public's foreign policy attitudes and their evaluations of Kerry cannot wholly be explained by the reactions of

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dovish Democrats who liked Kerry but saw him as more hawkish than they were or by dovish Republicans closer to the Democrats than to the Republicans. The bottom panels of Figures 7.5 and 7.6 display the same relationship as the upper panel separately by partisanship –respondents' foreign policy attitudes relative to the parties' on their evaluations of Kerry and Bush. Republican respondents are represented by the red solid line and Democratic respondents by the blue dashed line in both graphs. Both Republican and Democratic respondents felt more warmly toward Kerry as they perceived the Democratic party to their right on foreign policy, suggesting that had Kerry taken more hawkish foreign policy positions, he may have been able to pick up additional dovish to moderate voters.[32] In contrast, Democrats and Republicans feel most warmly toward Bush and the Republicans when they believe that the Republican party shares their foreign policy views. Although the line for Republican voters seems to decrease quite sharply on the right side of the Bush thermometer graph, it is worth noting that only 10 percent of Republicans placed the Republican party more than .5 units to the right of themselves and 40 percent of the 297 Republicans in the NES placed the Republican party at the same place as themselves, meaning that overall Republicans like Bush quite a bit but that dovish Republicans (of which there are few) are less fond of their candidate.

Conclusion and Implications

This chapter demonstrates that the public's views on foreign policy mattered greatly in how the public judged and chose their political leaders in 2004. Individuals with more hawkish policy attitudes, those people who prefer a strong national defense,

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[32] In a separate analysis not shown here, I find that Independents (both leaners and "pure" Independents) who perceive the Democrats as more hawkish than themselves rate Kerry 10-13 degrees more positively than if they perceived the Democrats as sharing their own position on foreign policy. This suggests in order to pick up Independent voters, Kerry needed to take foreign policy positions to the right of .48 on the diplomacy-militarism scale, the mean for Independents (including leaners).

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approved strongly of George W. Bush's handling of the presidency and particularly of his handling of the War on Terror. In addition, those people with more hawkish preferences voted in higher numbers for George W. Bush for the presidency and Republican candidates for Congress and the Senate than people with more accomodationist foreign policy views. In addition, hawkishness increased respondents' evaluations of the Republican party and led respondents to feel more negatively toward the Democratic party as well as John Kerry. Hawkishness is not simply a proxy for partisanship here, although Republicans are more likely to be hawkish, there was high support for more aggressive foreign policy among Independents and Democrats as well in 2002. It is not simply the case that Republicans are more hawkish and therefore preferred Bush over Kerry. The empirical models include measures of both partisanship and hawkishness, so the effect of militaristic foreign policy attitudes already accounts for partisanship. Additionally, the finding that hawkishness increases support for the Republican party significantly more than it decreases support for the Democratic party holds among both Democrats and Republicans.

Overall, these findings concur with the issue ownership theory – Republicans and particularly George W. Bush benefited greatly by priming defense and national security issues, while the Democrats were better off ignoring foreign policy. Foreign policy particularly helped the Republicans since the public's attitudes remained relatively hawkish in 2004 – 53 percent of respondents thought that the federal government should spend more money on defense and 58 percent answered that government should spend more on homeland security and the War on Terror – but also because the public perceived the Democratic party as quite dovish on national security. Almost half of the

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NES respondents in 2004 perceived the Democratic party as being more dovish than their own foreign policy views while only 19 percent of those respondents thought that their foreign policy views were in line with the Democratic party. This perception of dovishness for Kerry and the Democrats proved problematic not only because dovish views were out of line with the public's issue positions but also because the public seemingly preferred a president with stronger and more hawkish ideas about foreign policy. This preference for a more hawkish president may have originated from the high percentage of threatened respondents - 59 percent of respondents believed that a terrorist attack was likely or very likely in the near future. Citizens concerned about terrorism do not rely more heavily on foreign policy in their vote choice than less fearful citizens, but the threat of terrorism influences vote choice indirectly by shaping foreign policy attitudes. Although Kerry's best response was to ignore foreign policy in the 2004 election since it favored Bush so much, ignoring issues like defense spending, terrorism, and Iraq was all but impossible, particularly since the Democratic party nominated Kerry in part based on his military record and foreign affairs experience in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The implication of the last section of the chapter is that barring totally overlooking foreign policy in the campaign, Kerry would have been best served in 2004 by taking quite hawkish foreign policy positions or at least positions to the right of public but not as far right as the Republican party.

The 2008 campaign seems like it will once again prominently feature foreign policy as an election issue, and the issue ownership theory and conventional wisdom may suggest that if foreign policy becomes the major agenda item that a Republican may occupy the White House again come January 2009. The presidential candidates mention

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terrorism with some frequency and Republican nominee John McCain often reminds voters of his military service on the stump. In a June 2008 interview for *Fortune* magazine, McCain responded to a question about the economy with an answer about national security as a way to highlight terrorism and presumably advantage his campaign. McCain said, “Well, I would think that the absolute gravest threat is the struggle that we're in against radical Islamic extremism… Another successful attack on the United States of America could have devastating consequences." (Whitford 2008, 1). In an op-ed titled “Noun + Verb + 9/11 + Iran = Democrats’ Defeat?” in November 2007, *New York Times* columnist Frank Rich predicted that if terrorism and military action against Iran become issues in the 2008 general election that it will advantage the Republican party, no matter who its nominee is. Rich’s claim is that the Republicans can use the fear of terrorism to convince the public that only their party can keep them safe and ride foreign policy into the presidency again. He writes, “Fear, the only remaining card this administration still knows how to play, may once more give a seemingly spent G.O.P. a crack at the White House in 2008.” John McCain’s chief strategist Charlie Black agrees; Black claims that another terrorist attack on American soil would help McCain win the presidency. While this chapter finds evidence for these claims during the 2004 election, it is not necessarily clear that the Democrats are helpless on foreign policy in 2008. The findings from this chapter offer some tentative implications for how the Democratic party could blunt their perceived disadvantage on security issues.

While the Republican party retained ownership over foreign policy in 2004, by 2007, the public viewed the Democrats as just as able to handle national security, terrorism as the Republicans and more capable on the war in Iraq (Goble and Holm

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forthcoming). Goble and Holm argue that the Republicans lost dominance on foreign policy due mostly to the public's disapproval of Iraq war and that this loss contributed to the Democratic take-over of Congress in 2006. Goble and Holm's findings suggest that at least in the short run, discussing foreign policy will advantage neither party and priming Iraq will generally favor the Democrats. Holian (2004) suggests that a party can neutralize its disadvantage on an issue more permanently after the public sees the parties as equally qualified to handle an issue if the party can reframe the issue and the media repeats the new frame. Another way that a party can take advantage of a shift in the public's perception is to alter or fundamentally change its positions on the previously disadvantaged issue or at least nominate candidates with positions closer to those of the advantaged party. One implication is that if the Democrats can take more hawkish positions on foreign policy without alienating their base of more moderate and dovish voters then they will be rewarded electorally in 2008.

A hawkish Democratic party is not an unheard of proposition, particularly when the Democrats faced the choice of either taking more hawkish positions or potentially losing the presidency. Julian Zelizer's history of American national security policy since World War II argues the parties continuously updated their positions on national security to gain electoral advantage (Zelizer forthcoming). As new threats emerged in the Cold War period, the parties looked to gain voters by becoming more hawkish on defense. After the end of WWII, hawkish Republicans such as Richard Nixon and Barry Goldwater became a serious political force and began to gain political ground by claiming that high levels of defense spending were essential to maintain American dominance and protect the world from communism. However, throughout the 1950s and

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1960s, the Democratic party in Congress and later in the White House under Kennedy and Johnson took increasingly hawkish stands on anti-communism policy, particularly on Cuba. National security became central to electoral competition as both parties attempted to stand tough against communism but not appear too bellicose. During the 1964 campaign, Goldwater pushed Johnson to stake out a definitive position on Vietnam, and Johnson took a more hawkish position to counter the electoral threat posed by Goldwater's hawkish policies. Zelizer writes that this electoral competition pushed the country toward Vietnam and his assessment is worth quoting at length:

> Although often remembered as a 'Democratic War,' Vietnam was rooted in Republican politics as well. While the popular political ideas from the Cold War and the ideology of liberal militarism were highly influential, Johnson's decision to accelerate the war in Vietnam also grew out of partisan battles over national security. Democrats in the 1950s had decided to respond to the Republican Right, not by seeking to resurrect a bipartisan coalition that existed in 1947 and 1948, but by waging a partisan campaign to demonstrate they were not weak on national security and their party was better suited to protect the nation (85).

Zelizer's overall finding is that the political competition over national security pushed both parties to support hawkish policies but which party was more hawkish depended on the time period and the electoral environment. The Kosovo war provides another example where the dove-hawk dimension did not map so cleanly on to the parties, transforming some traditional liberal "doves" like Senator Paul Wellstone into hawks who supported the bombing campaign and some traditional hardliners into doves and/or isolationists. Plotz argues that the flexibility in elite support for particular conflicts depends in part on the contours of the conflict as well as which party occupies the White House and therefore controls national security policy (Plotz 1999). While in the post-9/11 era, the Republicans are generally considered the more hawkish party, this brief history

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demonstrates that while the dove-hawk dimension sometimes lines up with the parties in this arrangement that is not always the case. Thus, the Democrats may have room in 2008 to maneuver to become a more hawkish party even if not more hawkish than the Republicans.

Overall, this chapter suggests that citizens do use foreign policy as a basis to choose their representatives and president, but that they do not vote to receive perfect representation of their own views nor do they want perfect representation. Rather, a public threatened by terrorism prefers hawkish policy but wants an even more hawkish leader to keep them safe from harm.

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Table 7.1: Effect of foreign policy attitudes on evaluations of the president 2004

	Approval of Bush presidency 2004				Approval of Bush's handling of terrorism 2004			
	All responds	Democrat	Independent	Republican	All responds	Democrat	Independent	Republican
PID 2000	**0.49**				**0.40**			
	(0.04)				(0.04)			
Ideo 2000	**0.22**	**0.21**	**0.39**	**0.23**	**0.19**	**0.14**	0.32	**0.23**
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.15)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.20)	(0.05)
Black	-0.07	-0.09	0.00	-0.13	**-0.16**	**-0.16**	-0.40	**-0.22**
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.00)	(0.11)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.46)	(0.11)
Female	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02	-0.01	-0.05	0.02	0.05
	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.10)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.10)	(0.03)
Hawk 2002	**0.38**	**0.33**	**0.29**	**0.54**	**0.35**	**0.36**	0.23	**0.43**
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.12)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.13)	(0.05)
Age	-0.01	-0.12	0.16	0.00	-0.01	-0.110	0.26	-0.02
	(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.23)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.11)	(0.25)	(0.07)
Knowledge	**-0.09**	-0.07	-0.16	-0.09	**-0.10**	-0.11	-0.24	-0.06
	(0.04)	(0.08)	(0.16)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.17)	(0.06)
Econ 2002	**0.11**	**0.20**	**0.25**	**0.07**	**0.10**	**0.17**	0.17	**0.07**
	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.10)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.10)	(0.02)
Constant	**0.10**	**0.30**	**0.37**	**0.36**	**0.25**	**0.44**	**0.43**	**0.42**
	(0.05)	(0.09)	(0.16)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.17)	(0.07)
R^2	825	386	79	360	823	381	82	360
N	0.50	0.22	0.25	0.30	0.41	0.19	0.18	0.25

Source: NES 2000-2004 panel. Model Specification: OLS. Coefficients in bold are significant at p< .05. Approval of the Bush presidency a nd Bush's handling of terrorism are 4 point scales that range from 0 (disapproval strongly) to 1 (approve strongly). Partisanship and ideology are measured in 2000 and range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating Republican and conservative. The measures of whether a respondent is African American or female are dummy variables with 1 indicating black and female. Age is measured in years and is recoded to vary between 0 and 1. Knowledge is the interviewer's ratings of the respondent's political knowledge, measured in 2000, measured from 0 (very low) to 1 (very high). Respondents' economic assessments were measured in 2002 and asked respondents whether they thought that the economy had gotten better (1), worse (-1) or had stayed the same in the past year (0).
Hawkishness is additive, 6-item index measured in 2002 – spending on foreign aid, defense, border security,

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and homeland security/ war on terror, support for the war in Iraq, approval of the president's handling of terrorism. The index ranges from -1 to 1, higher values are more hawkish.

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Table 7.2: Effect of foreign policy attitudes on evaluations of the parties 2004

	Democratic thermometer 2004				Republican thermometer 2004			
	All responds	Democrat	Independent	Republican	All responds	Democrat	Independent	Republican
PID	**-31.76**				**28.97**			
	(2.08)				(2.36)			
Ideology	**-8.49**	**-8.41**	-6.31	**-14.62**	**15.51**	**13.35**	**24.99**	**18.41**
	(1.76)	(2.51)	(5.70)	(3.17)	(2.01)	(3.16)	(6.95)	(3.03)
Black	0.68	5.21	-32.46	-6.76	3.41	2.49	-20.31	5.33
	(2.59)	(2.81)	(15.22)	(11.30)	(2.96)	(3.54)	(18.56)	(10.82)
Female	1.04	2.06	0.71	-0.90	**2.81**	1.48	3.40	**4.66**
	(1.15)	(1.77)	(3.71)	(1.79)	(1.31)	(2.23)	(4.52)	(1.72)
Hawkishness 2002	**-7.62**	**-7.16**	-5.10	**-15.82**	**23.28**	**23.87**	**20.76**	**29.89**
	(1.85)	(2.67)	(4.39)	(3.48)	(2.11)	(3.37)	(5.35)	(3.35)
Services 2002	**8.81**	3.42	**17.20**	**13.08**	-0.82	-0.37	3.91	-3.21
	(2.20)	(3.69)	(6.22)	(3.33)	(2.51)	(4.64)	(7.58)	(3.17)
Constant	**70.87**	68.23	47.16	54.50	**17.88**	**22.80**	**28.91**	35.16
	(2.12)	(3.16)	(5.53)	(4.18)	(2.41)	(3.99)	(7.58)	(4.00)
R^2	0.53	0.09	0.17	0.17	0.55	0.23	0.35	0.29
N	725	327	70	328	725	326	70	329

Source: NES 2000-2004 panel. Model Specification: OLS. Coefficients in bold are significant at $p < .05$. Democratic and Republican thermometers range from 0 to 100, with lower values meaning a "colder" or more negative evaluation of the party and higher values indicating a "warmer" or more positive evaluation of the party. The mid-point of 50 indicates neutral feelings toward the parties. Partisanship and ideology are measured in 2000 and range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating Republican and conservative. The measures of whether a respondent is African American or female are dummy variables with 1 indicating black and female. Hawkishness is additive, 6-item index measured in 2002 – spending on foreign aid, defense, border security, and homeland security/ war on terror, support for the war in Iraq, approval of the president's handling of terrorism. The index ranges

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from -1 to 1, higher values are more hawkish. Services 2002 is respondents' placement of themselves on the 7-point scale on how the government should allocate spending and how many services it should provide, with fewer services and lower taxes at the bottom (0) and higher taxes but more services at the top of the scale (1).

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Table 7.3: Effect of foreign policy attitudes on evaluations of candidates 2004

	Kerry thermometer 2004			Bush thermometer 2004		
	NES Panel	2004 CS	2004 CS	NES Panel	2004 CS	2004 CS
PID	**-31.63**	**-34.62**	**-35.18**	**36.14**	**45.75**	**49.52**
	(2.89)	(2.94)	(2.97)	(3.11)	(3.01)	(3.20)
Ideology	**-9.63**	**-11.57**	**-13.34**	**17.31**	**15.41**	**24.24**
	(2.46)	(4.10)	(4.10)	(2.64)	(4.21)	(4.40)
Black	1.49	**6.29**	**5.48**	1.64	1.56	-0.63
	(3.64)	(2.52)	(2.68)	(3.89)	(2.58)	(2.87)
Female	0.57	0.85	0.72	0.82	**3.60**	2.82
	(1.60)	(1.48)	(1.51)	(1.72)	(1.52)	(1.62)
Hawkishness index	**-10.69**	**-9.64**		**28.18**	**27.00**	
	(2.58)	(2.37)		(2.77)	(2.43)	
Militarism scale			**-11.98**			**21.19**
			(2.91)			(3.13)
Services v. spending	2.53	**9.81**	**11.22**	2.35	-2.92	-3.25
	(3.08)	(3.16)	(3.24)	(3.30)	(3.24)	(3.47)
Constant	**77.65**	**75.17**	**77.65**	**11.28**	**14.70**	**8.94**
	(2.96)	(3.18)	(3.34)	(3.18)	(3.25)	(3.58)
R^2	0.37	0.47	0.48	0.50	0.63	0.60
N	716	734	693	725	735	694

Source: NES 2000-2004 panel and NES 2004 cross-section. Model Specification: OLS. Coefficients in bold are significant at $p < .05$. Bush and Kerry thermometers range from 0 to 100, low values equal negative evaluation of the party and higher values equal a positive evaluation of the party. Panel measures: PID and ideology are measured in 2000 and range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating Republican and conservative. African American and female are dummy variables with 1 indicating black and female. Hawkishness is additive, 6-item index measured in 2002 and 2004 – spending on foreign aid, defense, border security, and homeland security/ war on terror, support for the war in Iraq, approval of the president's handling of terrorism. The index ranges from -1 to 1, higher values are more hawkish. Services is respondents' placement of themselves on the 7-point scale on how the government should allocate spending and services, with fewer services (0) and more services at the top of the scale (1), measured in 2002 in the panel and in 2004 in the CS. In the cross-section, PID and ideology are measured in 2004 and scaled like the panel measures. The militarism scale is a 7- point scale of whether the gov't should solve international problems through diplomacy (0), the military (1) or someone in between.

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Table 7.4: Foreign policy attitudes on vote choice

	Bush Vote 2004	Senate Vote 2004	House Vote 2004
PID 2000	**2.31**	**2.13**	**2.22**
	(0.22)	(0.24)	(0.22)
Ideology 2000	**0.96**	**0.83**	**0.68**
	(0.18)	(0.21)	(0.19)
Female	0.15	0.04	0.03
	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.13)
Black	**-0.85**	-0.46	-0.58
	(0.43)	(0.37)	(0.32)
Hawkishness 2002	**1.80**	**0.77**	**0.41**
	(0.23)	(0.26)	(0.20)
Economy 2002	**0.43**	**0.33**	**0.26**
	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.12)
South	0.14	0.24	0.11
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.14)
Constant	**-2.51**	**-1.98**	**-1.64**
	(0.25)	(0.27)	(0.22)
Psuedo R^2	0.51	0.42	0.38
N	734	460	594

Source: NES 2000-2004 panel. Model Specification: Probit. Coefficients in bold are significant at p < .0
Bush vote is equal to 1 if the respondent voted for Bush in 2004, 0 if respondent voted for Kerry or another candidate. Senate vote and House vote are equal to 1 if the respondent voted for a Republican candidate, 0 if they voted for another candidate. Only voters are included in the models. Partisanship and ideology are measured in 2000 and range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating Republican and conservative. The measures of whether a respondent is African American or female are dummy variables with 1 indicating black and female. South is an indicator variable of whether the respondent resides in the one of the Southern states, as defined by the Census. Respondents' economic assessments were measured in 2002 and asked respondents whether they thought that the that the economy had gotten better (1), worse (-1) or had stayed the same in the past year (0). Hawkishness is additive, 6-item index measured in 2002 – spending on foreign aid, defense, border security, and homeland security/ war on terror, support for the war in Iraq, approval of the president's handling of terrorism. The index ranges from -1 to 1, higher values are more hawkish.

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Table 7.5: Distribution of relative foreign policy attitudes

	Democratic party (%)	Republican party (%)
Much more dovish	11.2	2.1
More dovish	28.4	15.6
Same position	19.0	27.1
More hawkish	27.4	34.5
Much more hawkish	4.0	20.7
N	627	625

Source: NES 2000-2004 panel study. Cells represent the number of respondents who fit into the category.

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Table 7.6: Candidate and party evaluations based on relative foreign policy positions

	Democratic thermometer 2004	Kerry thermometer 2004		Republican thermometer 2004	Bush thermometer 2004
PID	**-30.41**	**-30.21**	PID	**29.30**	**37.02**
	(2.00)	(2.80)		(2.27)	(2.99)
Ideology	**-8.05**	**-8.90**	Ideology	**13.92**	**15.77**
	(1.73)	(2.42)		(1.99)	(2.63)
Dems much more dovish	**-13.75**	**-16.80**	Reps much more dovish	**-16.14**	**-21.23**
	(2.15)	(3.03)		(5.80)	(7.66)
Dems more dovish	-3.85	-3.82	Reps more dovish	**-16.78**	-0.08
	(1.41)	(1.98)		(2.06)	(2.72)
Dems more hawkish	2.20	**4.60**	Reps more hawkish	**-8.64**	**-10.00**
	(1.53)	(2.14)		(1.56)	(2.06)
Dems much more hawkish	1.87	4.28	Reps much more hawkish	**-22.91**	**-26.09**
	(3.29)	(4.58)		(1.96)	(2.59)
Services 2002	**7.56**	1.70	Services 2002	-0.71	1.54
	(2.17)	(3.05)		(2.47)	(3.26)
Constant	**68.41**	**72.35**	Constant	**41.10**	**37.36**
	(2.02)	(2.83)		(2.35)	(3.10)
R^2	719	710	R^2	719	719
N	0.55	0.39	N	0.56	0.51

Source: NES 2000-2004 panel. Model Specification: OLS. Coefficients in bold are significant at $p < .05$. The thermometers range from 0 to 100, with lower values meaning a "colder" or more negative evaluation of the party and higher values indicating a "warmer" or more positive evaluation of the party. The mid-point of 50 indicates neutral feelings toward the parties. Partisanship and ideology are measured in 2000 and range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating Republican and conservative. Services 2002 is respondents' placement of themselves on the 7-point scale on how the government should allocate spending and how many services it should provide, with fewer services and lower taxes at the bottom (0) and higher taxes but more services at the top of the scale (1). Dems/Reps more hawkish or much more hawkish are dummy variables that are represent the difference between respondents' own view on the diplomacy-militarism scale and their placement of the Republican and Democratic parties. If respondents placed the parties .5 units to their right or left, they fall into the category of the party is "more hawkish" or "more dovish". If respondents placed the parties more than .5 units away, they were placed in the parties are "much more dovish" or "much more hawkish" categories. Placing the parties at one's own position is the excluded category.

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Figure 7.1: Effect of foreign policy on party evaluations 2004

Democratic thermometer

Feeling thermometer

0 20 40 60 80 100

Dovish Hawkish

Hawkishness 2002

Source: NES 2000-2004

Republican thermometer

Feeling thermometer

0 20 40 60 80 100

Dovish Hawkish

Hawkishness 2002

Source: NES 2000-2004

Democrat thermometer 2004

Feeling thermometer

0 20 40 60 80 100

Dovish Hawkish

Hawkishness 2004

Source: NES 2004 fresh cross

Republican thermometer 2004

Feeling thermometer

0 20 40 60 80 100

Dovish Hawkish

Hawkishness 2004

Source: NES 2004 fresh cross

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Figure 7.2: Effect of foreign policy attitudes on party evaluations, by PID of respondent

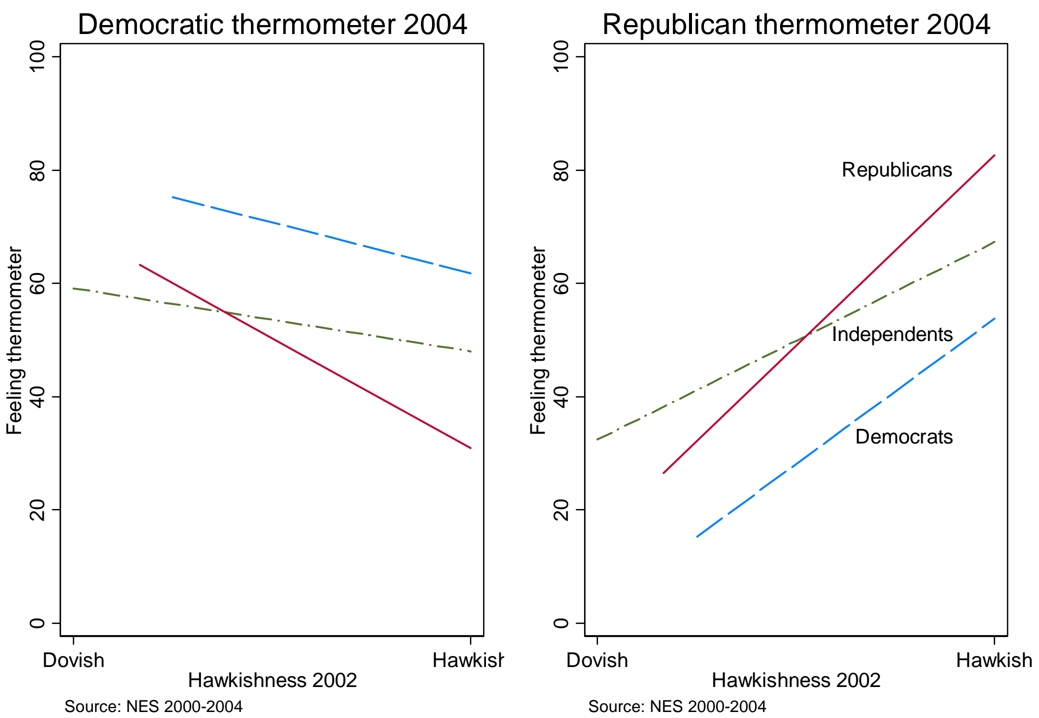

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Figure 7.3: Effect of foreign policy attitudes on candidate evaluations 2004

Kerry thermometer 2004

Feeling thermometer: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100

Dovish — Hawkish

Hawkishness 2004

Source: NES 2004 fresh cross

Bush thermometer 2004

Feeling thermometer: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100

Dovish — Hawkish

Hawkishness 2004

Source: NES 2004 fresh cross

Kerry thermometer 2004

Feeling thermometer: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100

Dovish — Hawkish

Hawkishness 2002

Source: NES 2000-2004

Bush thermometer 2004

Feeling thermometer: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100

Dovish — Hawkish

Hawkishness 2002

Source: NES 2000-2004

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Figure 7.4: Voters' probability of voting for Bush 2004 by partisanship

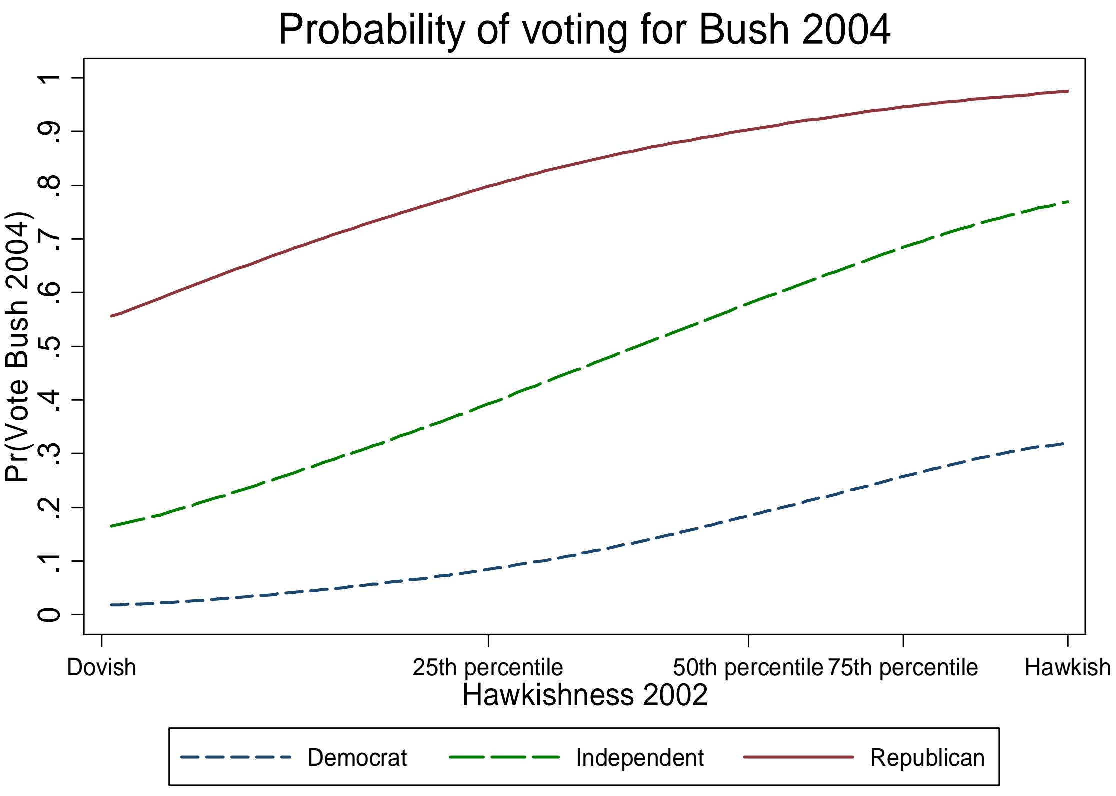

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Figure 7.5: Evaluations of the candidates based on parties' foreign policy positions

Kerry thermometer 2004

Feeling thermometer

0 20 40 60 80 100

More dovish Same position More hawkisl

Difference from Democrats on militarism

Source: NES 2000-2004

Bush thermometer 2004

Feeling thermometer

0 20 40 60 80 100

More dovish Same position More hawkish

Difference from Republicans on militarism

Source: NES 2000-2004

Kerry thermometer 2004

Feeling thermometer

0 20 40 60 80 100

Democrats

Republicans

More dovish Same position More hawkisl

Difference from Democrats on militarism

Source: NES 2000-2004

Bush thermometer 2004

Feeling thermometer

0 20 40 60 80 100

Republicans

Democrats

More dovish Same position More hawkish

Difference from Republicans on militarism

Source: NES 2000-2004

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Figure 7.6: Evaluations of the parties based on parties' foreign policy positions

Democratic thermometer 2004

Feeling thermometer

Difference from Democrats on militarism

More dovish | Same position | More hawkish

Source: NES 2000-2004

Republican thermometer 2004

Feeling thermometer

Difference from Republicans on militarism

More dovish | Same position | More hawkish

Source: NES 2000-2004

Democratic thermometer 2004

Democrats

Republicans

Feeling thermometer

Difference from Democrats on militarism

More dovish | Same position | More hawkish

Source: NES 2000-2004

Republican thermometer 2004

Republicans

Democrats

Feeling thermometer

Difference from Republicans on militarism

More dovish | Same position | More hawkish

Source: NES 2000-2004

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Table A.1: Effect of foreign policy attitudes on evaluations of the parties

	Democratic thermometer 2004		Republican thermometer 2004	
PID 2004	**-38.53**	**-39.49**	**43.14**	**41.95**
	(2.45)	(2.43)	(2.50)	(2.43)
Ideology	-3.18	-3.92	**19.19**	**15.69**
	(3.39)	(3.39)	(3.45)	(3.41)
Black	**5.18**	**4.95**	2.21	3.45
	(2.20)	(2.07)	(2.24)	(2.07)
Female	0.19	0.97	-0.22	0.64
	(1.25)	(1.23)	(1.28)	(1.23)
Hawkishness index 2004	-3.82		**12.70**	
	(2.42)		(2.46)	
Militarism 2004		-0.81		**13.10**
		(1.95)		(1.95)
Services v. spending	**10.47**	**9.42**	2.10	1.94
	(2.71)	(2.64)	(2.75)	(2.65)
Constant	**72.37**	**72.15**	**14.36**	**17.62**
	(2.77)	(2.64)	(2.81)	(2.65)
N	0.49	0.48	0.58	0.58
R^2	763	809	761	806

Source: NES 2004 cross-section. Model Specification: OLS. Coefficients in bold are significant at $p < .05$. Democratic and Republican thermometers range from 0 to 100, with lower values meaning a "colder" or more negative evaluation of the party and higher values indicating a "warmer" or more positive evaluation of the party. The mid-point of 50 indicates neutral feelings toward the parties. Partisanship and ideology are measured in 2000 and range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating Republican and conservative. The measures of whether a respondent is African American or female are dummy variables with 1 indicating black and female. Service-spending is respondents' placement of themselves on the 7-point scale on how the government should allocate spending and how many services it should provide, with fewer services and lower taxes at the bottom (0) and higher taxes but more services at the top of the scale (1). Hawkishness is additive, 6-item index– spending on foreign aid, defense, border security, and homeland security/ war on terror, support for the war in Iraq, approval of the president's handling of terrorism. The index ranges from -1 to 1, higher values are more hawkish. The militarism scale is a 7- point scale of whether the gov't should solve international problems through diplomacy (0), the military (1) or someone in between.

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Chapter 8: Conclusions and Implications

The risk of a terrorist victory is greater when in fighting terror, democracy betrays its own essence.
Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero (Prime Minister of Spain 2004-present)

In times of crisis, citizens turn to the government for answers, comfort, and protection. To understand what the right response is to crisis situations and what the government is doing to alleviate the situation, Americans use the mass media. In the hours after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, millions of Americans turned on televisions in their homes, schools, and workplaces to first make sense of the events unfolding in front of them and then to understand how they should react. Watching news coverage that day, viewers learned of three hijacked planes that destroyed major symbols of American power and a fourth plane that never hit its designated target. Not only did the news audience learn facts about the attacks, but the medium of television allowed Americans to witness destruction in two American cities and the victimization of thousands of fellow citizens. Television watchers *saw* the Twin Towers fall in New York City, raising a white cloud over Lower Manhattan, *saw* crowds of office workers running away from the disaster as fire fighters and police ran toward the collapsed buildings, and *saw* the desperate faces of bystanders. Bearing witness in this way led many Americans to feel profound emotions – anger at the hijackers, sadness over the loss of life, and fear of future attacks. These emotions and the uncertainty of another attack would underlie the types of policies that the public would demand in the aftermath of the attacks.

By the month following the attacks, the United States was at war in Afghanistan, and the president outlined a foreign policy paradigm for a War on Terror that emphasized the need for a strong hand and put little emphasis on the role of negotiations and

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diplomacy. In his speech to the nation from the National Cathedral on September 14, 2001, the president outlined in the most concise terms that the United States would pursue the struggle against terrorism as a military battle. The president said, "War has been waged against us by stealth and deceit and murder. This nation is peaceful, but fierce when stirred to anger. This conflict was begun on the timing and terms of others. It will end in a way, and at an hour, of our choosing." In the weeks, months, and years after the attack, the national television news covered more than 5,000 stories about terrorism, many of those stories incorporating those startling images from 9/11. In newspaper coverage as well as television coverage of foreign policy, the president's War on Terror frame dominated coverage, signaling to the public that these hawkish policies would most effectively protect them from the terrorist threat (Boydstun and Glazier 2008; Entman 2004). As this frame gained a strong foothold in the news, opposition voices were slow to arise and the president's frame remained predominant in the media.

In this dissertation, I argued that this one-sided flow of political information about foreign policy, coupled with the evocative, emotionally powerful images of terrorism cued the public into supporting hawkish foreign policy in the years after 9/11. However, not all citizens reacted to the information environment in the same way. Individuals' perceptions of threat greatly mattered for shaping foreign policy attitudes but also in determining whether individuals picked up on and used the hawkish cues from the media in forming their opinions. Concern about future terrorism led citizens to support militaristic foreign policy over alternative cooperative policies. Perceived threat, or the belief that future terrorism is likely, proved to be a powerful determinant of individuals' foreign policy attitudes. Those individuals already concerned about future terrorism were

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especially supportive of hawkish policy when exposed to news coverage, particularly news coverage that was emotional in nature. While the attitudes of respondents unconcerned about further terrorism were unmoved by exposure to terrorism stories, respondents convinced that terrorism was likely in the future were responsive to the message and emotional content of terrorism news stories. The mass media covered the War on Terror heavily from the 9/11 attacks onward, and the findings from this project illustrate that the amount and type of information that citizens received from the media profoundly affected policy attitudes, conditional on individuals' level of concern over terrorism.

The dissertation also showed that although the War on Terror began as a bipartisan effort (or at least one uncontested by Democrats in Congress), as the parties grew further apart on foreign policy, citizens' partisanship began to shape foreign policy views. No longer did politics "stop at the water's edge". Soon after the terrorist attacks, citizens concerned about terrorism, regardless of their partisan identities, increasingly supported more militant policies. By the 2004 elections though, partisanship and ideology increasingly mattered for public opinion as well as for how individuals interpreted media messages about terrorism. Democrats became less supportive of hawkish foreign policy closely aligned with the president over time, and politically knowledgeable Democrats were less easily swayed by threatening media messages. As the information and political environments became more diverse, Democrats were more able to resist foreign policy messages that they disagreed with. Yet, the experimental evidence shows that while some Democrats disregarded threatening messages about terrorism, the emotional aspects of the news still successfully persuaded those 70 percent of Democrats concerned about

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future terrorism to adopt hawkish policies even though their predispositions were relatively dovish. Both the survey data and the experimental data demonstrate that Republicans supported hawkish policy more than other citizens but were less influenced by media messages than were Democrats or Independents. Republicans did not need the emotional rhetoric and imagery within terrorism stories to persuade them to support hawkish policies consistent with their ideology and the positions taken by Republican elites. Even with the passage of time from 9/11 and with a more diverse political context, citizens who normally prefer dovish policy were still affected by evocative reminders of terrorism. What these findings illustrate is that emotionally resonant messages may be powerful enough to affect attitudes even among those individuals who consciously discount the message but that not all citizens are responsive to even the most emotionally powerful messages.

Citizens do not form foreign policy attitudes only to ignore those attitudes in the voting booth. Citizens are quite willing and capable of using their foreign policy views in order to evaluate the president as well as a basis for voting decisions for Congress and the presidency. Hawkish citizens evaluated George W. Bush's presidency quite positively and were more likely to vote for Republican candidates for the House, Senate, as well as the presidency. This project reveals asymmetries in the ways that citizens utilize their foreign policy views; individuals rely on their foreign policy attitudes much more in evaluating the Republican party and its candidates than in evaluating Democrats. This asymmetry suggests that the parties do not have equal incentives to mention foreign policy in campaigns or to try to persuade the public to update their opinions.

This project also suggests that in choosing a president, citizens do not look for

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perfect representation of their foreign policy views but rather prefer a president more hawkish than their own views. On average, NES respondents saw themselves as closer to John Kerry than George W. Bush on foreign policy during the 2004 presidential election. However, when respondents perceived Kerry as being more dovish than their own attitudes, they evaluated him significantly more poorly than when they saw Kerry as more hawkish than their own views. When Kerry was viewed as being too dovish, the cost to his evaluations outweighed the benefit that he received by being perceived as more hawkish than the public, suggesting that he was always better off taking hawkish foreign policy positions. Together, these findings suggest that in a time of threat when citizens prefer hawkish policy, they also prefer hawkish leaders and will electorally punish candidates who take foreign policy positions perceived to be too dovish.

The findings throughout the dissertation offer a new perspective on the mechanisms by which the media are able to influence the public under conditions of threat as well as what considerations the public weighs when forming attitudes on foreign policy. In the next section, I focus on two ways that this project helps to rethink previous scholarship on foreign policy opinion and political communication – by taking emotion seriously and by exploring the differences and similarities between foreign and domestic policy attitudes.

Taking Emotion Seriously

For many years, the overwhelming consensus in the political communication literature was one of "minimal effects" – that the mass media could not persuade the public or significantly affect their attitudes (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McFee 1954). The last two decades saw that minimal effects consensus overturned and a new consensus

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arise that the media do influence attitudes through a variety of mechanisms, among them agenda-setting, priming, and framing (Bartels 1993; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Kinder 1998). The effects of agenda-setting, priming, and framing all involve information – in the case of agenda-setting, the amount of emphasis that the media give a topic, the way that public weights information in evaluating leaders in priming, or in framing, which facts or pieces of information are emphasized over others. Through all of these mechanisms, the way that information is presented in the media can change decisions indirectly by changing what considerations individuals bring to bear when forming their attitudes. In writing on the press and foreign policy, Cohen (1972) stated this premise of agenda-setting, "The media doesn't tell us what to think but what to think about" (1972, 2). Scholars of framing consider how journalists construct stories – the type and credibility of sources, the strength of arguments, the concentration of information on one side or another – and find that frames change both the information that people use in making political decisions as well as the decisions themselves (Bennett 1990; Chong and Druckman 2007; Druckman 2001; Entman 2004).

Public opinion scholarship also mainly underscores the way that the public uses the information gained from the mass media to form their opinions and how the amount of information and the sources of information matter in attitude formation. Berinsky (2007; forthcoming) and Zaller (1992) pay close attention to the flow of elite cues – which political leaders are on which side of a foreign policy issue and how knowledgeable citizens match their opinions to those of their party leaders. Baum (2003) considers the way that soft news programs frame foreign policy news in human interest terms and affect the attitudes of low knowledge citizens. In addition, Baum and Groeling

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(forthcoming) pay close attention to how the public reacts to the partisanship and credibility of information sources in the media when making foreign policy decisions.

This emphasis on information is useful in understanding a good deal about public opinion, but it minimizes the possibility that the media can affect opinions through other means, such as by manipulating emotions. Certainly, the flow of information and the dominance of George W. Bush's War on Terror frame influenced the type of policies presented to the public after 9/11, particularly whether hawkish policy was considered legitimate and the best policy for fighting terrorism. Through analysis of the NES panel as well as several Pew surveys, this project showed that the amount and source of news significantly increased the probability of supporting hawkish policy. From content analysis (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2007; Bodystun and Glazier 2008), we know that newspaper and television news coverage of the War on Terror prominently featured threatening information and pro-administration frames. This suggests that the more news consumed, the more likely citizens were to receive large doses of threatening information linked to the president's policy messages. Yet, the experimental evidence presented in Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrated that while threatening information may matter, the pairing of information and emotion is potentially even more powerful in moving attitudes.

This project takes information seriously, but it also explicitly considers the ways in which the mass media can influence opinions by its own devices – through the tone and presentation of information. The threat theory posits that the mass media are not simply a conduit for information devoid of emotion. The medium of television, especially, is a visual medium that can both attract and maintain viewers through creating a sense of excitement or uncertainty. Emotions, particularly negative emotions like fear,

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alert individuals to pay close attention to their surroundings and seek out additional information (Brader 2006). Especially in foreign affairs, where issues may be complicated, journalists and media outlets have an incentive to draw consumers in through dramatic coverage. Terrorism stories in particular provide the media with dramatic storylines– victims and perpetrators, good and evil – as well as with dramatic images of death and destruction. These images and the emotions that they arouse significantly affect foreign policy attitudes when they are coupled with a hawkish policy frame. The Threat Experiment demonstrated that when individuals are concerned about terrorism, exposure to a terrorism story with threatening information but without emotion influenced foreign policy views less than the same information with added emotion. This means that information and emotion may have separate influences on opinion and it is important to consider both in a theory of media effects. Clearly, not all news is as dramatic as terrorism, so considering emotion in an area such as tax policy may not be fruitful; however, ignoring the role of threat and emotion in media effects may underestimate the impact of the media for many policy areas, including foreign policy. This suggests that research in political communication should consider the role of emotion, not just information, in theory building and in estimating the effects of the news on public opinion and behavior.

In addition to highlighting the importance of emotion in political communication about foreign policy, this project also suggests that studies of foreign policy attitudes should consider the differences and similarities between domestic and foreign policy.

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Foreign policy opinion is and is not like domestic opinion

In his seminal work *Public Opinion,* Walter Lippmann asserted that in foreign affairs, the government is less constrained in policy making than on domestic policy because the policies were so physically removed from the populace and because citizens were less likely to hold attitudes on foreign policy. Lippmann wrote, "In foreign affairs the incidence of policy is for a very long time confined to an unseen environment... governments go along according to their lights without much reference to the people. In local affairs the cost of a policy is more easily visible" (1922, 154). Much of the scholarship on foreign policy opinion argues either implicitly or explicitly that the public's attitudes on foreign and domestic policy are distinct and are shaped by significantly different factors. A great deal of literature on foreign policy opinion argues that salient events such as war casualties directly affect support levels for foreign policy and war without accounting for the ways that both elites and the mass media may affect the framing of those events (Feaver and Gelpi 2004; Mueller 1973). After the 9/11 attacks, the United States did not suffer any further terrorism at home, yet public opinion did not return to pre-9/11 levels nor did support for hawkish policy decrease evenly across all citizens, suggesting that events alone cannot explain foreign policy opinions in this era. In forming their attitudes about foreign policy, Americans respond not simply to the 9/11 attacks but rather to the political environment surrounding the War on Terror much as they do on domestic issues – based on which elites support which policies and how those policies are portrayed in the mass media.

In looking at foreign policy as a separate dimension of opinion, the event-based scholars ignore how the public's individual-level predispositions such as partisanship and

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their level of media consumption may influence how citizen interpret events and casualties. Like Berinsky (2007; forthcoming), Zaller (1992), Hurwitz and Peffley (1987), and Baum and Groeling (forthcoming), this project considers how the same processes that affect domestic opinion also affect foreign policy attitudes. The theoretical perspective in this dissertation considers how partisanship influences the types of policies that citizens are willing to support, the elites that individuals will turn to in times of crisis, and the kind of information that is persuasive to citizens. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, partisanship mattered for the level of support for hawkish policies but not for the increase in support over time. That is, in 2002, more Republicans than Democrats supported hawkish policy in absolute terms but after the attacks, all partisan groups increased their support for militant policies at the same rate. However, the bi-partisan spirit that helped pass the Congressional resolution for military action against Afghanistan by a vote of 520-1 was not sustained as the War on Terror became split along partisan lines (Bloch-Elkon and Shapiro 2005). The polarization that occurred on foreign policy attitudes between citizens occurred on issues where the parties most clearly disagreed, suggesting that citizens recognized the splits between elites. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, by the time of the 2004 election, Democrats were significantly less supportive of the president's handling of terrorism and the Iraq war than Republicans, but partisans were less split on foreign policy spending where there were less clear differences between the parties.

Partisanship also influenced how concerned citizens were about future terrorism over time. In the years after 9/11, Democrats expressed more concern over future terrorism than Republicans but were also more likely to discount threatening information about terrorism when they believed that the information was manipulative. Given that the

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information about terrorism that Republicans and Democrats received in the Threat Experiment was identical, it appears that partisanship can determine citizens' interpretation of events. These findings suggest that theories of foreign policy opinion that do not account for the role of partisanship may not capture the full dynamic of how citizens form their attitudes on foreign policy. Citizens use many of the same considerations in developing their foreign policy views that they use in domestic policy attitudes, particularly partisanship. Theories that ignore these considerations in favor of considering particulars of each crisis may miss the commonalities between domestic and foreign policy and also how the flow of political information influences attitudes.

While attitudes about foreign policy are like domestic policy, in that they are shaped in good part by partisanship and considerations picked up through the mass media, in other ways, foreign policy is quite unlike many domestic policies. It is important for research on foreign policy attitudes to consider how threat matters for foreign policy attitudes. Throughout this project, it became clear that threat perception is key to understanding what types of foreign policy that citizens prefer in crisis times. Citizens' concern over future harm does motivate action on domestic issues (Miller and Krosnick 2004) and threat underlies attitudes on a wide variety of policies such employment, gay rights, healthcare, crime, and race policy. Yet, it seems likely that the more existential threats found in international relations means that threat may be a more powerful determinant of foreign policy attitudes than domestic policy attitudes most of the time. During the Cold War, the threat of communism, that is, the threat of ideological and physical decimation of the United States, shaped how political leaders framed foreign policy and shaped public support for policies toward the Soviet Union, Central America,

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Korea, and Vietnam (Bartels 1994; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987). In the post-9/11 era, citizens who perceive a great deal of threat in the political environment, who believed that a terrorist attack to be likely in the near future, are the most strident supporters of hawkish foreign policy and much less supportive of more cooperative types of policies such as foreign aid. Unlike many areas of domestic policy, where self-interest matters significantly for attitudes, sociotropic threat or a concern over the fate of the nation, is a more powerful predictor of attitudes than a fear of victimization of oneself or one's family.

Because the specter of terrorism may pose a more serious and more immediate risk to the nation than the threats inherent in many domestic policies, and because the issues at stake in foreign policy are not always easily linked to the long-standing divisions between the parties, the actions of political elites may be more reserved in times of foreign policy crises. There may be reasons for the opposition party to take similar positions as the president and the party in power and the pressures to be "patriotic" may unify elites on foreign policy more often than on domestic policy. Neither party wants to come out on the "wrong side" of history, and in times of crisis when the country is rallying behind the president, political elites may face an incentive to line up behind the president and stifle dissent (Brody 1991). This means in crisis times, that citizens will face more limited political options than in more peaceful times and more limited options than on domestic issues. Politicians may also confront incentives to take tougher, more punitive stands on foreign policy to retain the trust of citizens and the respect of foreign adversaries (Berrebi and Klor forthcoming), a phenomenon that may also exist to a lesser degree with domestic policy.

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This is not to say threat does not affect attitudes on domestic policy or that the way that the threat is communicated to the public will not push the public in a more punitive direction on domestic issues. In fact, it seems likely that the same mechanisms that affected foreign policy attitudes – threatening information paired with emotional imagery – would also influence attitudes on a number of policy issues such as public health, immigration, or crime. Researchers in public health demonstrate that moderate or mild fear appeals are persuasive to individuals and can motivate behavioral change in order to avoid the danger discussed in the appeal (Witte and Allen 2000). This literature also shows that attitude and behavioral change is contingent on the perceived efficacy of the response – whether respondents believe that the course of action will be effective and when they themselves are able to take the action (Witte and Allen 2000). However, when fear is too strong or respondents perceive the remedy as ineffective, they may use defensive behaviors such as avoidance rather than take the recommended course of action (Witte 1992). In the case of foreign policy, the perceived efficacy of policy is also an important moderator of citizens' attitudes. However, because it is difficult to observe how effective counterterrorism policy is, citizens rely in part on their partisanship in order to judge which policies most effectively keep the country safe. As the parties split on foreign policy and there was competition over which policies would more effectively counter the risk of terrorism, Democrats could more likely use defensive measures to avoid threatening information intended to change their attitudes. The evidence that politically knowledgeable Democrats rejected the strong fear appeal in the Threat Experiment in the scary visuals condition but not the more moderate fear appeal in the

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neutral visuals condition suggests that Democrats employed a defensive mechanism in ways found in public health campaigns.

Immigration attitudes are also moved in a more punitive direction under conditions of threat, and exposure to fear-inducing advertisements leads citizens to support a variety of policies to deny services to immigrants and increase spending on the border. Like the information environment surrounding terrorism, the information about immigration is heavily skewed toward threatening and negative information (Hayes 2008; Simon and Alexander 1993). Fear about immigration leads citizens to want to learn more about immigration, but fearful citizens are more attracted to and more likely to remember negative information than positive information (Albertson and Gadarian 2008; Gadarian and Albertson 2008). Brader, Valentino, and Suhay (2008) also demonstrate that when individuals are made anxious about the costs of immigration, they are motivated to seek relevant information but that the information that they seek is skewed in one direction. When asked whether they would like to receive information from a variety of sources, experimental subjects who received a cue that low-skilled Latino immigration was costly to the United States requested more information than respondents in the control condition. These anxious subjects were most likely to request information from anti-immigration interest groups rather than more neutral sources. There is also evidence that political elites and interest groups use mediated images of immigrants in ads in order to induce fear about immigration as well as persuade citizens to adopt more punitive attitudes. These ads appear to have been successful in a number of cases, including California's Proposition 187 campaign, a measure designed to deny social services to illegal immigrants. In the campaign for California's Proposition 187 in 1994,

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commercials supporting the proposition featured threatening voices declaring “They just keep coming” paired with grainy images of immigrants darting across the highway, sneaking across the border. An ad for Bob Dole in the 1996 presidential election featured menacing Latino immigrants invading the country, filling prisons and schools, victimizing citizens. "We pay the taxes. We are the victims. Our children get shortchanged," the ad said as the camera zoomed in on a classroom full of white teenagers, suggesting Americans should be very concerned over illegal immigration and willing to stop it. In an experiment that used anti-immigration ads designed to induce fear about immigration, Albertson and Gadarian (2008) show that when a fear ads is used to induce anxiety about the effects of immigration, experimental subjects want to significantly reduce support for immigrants’ access to government programs and services.

These findings suggest that in a policy area where there are resonant images that can induce fear, elites have an opportunity to persuade citizens to support preferred policies, particularly punitive policies. Crime policy also fits this definition – images of victimization are common in news coverage of crime and can be used in campaign ads to induce support for “tough on crime” candidates. Iyengar (1991) showed that when crime stories are framed episodically that viewers are likely to support stricter and more certain punishment for criminals. Yet the issues surrounding crime are racialized (Mendelberg 2002), and as such, who is portrayed as a victim or a perpetrator in the news matters significantly for how punitive citizens prefer crime policy to be (Gilliam, Valentino, and Beckman 2002; Iyengar 1991). It is certainly possible that the images of terrorism used on the national news and within the Threat Experiment induce negative emotions in

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Americans not only because those images invoke a fear of death, as suggested by psychologists (Landau et al 2004), but also because of racial animus. Whatever the root cause of the emotional response, to the extent that the mass media reports of terrorism or crime feature evocative imagery paired with threatening information, American citizens concerned about these issues are likely to support punitive policies as a result.

One question that remains unanswered by this project is whether the information and threatening imagery that is a prominent feature of television news coverage is equally able to persuade citizens to adjust their attitudes in a less punitive or more liberal direction as in a hawkish direction. Is the power of destruction, devastation, and victimization on attitudes symmetric or asymmetric? Can emotional images of disaster victims or drowning polar bears convince Americans to demand more action from the government on global warming? Would a more dovish president be able to link frightening images of terrorism to a call for more cooperation abroad or for the need for additional foreign aid? In a speech on Super Tuesday 2008, Barack Obama did connect 9/11 to a broader range of foreign policy, including the environment and genocide. In Illinois, the candidate said:

> When I'm president, we will put an end to the politics of fear, a politics that uses 9/11 as a way to scare up votes. We're going to start seeing 9/11 as a challenge that should unite America and the world against the common threats of the 21st century, terrorism and nuclear weapons, climate change and poverty, genocide and disease. (Feb 5, 2008)

The threat theory suggests that it is possible for emotion to be utilized in a variety of policy directions, and for this type of rhetoric to successfully influence attitudes in a dovish direction. The political circumstances of the post-9/11 era do not allow for a test of this hypothesis; it is not possible to rerun the 2000 presidential election to see how a

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President Gore would have reacted to the 9/11 attacks. However, in an experiment that tests the persuasiveness of dovish versus hawkish cues when each is connected to an emotionally powerful terrorism image, I find that fear does increase the persuasiveness of both types of cues, but only when those cues come from elites of the same party (Gadarian 2008). Fear can be linked to a wide variety of foreign policies but its effect is limited by the relationship between the elites advocating the policies and the cue recipients.

Overall, this section suggests that considering foreign policy attitudes as separate from domestic policy attitudes may be misleading. Yet, there are elements of foreign policy views, particularly threat, that may be less consequential for domestic policy opinions and should be considered to more fully account for foreign policy opinion formation. Lastly, this section argues that the mechanisms that influence foreign policy opinion – a threatening frame linked with evocative imagery – may also affect attitudes on public health, crime, and immigration.

Implications

While this dissertation considers a particular issue - foreign policy opinion formation - at a particularly extraordinary point in time, the project holds implications for broader democratic theory. In particular, the findings raise questions about whether the mass media assists or impedes deliberation on foreign policy issues. Additionally, the project also raises the questions of whether elites and the media can use threat in order to persuade and/or manipulate the public and raises questions as well about what types of leaders and the kind of representation the public wants in times of threat.

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Deliberation

In comparison to the ideal of a knowledgeable and informed citizenry, the American public falls far short. Americans' overall level of political knowledge is quite low, and knowledge of foreign policy is even lower than that of domestic policy (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Looking at more than 500 separate public opinion questions on foreign policy, Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) found that only 36 percent of the questions could be answered correctly by half of respondents while nearly a quarter of questions could be answered by fewer than a quarter of respondents. This lack of knowledge raises concerns that rather than respond to the opinions of the public, political leaders should simply ignore the public in crafting foreign policy and try to move public opinion rather than respond to it. Yet although the public fails on civic exam questions, many democratic theorists believe that that citizens can become more informed and enlightened about policy through the process of deliberation (Fishkin 1995; Gutman and Thompson 1996; Habermas 1989).[33] Benjamin Page argues in *Who Deliberates* that public deliberation is essential to democracy to ensure that the public's policy preferences are informed, enlightened, and authentic (Page 1996). The payoff to deliberation is that citizens who deliberate will then be capable of forming opinions consistent with their beliefs and values and making demands of their representatives. While deliberation seems fundamental to representation, most citizens do not participate in formal deliberative settings such as town hall meetings, citizens forums, or Deliberation Day (Ackerman and Fishkin 2004), but the mass media can provide an outlet that may ultimately lead to a more deliberative and informed polity (Page 1996). Through reading newspapers,

[33] Rather than defining deliberation procedurally like some theorists do, by deliberation, I simply mean discussion of policies where citizens identify the interests on each side, ask questions, and consider the pros and cons of policies.

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watching television news, or searching online, citizens can not only learn facts about foreign policy but also become aware of the debates surrounding policies. However, to the extent that mediated deliberation is biased or skewed, citizens' attitudes will also be skewed and real representation cannot occur.

While the mass media can provide a forum for deliberation, the findings from this dissertation question the notion that during times of crisis and particularly in the time after the 9/11 attacks, the media provided a broad enough spectrum of political views to allow for even minimal deliberation about foreign policy. During times of high threat, such as the time following a terrorist attack, it is unsurprising that the most frequent and prominent voices in the mass media come from the presidential administration. Since the press tends to index coverage to reflect the balance of views in government (Bennett 1990), in times of trouble, when elite dissent is less prominent, then the media reflect this imbalance and most heavily cover the president's foreign policy frames and coverage (Entman 2004). The president's War on Terror frame and its hawkish policy solutions gained a great amount of legitimacy among the public by becoming a dominant voice on foreign policy after the 2001 attacks. When elite dissent dissolves, the public is likely to support the dominant views and may ultimately support policies that individuals would not when presented with alternative policies. Berinsky (forthcoming) shows that while attitudes about intervention in World War II were extremely partisan before December 1941, with citizens who supported FDR more willing to intervene than Republicans, after Pearl Harbor, when both parties converged on the president's policy, the public followed and became more supportive of entering the war. Similarly, after the 9/11 attacks, the

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parties converged on the president's foreign policy message, leaving little strong opposition to be covered in news coverage.

Journalists are hesitant to provide their own views opposing the arguments of political authorities for fear of looking biased. However, a one-message environment like the one after 9/11 cannot assist citizens in thinking through policy alternatives or the possible repercussions of policies. Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston (2007) write that if the press does not report sustained challenges to the government, particularly when the government is being deceptive, that public opinion will not become "meaningfully engaged in deliberation about important political considerations" (6). Additionally, media coverage that features alternative policies or opponents the president's policies whose political power is significantly less than that of policy proponents and who are therefore less credible (Guardino and Hayes 2008) also inhibits deliberation. Guardino and Hayes (2008) demonstrate that while national television coverage in the run-up to the Iraq War did feature opponents to war, opposition voices tended to come from politicians outside the United States or average citizens, leaving a power imbalance in the voices the Americans heard for and against hawkish policy.

An additional complication to the media's ability to assist with deliberation is the market pressure faced by news outlets. In a competitive media environment, when television news audiences are down and many citizens choose to opt out of news altogether (Prior 2007), journalists and executives face incentives to keep and attract viewers. In his theory of media politics, Zaller (1999) makes a similar point; he predicts that journalists are best able to produce "high quality" news when they are insulated from market pressures, and that as media markets become more competitive, the marginal

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benefit of sensationalism increases. Given these incentives, the media may hype concerns about terrorism and portray the threat of terrorism in a particularly evocative way that serves to increase fear and also increase ratings.

From both the empirical work and the experimental results in this dissertation, we know that the public's foreign policy attitudes are different under different information conditions. In more emotionally charged information environments, threatened respondents were more likely to support hawkish policy than in more neutral environments. In the NES analysis, newspaper reading had no discernable effect on citizens' level of hawkishness while television watchers concerned about terrorism were likely to support hawkish policy. In the experiment, the neutral visuals condition did not increase hawkishness over the control condition while the scary visuals condition did increase support for general hawkish policy as well as specific foreign policy such as sending troops to fight terrorism in Sudan. The differences in the findings between the more neutral information environment and the more evocative one suggests that citizens go through a different process of judgment and decision-making when emotion is involved than when it is not.

These findings do not suggest that emotionally powerful news necessarily leads citizens toward bad decisions or that hawkish policy was the wrong response to 9/11, but rather that since the information environment did not feature a variety of views on foreign policy, when citizens became scared about terrorism, they found few policy solutions reflected in media coverage. Fear does not stop individuals from thinking and does not necessarily lead citizens to blindly accept politician's political positions. But since fear does open individuals up to new information (Marcus et al 2000), to the extent that the

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information environment is one-sided, fear leads citizens toward the available policy options and may lessen the probability of deliberation of alternatives.

The mass media can provide opportunities for citizens to learn and deliberate, but the implication of the findings from this dissertation is that in times of crisis, if journalists simply index coverage to the distribution of elite voices, then public deliberation is less likely because elite deliberation is less vigorous. Additionally, television's emphasis on conflict and threat and the incentives to gain viewers through evocative coverage suggest that the media may ultimately lead citizens toward particular policies rather than simply "keep(ing) tabs on the political world" (Schudson 1999, 238). In 1960, Clinton Rossiter expressed the concern that television especially makes democratic dialogue difficult because of the emphasis on the visuals and the paucity of substance. In writing for the President's Commission on National Goals, Rossiter wrote that television was becoming the "Circus Maximus rather than the Forum of American democracy…the democratic dialogue is in real danger of being smothered" (1960, 72). While it would be overstating it to suggest that democratic dialogue was smothered in the post-9/11 era, this project suggests that in times of crisis, the mass media do not provide an adequate forum for citizen deliberation. If the media comply with the storyline provided by political elites, particularly the presidential administration, if the media "embed" with the administration without challenging the dominant frame, then the potential for citizen deliberation is quite limited.

Elite persuasion and manipulation

One of the other implications of this dissertation is that emotion can significantly influence the public's attitudes and that fear may cause attitude change even when

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citizens try to actively resist it. This suggests that fear appeals may not only be persuasive but manipulative, raising questions about the conditions under which emotional appeals may help the public form opinions and when they may inhibit citizens from forming attitudes in line with their best interests. Emotion on its own should not necessarily be viewed with suspicion. Fear may serve the populace well by promoting information seeking and vigilance, and be a pathway to a more informed citizenry. Certainly, when fear is used to warn the populace about a genuine threat, this emotion assists citizens in becoming focused and learning more. Bryan Gartsten (2006) argues in *Saving Persuasion* that anxiety might actually be a key to deeper reflection.

> Deliberation and judgment therefore seem to emerge not in sedate citizens who reason, as Rousseau once proposed in the 'silence of the passions' but instead in citizens who have been disturbed out of their calm and made attentive by sharp feelings of anxiety. Partiality and passion together, in the form of anxiety, can prod reflection (Garsten 2006, 196)

News reports about terrorism surely helped passengers on an American Airlines flight in December 2001 stay alert to the potential for terrorism, so when a passenger attempted to bring down the plane with a shoe bomb, they were ready to thwart the attempt and save the plane. Thus, the perception of threat was accurate in shoe-bombing situation, and fear served those individuals well. Alternatively, though, emotion may increase the potential for bias in reasoning and open citizens to faulty political arguments that may not be challenged. As Brader writes, "Emotion, like rationality, does not ensure desirable or good outcomes; emotion assists the democratic citizen in self-governance *and* can facilitate manipulation and error" (2006, 195).

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So when does fear turn from a powerful tool of persuasion to one of manipulation? Persuasion can be defined by the ability to provoke a change in people's beliefs while they use their own judgment to evaluate the arguments (Gartsen 2006). One way to judge whether elite appeals are manipulative is to ask whether politicians "knowingly present information in a way that leads citizens to behave contrary to their true interests" (Brader 2006, 193). While this standard is a useful one, it seems difficult to use in the particular case of terrorism since citizens' "true interests" in this policy area are not entirely clear other than safety and security. It is also difficult to know the private information of political elites and to know whether the president knowingly presented false or misleading information about the War on Terror. It also seems implausible to argue that the media intentionally frightened the public with images of terrorism to increase support for hawkish policy. Another standard is when elites portray a threat as being more serious than it is, a fear appeal may be unjustified. According to John Mueller (2006), the probability of any person around the world dying due to terrorism is approximately 1 in 80,000, which is a similarly small probability as one's likelihood of dying from an asteroid or comet hitting the planet. This suggests that given this extremely low probability, no fear appeals in this area are justified and that all appeals hyping the threat of terrorism are manipulative. It is clear from both the survey analysis and the experimental results that the citizenry was significantly less hawkish in a less emotionally evocative information environment, yet this may be a marker of either successful persuasion or manipulation. Whether one believes that the foreign policy opinions reached by the public under the emotionally charged atmosphere are manipulative may be

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due to one's own ideological proclivities more than either one the standards set forth here.

Without knowledge of the workings of the Bush White House, we cannot adequately judge whether the president knowingly provided information intended to cause citizens to behave against their true interests. The administration, though, did utilize evocative images of terrorism in explaining and marketing foreign policy, including the War in Iraq. The findings from this dissertation imply that this strategy was a winning one in convincing the public to set aside their partisan and issue positions and adopt the president's policies, at least in the short term. In persuading the American public to support the War on Terror, the presidential administration often tied policy explanations to verbal and visual reminders of terrorism. Reminding the public of terrorism served to increase presidential approval as well as support for the president's policies. In October 2001, in the wake of the terrorist attacks, 91 percent of respondents to the Gallup poll approved of how George W. Bush was handling the presidency. Each time the Department of Homeland Security raised the threat alarm system, the president's approval ratings increased (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2007), giving the president more leverage to pursue his preferred foreign policies. Persuading Congress and the American public to take military action against the Taliban in Afghanistan, who provided a safe haven for the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks, proved relatively easy. Yet the Bush administration not only launched a war in Afghanistan but a broader War on Terror that necessitated persuading the American public to support an open-ended military commitment to wiping out a stateless, ideologically driven enemy. In order to convince the public that hawkish policy was necessary, the administration touted the framing that

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terrorism would only be defeated through hawkish means and that threat necessitated a strong response.

In advocating this hawkish policy, the president consistently referenced the 9/11 attacks in the hundreds of speeches and press conferences on national security and co-opted the imagery associated with 9/11 as part of the frame (Entman 2004; Gershkoff and Kushner 2005). The president's campaign staff also utilized terrorism images to make the case for re-electing the president. During the 2004 presidential campaign, the Bush campaign team debated about how scary to make the candidate's ads since they had evidence from focus groups that the images of flag-draped coffins and the burnt out wreckage of the World Trade Center increased a sense of fear in the viewing public (Thomas 2004). Bush campaign strategist Mark McKinnon described focus group respondents' reactions to ads created in March 2004 that depicted images like firefighters carrying a coffin. He said, "When you talk about a 'day of tragedy,' the dials just go boom!" (Thomas 2004, 128). *Newsweek* called the ads a "shocking stumble" and some widows of 9/11 victims criticized the ads as exploitative.

George W. Bush successfully relied on emotional appeals to persuade the public to support his policies and his re-election in good part because of the use of emotion was successful but in good part because this strategy was not forcefully countered by either the Democratic opposition or the mass media. A large proportion of the effectiveness of the hawkish message was not due to the inherent strength of the argument but rather in the presidential administration's ability to effectively shut out alternative arguments. When alternative viewpoints did emerge, citizens were more able to counter the president's emotional appeals, suggesting that there are limitations to the power of

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emotion to sway the public. However, whether one judges the continued use of emotional appeals to be effective persuasion or manipulation depends on whether one believes that the hawkish policies pursued by the government increased safety and security and were therefore in the best interest of the American people.

Representation – Choosing political leaders in times of crisis

A fundamental feature of democracy is that government is meant to reflect the values and opinions of its citizens. Democracy does not demand a one-to-one correspondence between the preferences of the majority and policy outcomes; however, the expectation of popular sovereignty is that the people's will translates into government action. However, one implication that arises from Chapter 7 on the 2004 presidential election is that in times of threat, the people may not always want perfect representation. On average, respondents in the National Election Studies perceived the Democratic party's foreign policy positions to be closer to their own, but these citizens evaluated Kerry and the Democratic party more positively when they perceived the Democratic party as being more hawkish than their own views than when they perceived the Democrats to have their own ideal foreign policy position. Threat may induce a preference not for a perfect mirror of public attitudes but rather a preference for strong political leaders with more militant positions than the public's positions. In addition, a threatening political environment may create incentives for candidates vying for the presidency, particularly Democratic candidates, to take foreign policy positions that are more hawkish than the public so as to not be punished for seeming too weak on national security. Voters in the 2004 election evaluated Kerry positively for hawkish foreign policy positions but decreased their evaluations even more greatly when they perceived

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Democratic party to be too dovish. This asymmetry in the way that citizens use foreign policy to evaluate implied that Kerry was better off by touting hawkish foreign policy messages than by distinguishing himself from Bush's position, leaving dovish citizens without either candidate to represent their views.

Elections in times of threat often highlight candidates' leadership qualities such as "strength" and "resolve" as important factors in the voting decision. Berinsky (forthcoming) argues that foreign crises can cause citizens to place a high value on leadership, benefiting the party in power, which helped FDR and George W. Bush get re-elected in wartime. Berinsky finds that in 2002 and 2004, as the threat of terrorism increased, that evaluations of George W. Bush's job became more positive and became tied more closely to evaluations of his leadership. Berinsky argues that the public's positive evaluations of the president's leadership helped to re-elect Bush in 2004. Merolla, Ramos, and Zechmeister (2007) also demonstrate that crisis times significantly influence the types of leaders that citizens prefer in office. Using experiments that compare reactions under a "good times" condition versus a "crisis" condition, Merolla et al find that respondents in the crisis condition perceive George W. Bush to be more charismatic than in the control condition and are also less likely to blame him for failures in Iraq. The authors suggest that in times of threat, citizens are apt to project charisma onto likely leaders and be more forgiving of policy missteps than in more peaceful times. They write, "…during times of crisis, individuals look for a strong, confident leader, and they project additional power, morality, and competence onto that individual" (39). From a different theoretical perspective, Terror Management Theory suggests that when crises create a sense of anxiety, individuals prefer leaders who they believe will save them from

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destruction and maintain their worldview (Landau et al 2004). Together, all of these studies suggest that the leadership qualities that citizens want in times of war and threat are different than those desired in times of peace or relative calm.

The findings from this project imply "strong leadership" takes on a particular meaning when the threat is terrorism. In the 2004 election, strong leadership was as much about "taking the fight to the terrorists" and a willingness to use the military in foreign affairs as it was about charisma. Citizens who saw the Democratic party as much more dovish than their own foreign policy position felt significantly more coolly, measured by a feeling thermometer, toward the party and its presidential nominee than citizens who saw the party as being "strong" on national security issues. John Kerry was actually evaluated 5 degrees more warmly on the 101 point feeling thermometer when NES respondents saw him as being more hawkish than their own foreign policy position than when they perceived that they shared the same position with Kerry. The public did not want, however, unrestrained strength in a president; NES respondents felt significantly more coolly toward George W. Bush as they perceived his foreign policy positions to be much more hawkish than their own.

Together, these findings suggest that in crisis times, citizens are willing to give more leeway to political leaders than in more normal times in producing foreign policy outcomes and thus may not want or receive direct representation. Even in more peaceful times, though, citizens and political leaders significantly differ in their preferences over foreign policies and priorities. Page and Barabas (2000) document large differences in the foreign policy views of political leaders and citizens between 1974 and 1998, some in the range of 30 to 50 percentage points. In particular, leaders are more willing to send troops

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abroad than citizens are. The authors surmise that some of these differences come from differences in information between the public and leaders, but many of the gaps come from differences in values. From the perspective of democratic theory, gaps between the preferences of the people and policy outcomes may be problematic, but when the people authorize a Burkean model of representation on some policy domains, the normative consequences are less clear. If citizens simply hand over the reigns of policy out of ignorance and elites do not provide adequate information or deliberative opportunities for citizens to form opinions, then the trustee model may not be normatively preferable. This model of representation becomes problematic when leaders artificially create crises in order to maintain power, provide false information about the consequences of policy, or cynically portray their foreign policy positions in elections. If citizens recognize the differences between their views and the views of their elected leaders and still choose a loose representation, this seems if not ideal, then perhaps not entirely problematic when political power is limited by institutional or other means. However, citizens must then be more monitorial than normal to hold leaders accountable when policies veer too far from their priorities and values.

Final thoughts

Crisis and threat are relatively common phenomena in the American landscape. In the past century alone, the country experienced numerous times when the nation seemed to be in peril - the Great Depression, Pearl Harbor, World War II, the Cold War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Oklahoma City bombing, September 11th. On all of these occasions, the public turned to the government for guidance about how best to protect and preserve the United States and its people. By using the threat of terrorism as an

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example, this dissertation illuminates how the American public forms attitudes in times of threat – how individual level psychology and the contours of the political environment interact to shape policy preferences. In extraordinary times, the interactions of elites vying for dominance over policy and the media vying for consumers creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in which the public must decide what type of foreign policy the government should engage in. When emotions are invoked by political leaders in speeches and ads and communicated to the public through the mass media, citizens form different opinions than they do under more stable conditions. When citizens are threatened and when that threat is linked to fear, citizens are willing to support hawkish policies to protect themselves, more willing to stand behind the president, and more willing to support a democracy that is less responsive to their preferences. Citizen attitudes are not automatically changed by mediated threats - partisanship provides a bulwark against emotion's persuasive power – but only when elites provide alternative voices and policies. Terrorism immediately changed the American landscape in 2001 and the continual threat of terrorism provides opportunities for political leaders and the mass media to affect whether the citizenry consents to sending fellow Americans to war.

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