U.S. Public Reactions to Terrorism: Threat, Emotion, and Reason

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ABSTRACT

In a population-based, online survey experiment, hypothetical terror attacks by the Taliban on U.S. soil, with the declared aim of coercing U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, increased support for the Afghanistan War compared to a terrorist threat. Attacks on a national symbol heightened support for war–and an angry desire for revenge–relative to attacks on a shopping mall. Mediation tests found that an anger/revenge factor mediated much of the attacks' effect on war support, but that a fear/threat factor did not. The findings lend support to the theory that terrorism heightens U.S. public belligerence by arousing anger and desires for revenge, and are problematic for theories stressing either the coercive or backlash effects of popular threat perceptions and fear, and the theory that backlash is heightened by terror attacks on civilian targets.

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Introduction

Would U.S. citizens favor a more rapid military withdrawal from Afghanistan if the Taliban mounted a lethal terror attack in the United States? Or would such an attack heighten public support for continuing or even escalating its decade-long military intervention? This paper uses a population-based survey experiment to assess and explain how U.S. citizens would respond–or at least how they think they would respond–to such an attack.

September 11th, 2001 obviously aroused a bellicose public response, but scholars disagree why. Most contend that public belligerence was heightened by the perceived terror threat, fear, or both (Gadarian 2010; Huddy et al. 2005; Malhotra & Popp 2012; Merolla & Zechmeister 2009; Pyszczynski et al. 2006). But others emphasize the role of anger, and find that fear was unrelated or even negatively related to support for force (Huddy et al. 2005; Huddy et al. 2007a; Lambert et al. 2010; Sadler et al. 2005; Skitka et al. 2006). In addition, at least one study found perceptions of the terror threat to be unrelated to approval of the Afghanistan War (Kam & Kinder 2007).

Most of these studies analyze the correlations between perceptions, emotions, and attitudes about actual attacks. However illuminating, it is difficult to distinguish in such data the effects of prior beliefs about terrorism and force, political discourse, and the attacks themselves. Using geographic proximity to, or images of, an attack has been employed to simulate individuals' exposure to terror attacks (Berrebi & Klor 2008; Fischhoff et al. 2005; Gadarian 2010; Gould & Klor 2010; Lambert et al. 2010; Landau et al. 2004; Merolla & Zechmeister 2009; Pyszczynski et al. 2006). But this method addresses neither the effects of a terror attack versus no attack, nor the effects of the

attributes of an attack. Longitudinal studies that happen to capture key attitudes before and after an attack would be better for studying such effects, but these are for obvious reasons extremely rare.

The present study uses a population-based survey experiment to tackle this question. U.S. citizens were randomly assigned to scenarios describing hypothetical suicide attacks on U.S. soil, as well as threat to launch such an attack. The attack scenarios were varied in terms of the target, death toll, and the terrorists' capabilities to inflict further damage.

The experiment is designed to test several theories, drawn or inferred from past work on public and national responses to terrorism and war. Two of the theories were just mentioned: that the threat signaled by terror attacks promotes public bellicosity, or that the evil nature of the crime arouses moral indignation and desires for revenge. Another holds that a particular dimension of threat–the perceived intentions of the terrorists, which in turn depend on the type of target attacked–determines public preferences for concessions versus force (Abrahms 2006, 2012). Yet another theory is the polar opposite of the first, positing that threats lead to support for concessions rather than for force (Pape 2003, 2005). Finally, rationalism predicts that citizens' preferences for concessions versus fighting will depend on publicly available information on the relative utility of these options.

The survey experiment analyzed here tests all five of these theories, although the tests of the rationalist theory are quite limited. The findings also have something to say about more developed literatures on the effects of threats, casualties, national identity, as well as instrumental and moral beliefs, on foreign policy opinion (e.g., Gartner 2008;

Gelpi et al. 2009; Herrmann et al. 2009; Herrmann et al. 1999; Rousseau 2006). They also bear on broader theories of reason and emotion in political attitudes (e.g., Brader 2006; Lupia et al. 2000; Neuman et al. 2007; Page & Shapiro 1992).

To the extent that public opinion constrains foreign policies (Foyle 1999; Jacobs & Page 2005; Sobel 2001; Baum & Potter 2008), research on public responses to terror also contributes to an ongoing debate about whether, when, and why terrorism coerces or backfires against democratic societies. Pape (2003, 2005; see also Rose et al. 2007) contends that a majority of suicide terror campaigns have elicited significant policy concessions, whereas Abrahms (2006, 2012) holds that states never make concessions to terrorists who attack civilians (see also Chenoweth et al. 2009; Jones & Libicki 2008; Kiras 2007; Moghadam 2006). Both scholars assume that public opinion shapes national policies. Of course, political leaders can often manipulate public opinion. But even then, understanding mass responses to accounts of terrorism clarifies how specific types of political discourse and policy frames affect public attitudes about the use of military force.

The next section outlines the five theories on how terrorism affects public support for concessions versus military force. This is followed by discussions of the survey experiment, the measures, and the data analysis. The conclusion reviews the theoretical and policy implications of the findings, as well as the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

Theories of Public Responses to Terrorism

A variety of theoretical insights have been raised to explain and predict popular responses to terrorism. To simplify the discussion and facilitate testing, I identify five theoretical arguments, some lumping together distinct psychological mechanisms that make similar predictions at least as far as the data analyzed here goes. This is not a comprehensive set of relevant theories; notable exclusions are framing and cue-taking theories, which are not tested here. But these five represent a set that is more complete than usually addressed in individual studies on the subject.

As noted, the most popular theory, at least for explaining U.S. post-9/11 bellicosity, is that public aggressiveness is heightened by threat perceptions, fear, or both. Both prudential and non-prudential mechanisms could generate such a "threat-backlash" effect. A substantial body of work argues that a "pretty prudent public" responds forcefully to traditional interstate security threats (Jentleson 1992; Jentleson & Britton 1998; Herrmann et al. 1999). An extension of this effect could explain findings of correlations between threat perceptions and support for force (e.g., Huddy et al. 2005; Malhotra & Popp 2012; Merolla & Zechmeister 2009; Pyszczynski et al. 2006). Of course, whether a bellicose response is in fact prudent depends on the costs and effectiveness of force. Deriving the threat-backlash theory from rationalist premises requires the assumption that military force is more cost-effective than retreat in diminishing the terror threat.

Some theories suggest that many people have counter-productive aggressive reactions to threat. Authoritarianism and terror-management theories posit that belligerence functions as a psychological defense mechanism against unpleasant feelings

of uncertainty or anxiety, rather than as a prudential national security strategy (applications to terrorism include Crowson et al. 2006; Huddy et al. 2007b; McFarland 2005; Pyszczynski et al. 2006). Because this study lacks the data needed to distinguish between these prudential, authoritarianism, and terror-management mechanisms, I lump all three together here into a single "threat-backlash" theory.

A second theory concentrates on a particular dimension of the perceived terror threat–the terrorists' perceived implacability. Abrahms (2006, 2012) argues that societies victimized by terrorism typically misperceive counter-civilian attacks as aimed at slaughter rather than political concessions. Societies respond pragmatically to this misperception, judging concessions to be futile against adversaries hell-bent on their destruction. Abrahms infers this effect from the psychological theory that people attribute the ultimate aim of an action to its immediate outcome (an effect known as "correspondence bias"), from anecdotal evidence (e.g., President George W. Bush's assertion that Al Qaeda "hates not our policies, but our existence"), and from evidence that states make far fewer concessions to terrorist groups that attack civilians than to those that attack military targets.

A third theory, which I call the "revenge" theory, holds that moral outrage and desires for retribution motivate support for force, and do so independently of security incentives. Social psychological theories of anger and justice predict angry and retributive reactions to harmful wrongdoing (see reviews by Carlsmith & Darley 2008; Gintis et al. 2005; Mackie et al. 2009; McCullough 2008; Tripp & Bies 2010). Punishing wrongdoing is often personally and socially useful. But careful research has found a

distinct and often dominant role of nonutilitarian motives for punishment, aiming at "just deserts" as an end-in-itself (Carlsmith & Darley 2008).

Although this research has focused on criminal justice attitudes and interpersonal retaliation, retributive motives might also affect public support for military counter-terror policies. This is suggested by correlations observed between support for force against terrorists and anger, an emotion closely linked to desires for retribution (Cheung-Blunden & Blunden 2008; Huddy et al. 2007a; Lambert et al. 2010; Sadler et al. 2005; Skitka et al. 2006). Other research has found similar effects in ethnic and other intergroup conflicts as well (e.g., Halperin 2008; Halperin & Gross 2010; Petersen 2002; cf. an early, influential study of intergroup anger by Mackie et al. 2000). Retributive motivations are also suggested by correlations found between support for military force against Iraq and death penalty support, a position closely associated with retributivist beliefs (Liberman 2006, 2007).

There is good reason to expect that national identity and norms moderate the effect of an attack on support for aggressive responses to terrorism. Many studies of intergroup emotion have found that identification with one's social group heightens the intensity of intergroup emotions, including angry reactions to harm (Gordijn et al. 2006). People especially concerned about national honor will be relatively outraged by attacks on their countries, especially those damaging national symbols; likewise, religious identity heightens sensitivity to attacks on sacred sites (Baron & Spranca 1997; Ginges et al. 2007; Lebow 2008; Riek et al. 2006). To the extent that armed forces are regarded as national symbols–as they are in the United States, if U.S. citizens' great pride in the U.S.

armed forces is any guide (Evans & Kelley 2002)–terror attacks on a nation's military assets should arouse more punitive reactions than the implacability theory would predict.

A fourth theory holds that perceived threat has an effect opposite to that predicted by the threat-backlash theory: elusive and dangerous terrorists can coerce targeted societies. Pape (2003, 2005) argues that the lethality and resolve demonstrated by suicide terror tactics often make policy concessions, such as granting territorial autonomy, a lesser evil than continued conflict and terror attacks. Fear and anxiety felt by citizens in attacked or threatened societies could have parallel, if more knee-jerk, effects. Psychological research has linked these two closely related emotions to risk aversion and threat avoidance, in both interpersonal and intergroup relations (Dumont et al. 2003; Huddy et al. 2005; Lambert et al. 2010; Sadler et al. 2005). In other words, to the extent that terrorism lives up to its name, terrorized citizens should favor "flight" over "fight."

A general rationalist theory would predict that threats would elicit resistance in some cases and concessions in others. Instead of assuming that most citizens see force as flatly effective (as in the prudential variant of threat/force theory) or as ineffective (as in the prudential variant of the coercion theory), rationalism assumes that such beliefs are inferred reasonably from relevant available information. Thus citizens' prior beliefs about the efficacy of force as well as new information–such as casualty rates and factors affecting the likelihood of victory–should influence support for war (Eichenberg 2005; Gartner 2008; Gelpi et al. 2009; Holsti 2004; Page & Shapiro 1992). Of course, new information often has unclear implications, even for experts (Jervis 1998; Tetlock 2005). Reasonable people might disagree, for example, about whether standing firm will increase or decrease the likelihood of further attacks.

However, even clear and readily available information about the utility of public policies, including the use of force, typically does not reach average citizens. Rational citizens with limited information thus rely on simple core beliefs and on elite cues in forming political attitudes (generally, see Lupia et al. 2000; Zaller 1992; on attitudes about war, see Berinsky 2009; Hurwitz & Peffley 1987). Such heuristics should lead prudential citizens to maintain stable positions absent dramatic new, relevant, and unambiguous information or changed elite cues. Either of these, however, should lead to revised opinions.

Rationalism might also account for the role of emotions in public opinion. Anger and fear often reflect situational incentives and in turn facilitate useful perceptual and behavioral "fight or flight" responses. These adaptive qualities probably account for these emotions' evolution in early humans. However, even if emotions are generally functional, they also sometimes misfire, leading to motivated bias, impulsiveness, and suboptimal behavior (regarding force, see Carver 2004; Mackie et al. 2000; Mercer 2005; Sell et al. 2009; more generally, see Marcus et al. 2000; Pham 2007; Vohs et al. 2007).

Limitations on survey time precluded testing all of the hypotheses derived from each theory. The hypotheses that we do test in our data analysis, using the survey experiment described in the next section, are summarized in Table 1. Not all of the hypotheses provide competitive tests between the theories, but there are enough unique predictions to permit some useful theoretical inferences.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Research Design and Measures

This section describes the population-based survey experiment and its usefulness and limitations for testing the threat-backlash, implacability, revenge, coercion, and rationalist theories of public reactions to a terror attack.

The Survey Experiment

The survey was conducted in two waves by Knowledge Networks (since acquired by GfK), which also provided previously collected data on demographics, ideology, and partisanship (on the high quality of KN data, see Chang & Krosnick 2009; Yeager et al. 2011). The first wave was fielded between October 28th and November 9th, 2011, and resulted in N=1,921 completions out of a random sample of N=2,946 online panelists (response rate=65.2%). A total of N=1,570 of the first-wave respondents completed the second survey between November 18th-29th (within-panel completion rate=82.1%). Probability weights were assigned to this second sample to reflect population demographics. In the analyses below, I dropped the 9.6% of surveys that were completed in less than one minute, which was insufficient time for attentive reading and responses, resulting in an N=1420 (mean group N=109).

The experimental treatment embedded in the survey was a manipulated vignette about a hypothetical Taliban suicide-bombing attack on the United States, accompanied by a threat of future attacks if U.S. military forces continued to occupy Afghanistan. All of the vignettes included a Taliban leader's photo and began with the same factual statement that the Taliban had killed Americans in Afghanistan and threatened to attack the United States unless it withdrew. The hypothetical terror attacks varied by target type

(a military base, shopping mall, or the Statue of Liberty), casualties (419 or 19), and the terrorists' capabilities (intelligence reports that the Taliban had acquired anthrax, vs. no mention of this), for a 3x2x2 between-subjects design. A thirteenth no-attack condition merely presented the factual statement about past Taliban actions, making no mention of specific targets, casualties, or anthrax.

A Taliban suicide-terror attack was chosen for three reasons. First, the use of highly lethal suicide bombings inside U.S. borders offers a relatively strong test of Pape's (2003, 2005) claim that suicide terrorism "works." Second, the Taliban is a relatively plausible terror foe, making it easier for respondents to accurately forecast their responses. The United States has been fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan for over a decade, has suffered many personnel and civilians casualties to terror tactics there, and already has received Taliban threats to attack the U.S. homeland. In fact, the Taliban mounted four lethal attacks on allied forces and government offices in Afghanistan–including the single deadliest attack to date on Americans in Kabul–just as the first wave of the survey–a two-wave panel study–went into the field on October 28th, 2011 (Nordland 2011). Finally, there is added value in forecasting U.S. public responses to what is arguably the most likely terror threat to the U.S. homeland for the foreseeable future.

The first wave included a brief seven-item questionnaire measuring national identification, retributiveness, and beliefs about the utility of the Afghanistan War for reducing the terror threat to the United States. This was administered approximately two weeks before the second wave, to avoid priming and artificial consistency effects on the post-test measures. The second wave opened with one of the thirteen randomly assigned

vignettes. Three randomly ordered blocks of questions followed the vignette. One block asked respondents to forecast–or to describe, in the no-attack condition–their support for U.S. military withdrawal vs. escalation in Afghanistan. Another asked about their perceptions of the Taliban's implacability, and a third asked about their feelings of fear, anger, threat, and revenge.[1] The wording of these questions, some in truncated form, appear in Table 2. Full question wordings and response options, along with additional details on the experimental stimuli, appear in the appendix.

The casualty and capabilities manipulations were designed to modulate threat perceptions; the magnitude of the death toll also should affect perceived wrongdoing. The target manipulation was intended to test the hypotheses that support for fighting would be increased by attacks on civilians (according to the implacability theory) and on symbolically-charged targets (according to the revenge theory). The no-attack condition, when contrasted with the attack conditions, offers further tests of all five theories. The coercion theory predicts diminished bellicosity following an attack, whereas the threat-backlash, implacability, and revenge theories predict the opposite.

Variables measuring psychological processes allow tests of meditational hypotheses, bearing in mind that such tests do not establish causal direction and can be biased by unmeasured covariates of the mediator variable (Green et al. 2010). The revenge theory holds that an attack's effects are mediated by anger and desires for

[1] An additional item, which asked about the Taliban's ability to kill more Americans, was omitted from the data analysis presented below because it was not closely related to the main study measures and was not a significant predictor of war support in multivariate regressions.

revenge, whereas the mediators for the threat-backlash and coercion theories are threat, fear, or both, and the mediator for the implacability theory is the perceived implacability of the attacker.

The study permits only limited tests of the rationalist theory. Rational citizens might disagree about the implications of these attacks and their attributes for the utility of the Afghan War. A new terror attack might reveal that a war was doing more harm than good, but it also might indicate that escalation was required to avoid looking weak and to restore the war's prior terrorism-suppressing effect. The data does not include a post-test measure of the perceived utility of force, which–if not overly contaminated by post-decisional justification–could be used to observe opinion updating and instrumental thinking.

A rationalist hypothesis that can be tested here is that the attack scenarios should have *some* impact on public bellicosity, except in the unlikely instance that they reveal no new information about the utility of force. Associations between measures of prior general beliefs about the war's utility and of war support, to the extent that the former is not overly contaminated by self-justification bias, would point to means-ends calculation, unless the new information had heterogeneous effects on those beliefs (e.g., by disillusioning over-optimistic hawks without making doves proportionately more pessimistic).

A few other limitations of this research design should be acknowledged at the outset. A common liability of survey experiments is that brief hypothetical vignettes, however plausible, are unlikely to have as strong emotional and cognitive consequences as is a real and startling event (Mutz 2011). Media coverage of actual, shocking news is

more likely to induce genuine emotions, information-seeking, and reflection. Arguably, ecological validity is most problematic in the realm of emotions. Although people usually can predict basic emotional reactions like anger and fear, they often have difficulty envisioning hypothetical situations, recalling their feelings about similar past events, or observing important differences between the two (Levine et al. 2012; Wilson & Gilbert 2003). Even if one accurately forecasts how one will feel, moreover, one still can fail to anticipate how those emotions would affect one's perceptions and motivations. People also have limited insight into their retributive intuitions (Carlsmith 2008). These considerations should make the tests of the emotion- and revenge-based hypotheses rather conservative.

Second, the survey's measures of the efficacy of the Afghanistan War (*Utility)* and of the futility of withdrawal (*Implacable)* are probably biased by post-decisional justification. People tend to endorse any claim that could be seen as a justification for their position, such as their position on a particular war, whether or not their position was shaped by that idea (Berinsky & Druckman 2007). Such self-justification bias was probably accentuated in these two measures because they are based on questions asking specifically about the consequences and utility of the war. Question-order effects can compound the problem by tempting respondents to justify positions they have just articulated (Rasinski et al. 2012). But these are addressed here by measuring the utility of the Afghan War two weeks prior to measuring war support and by randomizing question order. Still, other sources of contamination of *Utility* and *Implacable* by war support would artificially inflate their apparent significance, and artificially depress the apparent significance of other sources of war support.

Findings

My data analysis begins by examining the key measures. I then analyze how the experimental manipulations affected war support and the other post-test variables, before proceeding to the relationships among the measured variables.

Measures

The results of a seven-factor confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model are presented in Table 2. This model was estimated for only the respondents who were given the items on the implacability of the Taliban (used to measure the variable *Implacable*) before the items used to measure war support (*Prowar*). This is because preliminary analysis revealed a question-order effect that heightened self-justification bias. Measuring *Implacable* after *Prowar* increased their inter-correlation; this was not the case for the other post-test measures (for details, see appendix Table 2, Model 4). The most likely explanation is that people tended to adjust their estimate of the Taliban's implacability in order to justify just-stated positions, an effect probably aggravated by the questions' asking about the consequences of the use of force and of military withdrawal.

[Table 2 goes about here]

The CFA model fits the data well (Muthén & Muthén 2012). The high loadings of the anger and revenge items on a single *Anger/Revenge* factor indicate a very strong connection between these constructs. The fear and threat perception items also loaded on a single factor, which is more surprising given the clear distinction between the two found by Huddy et al (2005). The *Anger/Revenge* and *Threat/Fear* factors were highly

inter-correlated, suggesting variation in affective intensity that included both anger and fear. However, merging these into a single factor significantly worsened the fit with the data.

Experimental effects

A three-way ANOVA found no interactions between target type, casualties, and the anthrax warning (see Table 1 in the appendix), making it possible to focus on these attack attributes' main effects and to increase statistical power by pooling data on each attribute. Model 1 of Table 3 presents the results of regressing *Prowar* on the attack attributes, leaving aside the no-attack group. I used the factor scores for *Prowar,* and for the other dependent variables in this table, calculated from the CFA, as factor scores have more normal distributions and less measurement error than scale scores.

[Table 3 goes about here]

The only attribute with a statistically significant effect on war support was the Statue of Liberty target, relative to the shopping mall target, which was the reference category for the target variables in the model. The effect was small, representing an increase from the 50th to 59th percentile in war support. The effect of the military base attack was not statistically different from the attacks on the other two targets.

These were minor differences compared to those between the terror attack and no-attack conditions. Based on Model 2 of Table 3, a regression of *Prowar* on a dummy for the pooled attack scenarios, *Attack,* the attacks' average impact represented an increase from the 50th to 70th percentile of *Prowar*.

The belligerence-heightening effect of the terror attacks is contrary to the coercion theory, but consistent with the implacability, revenge, and threat-backlash theories, as well as with the rationalist hypothesis that new information is likely to prompt some change in preferences. The public's relative belligerence following the attack on the Statue of Liberty–a national symbol–is explained best by the revenge theory. The fact that the shopping mall attack failed to increase war support over the military base attack is problematic for the implacability theory, which holds that attacks on military targets should result in less belligerence than attacks on civilian targets.

The lack of any effect of the death toll and the anthrax warning, because these manipulations objectively signaled a greater threat, is problematic for all the threat-based theories. But it is conceivable that the manipulations were simply not perceived, or not perceived as signaling a greater threat. This can be probed further by examining these conditions' effects on *Threat/Fear,* shown in Models 3 and 4. The anthrax warning, but not the death toll, slightly increased *Threat/Fear*. The death tolls might have been irrelevant because they were attributed more to chance than to the terrorists' dangerousness. Possibly, people found the high-casualty scenarios less plausible than the low-casualty ones, weakening their net effect on threat perceptions. A third possibility is that the death toll simply was not noticed, which would nullify the theoretical implications of their insignificant effects.

The effects of the experimental manipulations on *Anger/revenge* were similar to those on *Prowar*: the attacks, and especially the Statue of Liberty attack, heightened anger and desires for revenge relative to a mere threat. This finding is best explained by the revenge theory, which predicts an indignant and vengeful response to assaults on

one's country, particularly those striking at a national symbol. Moreover, the irrelevance of the anthrax warning suggests that anger and the desire for revenge were not a byproduct of threat perceptions and fear, despite their strong relationship.

People described the Taliban as more significantly implacable following the Statue of Liberty and military base attacks than after the mall attack, as can be seen in Model 7 (as with the CFA, this model and Model 8 were estimated only for people who received the *Implacable* items before the *Prowar* ones, to minimize self-justification bias). The greater perceptions of implacability following the military base attack, relative to the mall attack, runs contrary to the implacability theory. So is the statistical equivalence of implacability perceptions following the Statue and military base attacks (M=-.20 vs. -.15; F[1,675]=.14, p=.71).

Relationships among the observed variables and the terror attacks

The relationships between war support and the other observed variables, and indirect effects of the attacks, provide further evidence on the five theories. To take account of measurement error, I estimated the structural equation model illustrated in Figure 1, using the same CFA measurement model described in Table 2 and only the cases in which the *Implacable* items preceded the *Prowar* ones. The path coefficients are unstandardized and weighted, and control for gender, age, education, liberal-conservative ideology, and partisanship.[2] (These controls, covariances among the pre-test and post-test variables, and paths failing to attain the p<.05 level are not shown in the figure, to make it

[2] No category of ethnicity was related to *Prowar,* and so was left out of the data analysis.

more readable.) The model fit indices indicate an overall very good fit with the data (Muthén & Muthén 2012).

[Figure 1 goes about here]

The model regresses *Prowar* simultaneously on *Anger/revenge*, *Threat/fear*, and *Implacable. Prowar* was significantly related to each, even when also controlling for the pre-test measures. A 10^{th} to 90^{th} percentile shift in *Anger/revenge* and in *Implacable* predicts increases in *Prowar* from its median to its 82^{nd} and 61^{st} percentiles, respectively; the same change in *Threat/fear* predicts a decrease from the median to the 29^{th} percentile of *Prowar*.

There is evidence here for all theories other than the threat-backlash one. Consistent with the coercion theory, but contrary to the threat-backlash theory, those who felt particularly threatened and fearful expressed relatively less support for the war. In addition, *Prowar*'s positive associations with *Implacable* and *Anger/revenge* are consistent with the implacability and revenge theories, respectively.

Several total and indirect effects are reported in the lower right corner of Figure 1. The indirect effect of *Attack* on *Prowar* through *Anger/revenge* represented 43% of its total effect on *Prowar* and was significant at $p<.03$. *Attack* had a smaller, negative effect through *Threat/fear*, which was significant at the $p<.1$ level. The direct path from *Attack* to *Prowar* indicates that the terror attacks heightened support for war above and beyond these effects. Keeping in mind the limitations of mediation tests mentioned earlier, the results are consistent with the revenge theory's hypothesis that terror attacks increase support for a military counteroffensive at least in part by fuelling anger and desires for revenge. Although weaker, the indirect effect via *Threat/fear* is at least consistent with

the coercion theory's expectation that a major attack would intimidate at least some people into greater support for retreat.

Additional revenge and rationalist hypotheses can be tested using the first-wave measures. The revenge theory predicts that those who generally believe in retribution and who identify strongly with the nation will be particularly belligerent, especially following a terror attack, an effect mediated by anger and the desire for revenge. But in the data, *Retributive*'s significant indirect effect through *Anger/revenge* on *Prowar* (b=.151; p<.01) was balanced by a comparable negative direct effect on *Prowar* (b=-.133; p<.07), leaving *Retributive* with no net effect on support for force. The data provides stronger support to the revenge theory's prediction that citizens strongly identified with America would be relatively bellicose toward the Taliban due to their anger and desires to avenge the attacks. The entire effect of *Nat'l Identification* on *Prowar* was mediated by *Anger/revenge*, and was hardly balanced by a much smaller negative direct effect through *Threat/fear.*

As noted earlier, the finding that the attack scenarios had *some* effect on war support is consistent with the rationalist hypothesis that new information is likely to change attitudes. The data on prior beliefs about the utility of force for protecting the United States against terrorism can be used to provide additional indirect tests of rationalist hypotheses.

First, the significant relationship between *Utility* and *Prowar* in the structural equation model is consistent with means-ends reasoning, at least to the extent that *Utility* is free of self-justification bias. The *Utility* coefficient in the model, like the coefficients of all the other observed variables, primarily represents associations for the large majority

of respondents in the attack conditions. One might expect that this association would be even stronger in the no-attack condition, due to the apparent lack of new information about the utility of the war. But for those unaware of the Taliban's threats to attack the United States, the information in this condition would have presented novel, and probably discouraging, information. Heterogeneous prior information about the war in Afghanistan would reduce associations between prior beliefs and war support in this condition, as less informed optimists would lose more enthusiasm than more informed pessimists. Differences in prior knowledge about the status quo should matter less in the attack conditions, which describe dramatic new developments overshadowing verbal threats.

A likely source of differences in prior knowledge about the Afghanistan War is chronic political awareness. This can be tested by using data on education-level as a proxy for political awareness (Price & Zaller 1993). In the data, citizens lacking college degrees–the majority of adult U.S. citizens–thought force was more effective against terrorism than did college graduates (*Utility* M =0.04 vs. -0.11; F[1, 1331]=7.78; p=.01).[3] The most likely explanation is that they were less aware of the ongoing war's challenges.

In turn, their rosier view of the war should have led them to more surprised and disappointed than college graduates by the verbal threat described in the no-attack condition. This logically would have resulted in a relatively weak *Utility/Prowar* relationship in the no-attack condition. This prediction is borne out in the three-way *Utility X College X Attack* interaction illustrated in Figure 2 (which is based on Model 6 of appendix Table 2). College graduates' beliefs about the utility of force strongly

[3] Preliminary tests with education categories found a nonlinear effect; the gap in beliefs was significantly larger between college students and the rest of the population.

predicted their positions in both the attack and no-attack conditions. But this was the case for less educated citizens only in the attack conditions. In addition, the difference in war support across conditions was greatest for less educated citizens who had previously expressed the rosiest views of the war (i.e., for higher values of *Utility* in the left-hand panel of Figure 2).

[Figure 2 goes about here]

These results suggest, consistent with limited-information rationality, that information in the no-attack condition about the difficulties and costs of war in Afghanistan changed the minds of mainly ill-informed optimists. But their overoptimism was unlikely to affect their views in the attack condition, which presented a radical new development in the conflict with the Taliban. Thus limited-information rationality can also explain why the *Utility* slopes did not differ between those with and those without college degrees following the attack scenarios.

Finally, the data also provides tests of the "rational emotions" variant of rationalism. The theory holds that those who see themselves as powerful tend to react to challenges with more anger than fear, and vice-versa for those seeing themselves as weak. In turn, these functional emotional reactions facilitate reactions of "fight" or "flight." However, the data provides at best mixed support to these hypotheses. Consistent with a rational emotions process, *Anger/revenge* was positively related to both *Utility* and *Prowar*. But the indirect effect of *Utility* through *Anger/revenge* was slight and significant only at the $p<.1$ level. The rational emotions theory is consistent with the close association between threat perceptions and fear, and with *Prowar*'s negative association with both. But the theory's prediction that perceptions of impotence would

heighten fear and perceived threat was contradicted by the positive relationship between *Utility* and *Threat/Fear*.

Conclusion

This study's findings lead us to expect that a Taliban terror attack on the U.S. homeland would heighten rather than diminish support for continuing the Afghanistan War. This reaction and several other key findings provide important insights into how and why terrorism affects public support for war and military occupation. After reviewing the evidence for and against each theory, this conclusion will discuss in turn the study's limitations, the questions it raises for future research, and its policy lessons.

Theoretical implications

The results are generally disappointing for coercion theory, i.e., that destructive acts of terror heighten support for concessions and retreat. People expressed greater support for the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan in response to a variety of hypothetical Taliban-sponsored attacks than in response to a mere threat of an attack. Moreover, the death toll and an official warning about the terrorists' capabilities–factors that coercion theory holds should increase support for concessions–did not affect war support. Fear and concern about the terror threat were negatively related to war support, as coercion theory would predict, but not strongly so. Thus, even if clearer signals of terrorist capabilities would have increased threat perceptions and fear, it is unclear that this would have overrode the attacks' belligerence-arousing effects.

Some support for coercion theory might be seen in the interaction between education and prior beliefs about the utility of force in the no-attack condition. Education's moderating effect suggests that information about the Taliban's threat of attack was especially discouraging to citizens with rosy images of the war. This in turn suggests that average Americans (the majority lacking college educations) would favor a more rapid withdrawal from Afghanistan if they knew more about the Taliban's continued hostility. So although a major terror attack resulted in an angry backlash, disenchantment from the simmering conflict is more consistent with coercion theory.

Overall, however, insofar as citizens' predictions of their own reactions to a major suicide attack resembles national reactions to suicide-terror campaigns, this study's findings run counter to Pape's arguments that suicide terrorism is an effective and rational coercive strategy. Of course, this study has investigated only the reactions of ordinary citizens, not those of leaders or states. But Pape's (2003, 2005) argument that terrorism extracts concessions from democracies rests on the premise of democratic responsiveness to public opinion.

The threat-backlash theory, which since 9/11 has become the conventional wisdom on U.S. responses to terror, also received relatively little support from this experiment. Terror attacks did elevate belligerence, as predicted, but this outcome is also predicted by the implacability and revenge theories. Contrary to the notion that threat arouses bellicosity, neither of the experimental manipulations of threat (the death toll and the anthrax warning) increased war support. In addition, rather than threat perceptions increasing support for force, as the theory predicts, they were associated with diminished bellicosity, after controlling for anger and revenge. These findings are problematic for all

the variants of this theory: that a "pretty prudent public" believes force to be inherently the best response to foreign dangers, that threat makes authoritarians more belligerent, and that belligerence functions as a psychological defense mechanism to ward of frightening thoughts of death.

Abrahms's implacability theory gains mixed support from the data. On the one hand, those who said the Taliban is implacable tended to support more strongly the continuation of the Afghanistan War. This finding is consistent with the theory, unless it is significantly exaggerated by justification bias. On the other hand, the data contradicted the theory's predictions that terrorists who attack civilians appear more implacable and elicit more resistance than do terrorists who attack military targets. Implacability attributions were lower following the shopping mall attack than following the military base attack, and the latter did not yield statistically less bellicosity than either of the counter-civilian attacks.

The revenge theory provides the best explanation of the terror attacks' effects. People felt greater anger and desires for revenge following the attacks, these feelings were strongly related to support for war, and the data fits the hypothesis that anger and revenge mediated much of the attacks' effect on war support. In addition, only the revenge theory can explain why citizens reacted particularly angrily, vengefully, and belligerently to an attack on the Statue of Liberty. This assumes that the symbolic nature of the Statue target logically did not signal a greater security threat to the United States or to individual Americans, an assumption verified by the lack of a significant effect of the Statue attack on *Threat/fear.* The revenge theory also accurately predicted that citizens who identified more strongly as Americans would be relatively belligerent, and that the

effect of national identity would be mediated by anger and revenge. These results are consistent with prior findings of cross-sectional correlations between anger and post-9/11 support for force against terrorists, their sponsors, and their allies (Huddy et al. 2007a; Sadler et al. 2005; Skitka et al. 2006), as well as with intergroup emotion theory (reviewed by Mackie et al. 2009).

However, not all of the revenge theory's predictions were borne out in the data. Individuals' general retributive values did not predict war support after controlling for beliefs about the efficacy of military force in reducing the terrorist threat. Nor was retributiveness a stronger predictor after the attack scenarios than after a mere threat (as was the case for national identification; both results are shown in the appendix Table 2, Model 4). One possible explanation is that this study's measure of the "just deserts" principle did not accurately capture people's retributive dispositions, whether due to a Western taboo on retribution (Jacoby 1983) or limited self-knowledge about why or how strongly they intuitively feel that "punishment should fit the crime" (compare Carlsmith 2008; Okimoto et al. 2011).

Another potential problem for the revenge theory lies in the high correlation between *Anger/revenge* and *Threat/fear* (refer back to the CFA shown in Table 2). It remains unclear if *Anger/revenge* affects *Threat/fear* (which would be consistent with the revenge theory), if *Threat/fear* affects *Anger/revenge* (which could redeem the threat-backlash theory), or if both are shaped by some other, unmeasured individual-difference variable. However, *Prowar*'s much stronger bivariate correlation with *Anger/revenge* than with *Threat/fear* (r=.435 vs. .224, from Table 2) shows that *Anger/revenge* was not

merely a mediator of *Threat/fear*. In addition, as noted, the effects of target type and the non-effect of the anthrax warning favor the revenge theory over the threat-backlash one.

The study's implications for rationalism are more modest. The fact that the public did respond indicates sensitivity to new information, even if uncertainty about how the attacks affected incentives for fighting versus withdrawal precludes a more specific prediction. Means-ends reasoning–if based only on simple hawk/dove heuristics–can explain why support for the war following the hypothetical attacks on the United States was related to prior beliefs about the war's efficacy. However, such reasoning must have been accompanied by widespread ignorance about the status quo, because this relationship shrank dramatically following an accurate description of a Taliban verbal threat to attack the United States.

In addition, rationalism offers no explanation for the relatively strong reaction to the Statue of Liberty attack and the impact of national identification. It has particular difficulty explaining the failure of the anthrax warning to dampen support for continuing the war.[4] Finally, although rational emotions theory can explain the findings on the emotional correlates of war support, it inaccurately predicts a strong positive association between utility-of-war beliefs and anger/revenge, and a strong negative association with threat/fear, offering little evidence for the proposition that emotions simply facilitate prudential judgment.

[4] Arguably, however, the anthrax warning might have elevated preventive war incentives to a degree that outweighed its short-run deterrent effect.

Limitations and Questions for Further Research

These findings must be qualified by uncertainty, inherent in the method employed here, about how well people can predict their own reactions to a momentous event. Respondents might not have read or reflected on the scenarios carefully. As noted earlier, it is possible that the death-toll manipulation was simply not perceived by the participants. Even carefully read, the vignettes undoubtedly lacked the impact of an actual attack. Predictions of one's emotions are particularly difficult. That said, it seems likely that many of these problems would tend to weaken participants' reactions to the experiment and to add measurement error, making the hypothesis tests more conservative rather than less. Absent systematic biases in these predictions (e.g., if it is more difficult to predict fear and threat perceptions than other kinds of reactions), it seems likely that the effects observed here would be considerably stronger following an actual attack.

Other limitations stem from potential justification bias in measures of beliefs about the war's utility and the adversary's implacability. There may be other distinct beliefs about force that these measures failed to capture altogether. Retributive dispositions might have been measured more accurately by asking whether "punishment should fit the crime" rather than questions about desert and suffering.

More work is also needed on the sources of threat, fear, anger, and revenge, and on the distinctions between them. It is unclear, for example, whether the relatively high correlation between fear and threat perception, compared to that found by Huddy et al (2005), is due to methodological or contextual differences. The correlation of these constructs to anger/revenge raises additional fundamental questions about the psychology

of threat and emotion. The harm and malevolent intent behind a crime typically affect appraisals of both wrongdoing (and hence anger and retribution) and danger (and hence utilitarian incentives for punishment). More fine-grained measures and experiments that manipulate retributive vs. instrumental incentives for punishment, such as those used to analyze criminal and interpersonal punishment attitudes, should be used to untangle these mechanisms (see reviews by Carlsmith & Darley 2008; Gintis et al. 2005).[5]

Finally, further research might identify important boundary conditions of the effects found here. How would different opponents, populations, and situations affect mass responses to terrorism? What are the effects of attacks against the homeland vs. equally lethal attacks in occupied foreign territory, and of a single major attack vs. a series of smaller ones? U.S. citizens might see the Taliban differently than other potential attackers, whether due to the Taliban's association with 9/11 or to the experience of a long war in Afghanistan. And attributes of U.S. society–such as its military predominance, nationalism, or values–could make Americans' reactions very different from those of Spaniards, Indians, or Israelis.

Implications for policy

Until further research resolves these questions, however, it seems reasonable to conclude that anger- and revenge-provoking factors, such as the harm inflicted and moral

[5] However, the inherently public nature of international crime and punishment preclude experimental manipulation of key situational factors, such as the difficulty of detecting a particular type of crime and the publicity of the sanction, that are typically used to differentiate deterrent and retributive incentives for punishment.

depravity of a terror attack, are likely to outweigh the actual danger it signals. Moralistic, good-versus-evil political discourse, moreover, are likely to inflame public support for force, which probably explains its frequent use by bellicose leaders (Ben-Porath 2007; Moerk 2002). Leaders wanting to deflate citizens' desire for revenge should instead trumpet just punishments already meted out, acknowledge offending actors' legitimate grievances, and encourage value-affirming activities (like donating blood or volunteering to help victims) to distract citizens from vengeful rumination (Exline et al. 2008; Skitka et al. 2004; Skitka et al. 2009). In addition, knowledge and publicity about such effects could help to counter their manipulative use, whether in support of military action or against.

To the extent that public opinion constrains or resembles the decision-making of political leaders, mass responses to terrorism will affect national policies. This information is useful for statecraft. For example, leaders should recognize that foreign policies bearing a risk of attracting terror attacks also entail subsequent domestic political pressure for military responses. Being able to predict how other societies will respond to terrorism should affect opportunities for third parties to join a military coalition, obtain side payments, or press for conflict resolution. It might affect terrorist organizations' strategies as well. Not all terrorist organizations seek to coerce the target (Abrahms 2008; Chenoweth et al. 2009), but those that do should be discouraged by evidence that major attacks are likely to fail or backfire.

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Table 1. Theories and Hypotheses on Public Reactions to Terrorism

Threat-backlash theory

A. Attack (rather than threat of attack) → threat perceptions → war support
B. Casualties → threat perceptions → war support
C. Terrorists' capabilities → threat perceptions → war support

Civilian-victimization-backlash theory

A. Civilian-victimization → perceived implacability → support for force
B. Civilian-victimization → perceived threat → support for force

Revenge-backlash theory

A. Attack (rather than threat of attack) → anger/revenge → war support
B. Casualties → anger and revenge → war support
C. Symbolic target → anger and revenge → war support
D. Retributivism → anger and revenge → war support

Coercion theory

A. Attack (rather than threat of attack) → threat perceptions and/or fear → diminished war support
B. Casualties → threat perceptions and/or fear → diminished war support
C. Terrorists' capabilities → threat perceptions and/or fear → diminished war support

Rationalism

A. Belief in utility of force → war support
B. New information about utility of force → change in war support

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Survey questions, standardized factor loadings (standard errors)							
	Utility	*Nat'l Id.*	*Retrib-utive*	*Anger/ Revenge*	*Threat/ Fear*	*Implac-able*	*Prowar*
Effect on terror threat of… "sending more U.S. forces to Afghanistan"	-.375 (.046)						
….of "withdrawing U.S. troops from Arab and Muslim states"	.710 (.035)						
Effect of "withdrawal from Afghanistan" on "likelihood of anti-American terror attacks coming from that country"	.910 (.032)						
When someone says something bad about America, how strongly do you feel it is as if they said something bad about you?		.928 (.041)					
How much does being an American have to do with how you feel about yourself?		.743 (.038)					
For the sake of justice, some degree of suffering has to be inflicted on an offender			.785 (.034)				
People who hurt others deserve to be hurt in return.			.903 (.035)				
If the terrorist attack described earlier actually occurred, how strongly would it make you feel…Angry				.923 (.022)			
….Hatred				.771 (.027)			
….A desire to hurt those responsible				.739 (.032)			
….Vengeful				.744 (.028)			
….Afraid					.713 (.026)		
….Worried					.817 (.019)		
….Concerned about future terror attacks					.949 (.011)		
….That more terror attacks are likely					.898 (.014)		
The terrorists are determined to kill as many Americans as possible, no matter what the United States does.						.986 (.062)	
The terrorists are likely to leave Americans alone if the U.S. withdraws from Afghanistan.						-.575 (.050)	
Should the United States withdraw all troops from Afghanistan?							-.834 (.018)
Should the United States increase…attacks on the Taliban [despite] hundreds of U.S. casualties?							.851 (.017)
Should the United States increase or decrease its military effort in Afghanistan?							.897 (.014)

Inter-factor correlations							
	Utility	*Nat'l Id.*	*Retrib-utive*	*Anger/ Revenge*	*Threat/ Fear*	*Implac-able*	*Prowar*
Utility							
Nat'l Identification	.412						
Retributive	.215	.317					
Anger/Revenge	.318	.511	.470				
Threat/Fear	.270	.344	.141**	.693			
Implacable	.431	.395	.170	.461	.311		
Prowar	.531	.370	.179	.435	.224	.451	

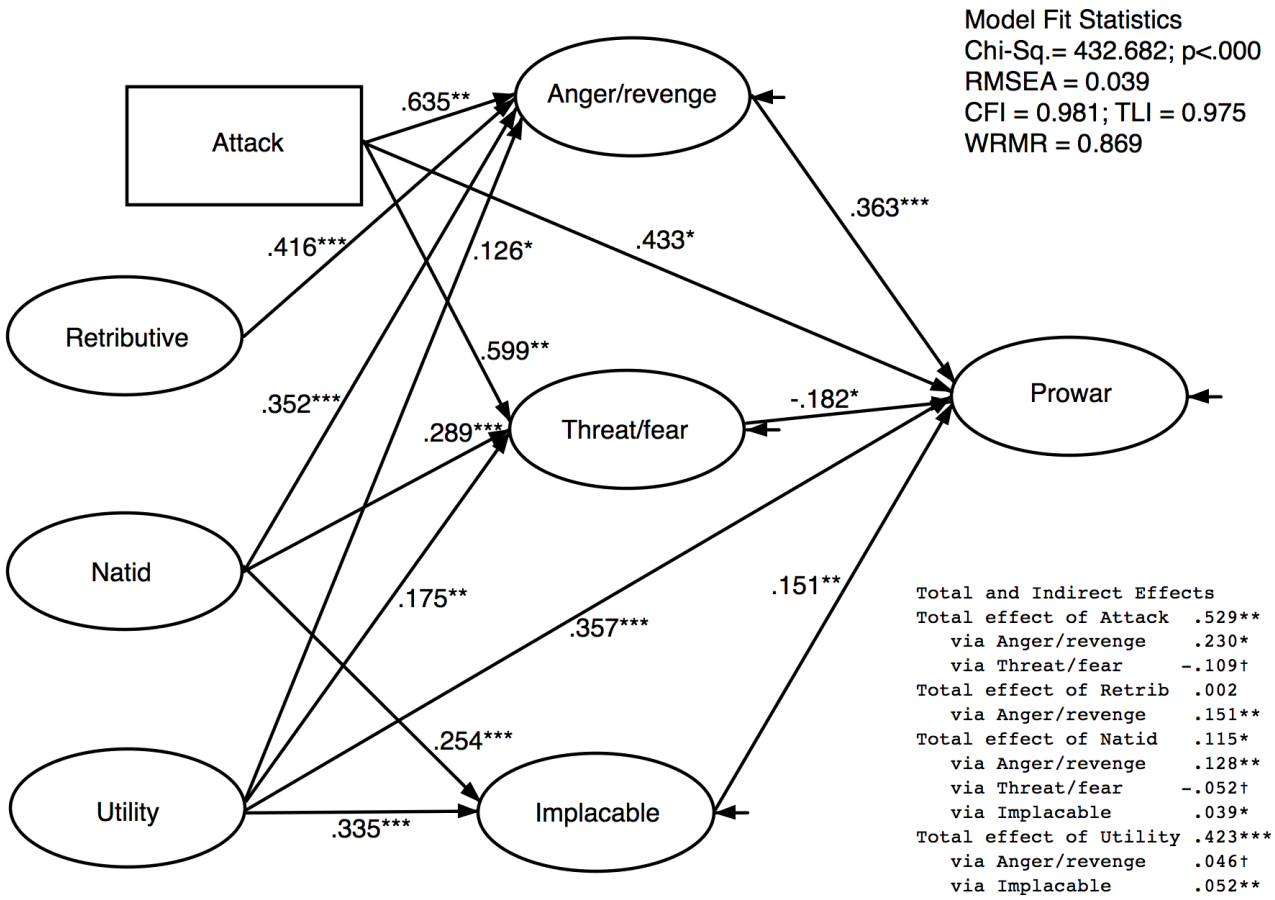
Estimated using the Mplus 6.1 program's weighted-least-squared means- and variance-adjusted (WLSMV) estimator for categorical observed variables. All factor loadings and correlations significant at p<.001, except as noted (** p<.01). N=676. Model statistics indicate a good fit with the data: Chi-square 391.624 (df=145), p<.000; RMSEA=0.050; CFI=.980; TLI=.974; WRMR=.943.

Table 3. Effects of Attack Attributes and of Attacks versus No Attack

	(1) Prowar	(2) Prowar	(3) Threat/fear	(4) Threat/fear	(5) Anger/rev.	(6) Anger/rev.	(7) Implacable	(8) Implacable
High casualties	0.00		-0.02		-0.02		-0.06	
	(0.06)		(0.06)		(0.06)		(0.06)	
Anthrax warning	-0.00		0.12*		0.01		-0.01	
	(0.06)		(0.06)		(0.06)		(0.06)	
Statue of Liberty	0.15*		0.05		0.17*		0.23**	
	(0.07)		(0.07)		(0.07)		(0.07)	
Military base	0.03		0.08		0.11		0.20**	
	(0.07)		(0.08)		(0.07)		(0.07)	
Attack		0.41***		0.49***		0.57***		0.05
		(0.08)		(0.13)		(0.13)		(0.10)
Constant	-0.04	-0.39***	-0.17	-0.47***	-0.05	-0.54***	-0.09	-0.10
	(0.12)	(0.07)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.10)
Adjusted R^2	0.003	0.015	0.003	0.019	0.005	0.028	0.025	-0.001
Observations	1236	1332	1236	1332	1236	1332	631	676

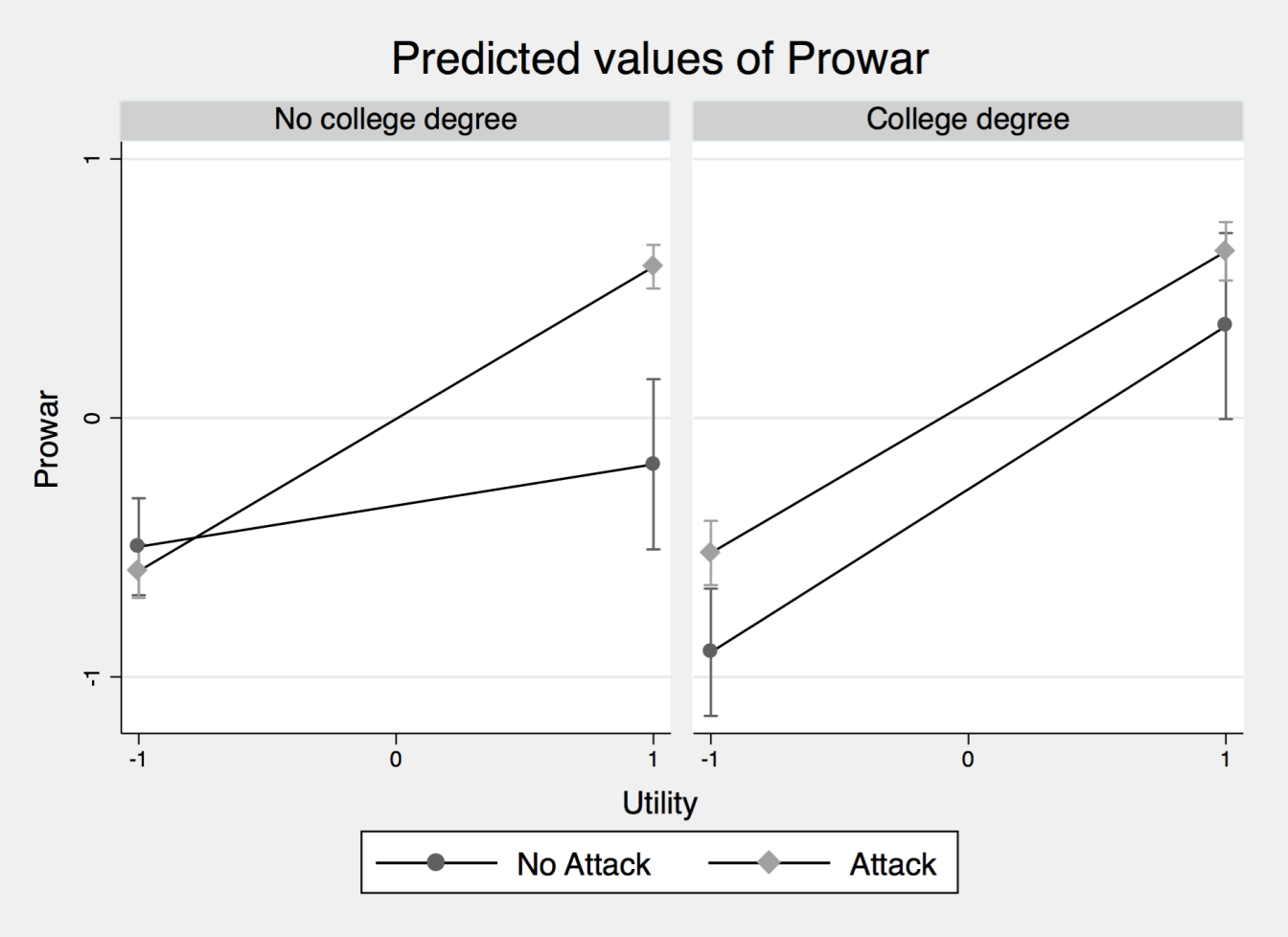
Entries in the table are unstandardized, weighted, linear regression coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses.
$^{\dagger}\ p < 0.10$, $^{*}\ p < 0.05$, $^{**}\ p < 0.01$, $^{***}\ p < 0.001$

Figure 1. Structural Equation Model of Support for the Afghan War



Notes: N=674. Figures are unstandardized coefficients († $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$). For latent variable measurement model and item loadings, see Table 2; error terms, covariances among the latent variables within each wave, and paths nonsignificant at p<.05 are also omitted from the figure. R-square of *Prowar* = 0.430. Results utilize Mplus 6.1's WLSMV estimator and sampling probability weights.

Figure 2. War Support Predicted by Utility, by College Degree and Attack/No-Attack Condition



Note: Predicted values of *Prowar*, with 95% confidence intervals, controlling for gender, age, ideology, party id, national id, and retributiveness. The -1 to +1 range for both variables corresponds roughly to the 10th and 90th percentiles of each, and the median of *Prowar* is about 0. Estimates based on Model 6 of appendix Table 2.

Online Appendix

Appendix Table 1: Casualty X Anthrax X Target Interactions on War Support

```
. anova Prowar Casualties##Target##Anthrax

                           Number of obs =    1236     R-squared     =  0.0072
                           Root MSE      = .849605     Adj R-squared = -0.0018

                  Source |  Partial SS    df       MS           F     Prob > F
-------------------------+----------------------------------------------------
                   Model |  6.36675109    11  .578795554       0.80     0.6384
                         |
              Casualties |  .071807197     1  .071807197       0.10     0.7525
                  Target |  1.97633528     2   .98816764       1.37     0.2548
        Casualties#Target |  1.17634206     2   .58817103       0.81     0.4430
                 Anthrax |   .03443017     1   .03443017       0.05     0.8272
       Casualties#Anthrax |  .001784917     1  .001784917       0.00     0.9603
           Target#Anthrax |  2.28421266     2  1.14210633       1.58     0.2059
Casualties#Target#Anthrax |  .816771615     2  .408385808       0.57     0.5681
                         |
                 Residual |  883.519275  1224  .721829473
-------------------------+----------------------------------------------------
                    Total |  889.886027  1235  .720555487
```

Appendix Table 2. Support for the Afghanistan War

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Attack	0.41***	0.33***	0.30***	0.29***	0.36***	0.33***
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Emotions after				0.04		
				(0.04)		
Implacable after				-0.02		
				(0.04)		
Male	0.05	0.08†	0.01	0.01	0.08*	0.08†
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Age	0.87***	0.43***	0.28*	0.27*	0.44***	0.44***
	(0.14)	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.12)
College	-0.04	0.06	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.06
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.14)
Conservative	0.58***	0.16	0.09	0.10	0.17	0.17
	(0.13)	(0.11)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Republican	0.48***	0.17*	0.08	0.07	0.16*	0.16*
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Nat'l Id.		0.09*	-0.03	-0.03	0.15†	0.09*
		(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.09)	(0.04)
Retributive		0.02	-0.09**	-0.09**	0.08	0.02
		(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.10)	(0.04)
Utility		0.57***	0.33***	0.33***	0.27*	0.16
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.13)	(0.11)
Anger/revenge			0.21***	0.22***		
			(0.05)	(0.06)		
Threat/fear			-0.19***	-0.15**		
			(0.04)	(0.05)		
Implacable			0.66***	0.59***		
			(0.04)	(0.05)		
Anger/revenge X				-0.00		
Emotions after				(0.06)		
Threat/fear X				-0.09		
Emotions after				(0.06)		
Implacable X				0.15*		
Implacable after				(0.06)		
Natid X Attack					0.06	
					(0.09)	
Retributive X Attack					-0.05	
					(0.11)	
Utility X Attack					0.31*	0.43***
					(0.14)	(0.11)
College X Attack						0.00
						(0.15)
Utility X College						0.47**
						(0.15)
Utility X College X						-0.48**
Attack						(0.16)
Adjusted R^2	0.166	0.433	0.598	0.602	0.436	0.438
Observations	1326	1326	1326	1326	1326	1326

Figures are weighted, least-squares coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. *Implacable after* is a dummy variable =1 when *Implacable* was measured after *Prowar; Emotions after* indicates when *Threat/fear* and *Anger/revenge* were measured after *Prowar*.

Attack vignettes

Please read the following description of a terrorist attack on the United States. This attack has not occurred, but it could. The Taliban terrorists have already attacked and killed Americans in Afghanistan, and recently have threatened to attack the United States. We are interested in how you would react to a real attack like the one described, so try to imagine it actually happening.

America Attacked!

Terrorists bombed the [Target type: Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor; a shopping mall in upstate New York; an Army barracks in a base in upstate New York before dawn] yesterday, killing [Casualties: 19, 419] [visitors; visitors; servicemen] and critically injuring many more. The blast was so powerful that it left the [treasured monument a twisted, smoking ruin. Several rescue workers perished while trying to pull survivors from the burning wreckage.

In a videotaped message delivered to CNN, Taliban leader Jalaluddin Haqqani (pictured) claimed responsibility for the bombing and praised the "brave warriors" who died in the attack. Haqqani demanded an immediate U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, and pledged that even more devastating attacks would follow if the United States continued "occupying" his country.

[Anthrax condition: By coincidence, U.S. intelligence officials testified last month before Congress that the Taliban had captured anthrax from a biological research laboratory in Pakistan. The amount obtained, the officials said, could kill thousands of Americans if spread in a large city. The officials testified further that Taliban terrorists would be able to get into the United States if determined to do so, and that some may already have slipped into the country undetected.]

No-attack condition

We are interested in your attitudes about terrorism and the war in Afghanistan. Taliban leader Jalaluddin Haqqani (pictured) has demanded an immediate U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, and pledged to launch terror attacks on the United States if it continued "occupying" his country.

Questionnaires

T1 SURVEY

[DISPLAY]
We are interested in your views about a few different issues of the day, and appreciate your

taking a few minutes to answer the following questions.

[RANDOMIZE AND RECORD ORDER OF FOLLOWING QUESTION BLOCKS]

BLOCK 1: NATIONAL IDENTITY

[HORIZONTAL SP]
B1_1. When someone says something bad about America, how strongly do you feel it is as if they said something bad about you?

	Extremely strongly	Very strongly	Strongly	Not too strongly	Not strongly at all

[HORIZONTAL SP]
B1_2. How much does being an American have to do with how you feel about yourself?

	A tremendous amount	A lot	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all

BLOCK 2: RETRIBUTIVENESS

[GRID – SP]
B2_1. How convincing do you find the following statements?

	Strongly						Strongly

	disagree						agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

a. For the sake of justice, some degree of suffering has to be inflicted on an offender.
b. People who hurt others deserve to be hurt in return.

BLOCK 3: BELIEFS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF WITHDRAWAL AND ESCALATION

[HORIZONTAL SP]
B3_1. Will each of the following steps increase, decrease, or have no effect on the threat of terrorism to the United States?

	Decrease a lot	Decrease somewhat	Have no effect	Increase somewhat	Increase a lot
a. Sending more U.S. forces to Afghanistan					
b. Withdrawing U.S. troops from Arab and Muslim states					

[HORIZONTAL SP]
B3_2. If the United States withdrew from Afghanistan, would that decrease, increase, or have no effect on the likelihood of anti-American terror attacks coming from that country?

	Decrease a lot	Decrease somewhat	Have no effect	Increase somewhat	Increase a lot

TESS2 DHS 07 – Liberman (Wave 2)
October 2011
- Questionnaire -

T2 part 1: Scenario
[Notes: The t2 survey begins with a manipulated text passage. Conditions 1-12 describe a hypothetical terror attack, and all include the same first paragraph. It is ok if this paragraph is placed on a separate page preceding the scenario so that each scenario and photo pair– formatted with a headline and columns like a news article–fit on a single page. Condition 13 just describes a terrorist group with the same photo.]

Treatment Condition 1 (symbolic target, high casualties, high threat)

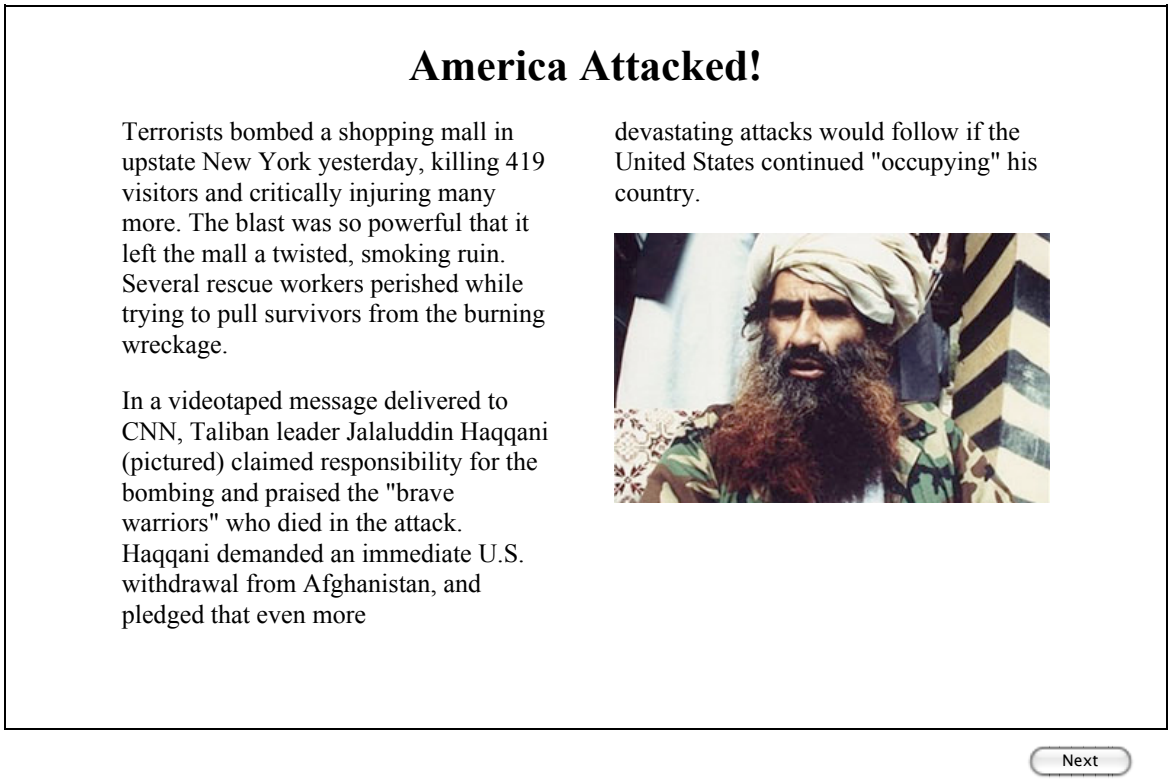
[IF XDHS07 = 1-12]
[DISPLAY]

Please read the following description of a terrorist attack on the United States. This attack has not occurred, but it could. The Taliban terrorists have already attacked and killed Americans in Afghanistan, and recently have threatened to attack the United States. We are interested in how you would react to a real attack like the one described, so try to imagine it actually happening.

[IF XDHS07 = 1-12, SHOW NEWS ARTICLE DISPLAY SCREEN BASED ON XDHS07]

[IF XDHS07 = 13]
[DISPLAY]
We are interested in your attitudes about terrorism and the war in Afghanistan. Taliban leader Jalaluddin Haqqani (pictured) has demanded an immediate U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, and pledged to launch terror attacks on the United States if it continued "occupying" his country.

Illustrative screen shot (high casualty, low threat, civilian-target condition):



T2 part 2: Questionnaire

[These questions all follow the terror scenario or description; randomize order of question blocks 4-6, and randomize item order within these blocks. Question block 7 (a single item) followed by the "thank you" always appears at the end.]

[RANDOMIZE AND RECORD ORDER OF FOLLOWING QUESTION BLOCKS, EXCEPT BLOCK 7, WHICH SHOULD BE ANCHORED LAST]

BLOCK 4: ANGER, REVENGE, FEAR, THREAT

[GRID, SP, RANDOMIZE DOWN THE SIDE]

If XDHS07 = 1-12, show: If the terrorist attack described earlier actually occurred, how strongly would it make you feel…?

If XDHS07 = 13, show: When thinking about terrorism, how strongly do you feel…?

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much

1. Angry
2. Hatred
3. Afraid
4. Worried
5. A desire to hurt those responsible
6. Vengeful
7. Concerned about future terror attacks
8. That more terror attacks are likely to occur

BLOCK 5: TERRORIST AIMS AND THREATS

[GRID, SP, RANDOMIZE DOWN THE SIDE]

How accurately do each of the following describe **[If XDHS07 = 1-12, insert:** those responsible for the attack described earlier?; **If xDHS07 = 13, insert:** anti-American terrorists?**]**

Very inaccurately	Somewhat inaccurately	Neither accurately nor inaccurately	Somewhat accurately	Very accurately

1. The terrorists are capable of killing many more Americans in the near future.
2. The terrorists are likely to leave Americans alone if the U.S. withdraws from Afghanistan.
3. The terrorists are determined to kill as many Americans as possible, no matter what the United States does.

BLOCK 6: SUPPORT FOR FORCE AGAINST THE TALIBAN IN AFGHANISTAN

[IF XDHS07 = 1-12, DISPLAY]

If the terror attack described earlier actually occurred, what would be your opinion about the following U.S. policies?

[RANDOMLY ASSIGN AND RECORD ORDER OF BLOCK6_1, BLOCK6_2, AND BLOCK6_3]

[GRID, SP]

1. Should the United States withdraw all troops from Afghanistan?

Oppose strongly	Oppose somewhat	Neither oppose nor favor	Favor somewhat	Favor strongly

[GRID, SP]

2. Should the United States increase or decrease its attacks on the Taliban, even if further military action would lead to hundreds of U.S. casualties?

Stop completely	Decrease a lot	Decrease somewhat	Continue at the same level	Increase somewhat	Increase a lot

[GRID, SP]

3. Should the United States increase or decrease its military effort in Afghanistan?

Stop completely	Decrease a lot	Decrease somewhat	Continue at the same level	Increase somewhat	Increase a lot

[ALWAYS SHOW LAST]
[SP]

BLOCK 7: PRESIDENTIAL JOB APPROVAL

Turning to another subject, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

Disapprove strongly	Disapprove somewhat	Neither disapprove nor approve	Approve somewhat	Approve strongly

INSERT STANDARD CLOSE.