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# Crossing the Water's Edge: Elite Rhetoric, Media Coverage and the Rally-Round-the-Flag Phenomenon, 1979-2003

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# Crossing the Water's Edge: Elite Rhetoric, Media Coverage and the Rally-Round-the-Flag Phenomenon, 1979-2003.

The most widely accepted explanation for the rally-round-the-flag phenomenon is a relative absence of elite criticism during the initial stages of foreign crises. In this study we argue that the nature and extent of elite debate may matter less than *media coverage* of any such debate, and that such coverage is heavily influenced by commonly held professional incentives and norms that lead journalists to strongly prefer certain stories over others. We also argue that not all messages in this debate matter equally for public opinion. Rather, the persuasiveness of elite messages depends on their credibility, which, in turn, arises out of an interaction between the sender, receiver, and message. Hence, only by understanding the interactions between elites, the public, and the press can we account for variations in public responses to presidential foreign policy initiatives. We test our theory by examining public opinion data and network news coverage of all major U.S. uses of military force from 1979 to 2003. We content analyze all congressional evaluations of the president and the executive branch of government from the three network evening newscasts within 60-day time periods centered on the start date of each use of force. Our results offer strong support for the theory.

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In August 2005, senators Chuck Hagel (R-NE) and George Allen (R-VA) appeared together on ABC's *This Week* to discuss the current and future status of American involvement in Iraq. The senators were of comparable stature; both were considered credible aspirants for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination, both were forceful and articulate for their respective positions, and both spoke for similar lengths of time. Yet in the two weeks following the interview, journalists broadcast over 20 times as many television stories about Hagel's criticism of the war than about Allen's defense of it.[1] In this study, we argue that the differential coverage of these prominent Republicans was both predictable and representative of an important limitation in our understanding of the dynamics of public support for the president, especially in times of foreign policy crisis.

Scholars have long debated the causes and consequences of public support for the overseas application of military force (e.g., Lippmann 1934, Almond 1950, Rosenau 1961, Baum 2003, Holsti 2004, Eichenberg 2005, Page and Bouton 2006). To explain public support, research in this area has focused on the characteristics of the conflicts themselves (hereafter "event-based" explanations), the internal characteristics of individual citizens ("individual-level" explanations), or on the domestic political circumstances surrounding them ("domestic political" explanations).

Event-based explanations focus primarily on *longer-term* public support, arguing that a president's ability to sustain public support for a U.S. military engagement depends primarily on its degree of success (Kull and Ramsay 2001, Feaver and Gelpi 2004), or the number of U.S. casualties (Mueller 1973, Gartner and Segura 2000). Such explanations cannot, at least in many instances, account for the presence or absence of a public opinion rally at the *outset* of a military conflict, before the public observes either the ultimate costs or outcome (for a critique of these literatures, see Berinsky 2005).

Jentleson (1992), however, advances an event-based theory that can, at least potentially, account for both initial and longer-term public support for U.S. conflicts. He argues that the American public is more likely to support military actions perceived as defensive (aimed at imposing "foreign policy

restraint" on an adversary), rather than offensive (aimed at imposing "internal political change") in nature (see also Oneal *et al.* 1996, Jentleson and Britton 1998, Eichenberg 2005). Yet recent research into both the rally-round-the-flag phenomenon (e.g., Brody 1991, Baum 2002) and, more generally, the framing of foreign policy (e.g., Entman 2004) calls this argument into question. Such scholarship has shown that public perceptions concerning the offensive or defensive nature of U.S. military engagements are often endogenous to the domestic political circumstances surrounding them, including the efforts of elites to frame events to their own advantage (Entman 2004).

Presidents routinely seek to frame their military actions as self-defense (e.g., Baum 2003, Perla 2005). At the individual level, most Americans know relatively little about foreign affairs (Holsti 2004). Consequently, in determining whether to support or oppose a conflict, typical Americans are ill equipped to independently assess the President's "true" motivations, especially in the short-term. Instead they rely on information shortcuts, or heuristic cues (Sniderman *et al.* 1991, Popkin 1994), most notably the opinions of trusted political elites, primarily as reflected in the mass media. Trust, in turn, frequently hinges on one particularly accessible heuristic: party identification (Rahn 1993, Popkin 1994, Nelson and Garst 2005).[2] Individuals' interpretations of heuristic cues depend in significant measure on their pre-existing belief systems (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987, Herrmann *et al.* 1997), for which party identification is typically an important (Rahn 1993, Popkin 1994, Lupia and McCubbins 1998, Groeling 2001, Nelson and Garst 2005), albeit incomplete (Holsti 2004), element. The party affiliations of information sources (e.g., elites) and receivers (citizens), in interaction, thus serve as a cognitive filter, mediating the selection and implications of the information shortcuts typical individuals rely upon in making political judgments.

In contrast to scholarship focused on longer-term public support for overseas conflicts, research on the public's *immediate* reactions to such events–the rally phenomenon–focuses far more on domestic politics in general, and on statements by political elites in particular. In fact, the most widely accepted domestic political explanation for the rally phenomenon holds that the extent of elite–and particularly

*congressional* (Hallin 1986, Althaus et al. 1996, Oneal *et al*. 1996, Bennett 1990, Zaller and Chiu 2000)–criticism of the president determines the magnitude of a post-use of force rally (Brody and Shapiro 1989, Brody 1991). We refer to this as the "*Opinion* Indexing Hypothesis," reflecting the tendency of the public to "index" their opinions to the tenor of elite debate to which they are exposed.

A closely related "prevailing wisdom" in the literature holds that media coverage is itself "indexed" to elite rhetoric in Washington (e.g., Hallin 1986, Bennett 1990, Entman and Page 1994, Zaller and Chiu 2000, Bennett et al. 2006). We refer to this as the "*Media* Indexing Hypothesis." The implication is that the media are passive and non-strategic, faithfully reflecting the actual substance of elite debate. Indeed, since, as Brody himself recognizes, citizens are exposed to elite debate primarily through the media, the Opinion Indexing Hypothesis implicitly shares this assumption. Others go a step further, arguing that elite debate actually bounds the range of arguments considered sufficiently "acceptable" to receive any news coverage (Bennett 1990), or that support and consensus among elites will short-circuit broader debate by constraining journalists' willingness to challenge an administration (Hallin 1986).

In contrast, we argue that the nature and extent of media coverage of U.S. foreign policy crises is driven less by political elites cowing journalists than by commonly held professional incentives and norms that lead journalists to strongly prefer certain stories over others. For example, as Republican Senator Hagel found when he characterized the Iraq war as similar to Vietnam, highlighting discord within the president's party is an especially attractive story, particularly when it occurs during unified government. Conversely, there is relatively little incentive to cover boosterism of the president by his own party, as George Allen discovered after his appearance on that same program.

Like event-based theories, the Opinion Indexing Hypothesis also assigns a passive role to individual consumers. In contrast, consistent with substantial prior research, we argue that not all elite statements are equally persuasive to different individuals. For example, opposition party endorsements of or presidential party attacks on the president should be extremely credible to viewers because they are

atypical and represent costly signals (Dutton 1973, Eagly et al. 1978, Lupia and McCubbins 1998, Groeling 2001). Similarly, typical individuals will likely view statements by their fellow partisan elites as more credible than statements by opposition elites (Rahn 1993, Popkin 1994, Lupia and McCubbins 1998, Groeling 2001, Nelson and Garst 2005). In short, we argue that only by understanding the individual incentives of, and strategic interactions between elites, the public, and the press can we account for variations in public responses to presidential foreign policy initiatives.

Our theoretical framework draws on widely recognized characteristics of human information processing, elite incentives and journalistic preferences. Taken individually, our assumptions are not novel. However, we argue that combining these relatively common assumptions–concerning the distinct preferences of the makers, transmitters, and receivers of news–yields a variety of non-obvious predictions. The implications of our argument, in turn, extend well beyond foreign policy. Nonetheless, we focus on foreign policy crises as a particularly interesting and useful application of our framework because prior theories of public opinion and foreign policy have generally ignored the strategic incentives of media actors and their potential effects on the *nature* of the information upon which distinct subgroups of the public base their opinions. We also view foreign crises (particularly those involving military mobilizations and conflicts) as an especially "hard case" in which to find an independent effect from media or elite rhetoric because they involve life-and-death risks and large-scale movements of people and equipment. Such crises thus tend to be unusually visible and salient to the public compared to the material costs and benefits of most domestic policy initiatives, which tend to be observable only gradually and primarily over the long term, if at all (Arnold 1992).

By analyzing network news coverage of congressional evaluations of the president and his administration in periods surrounding all major U.S. uses of military force between 1979 and 2003, we propose to demonstrate that even after controlling for a wide range of indicators of empirical "reality," *communication* still plays a crucial, independent role in influencing public support for the president

during foreign crises. We shall further show that, rather than simply parroting the statements of Washington elites, public opinion in these crises varies systematically with the *credibility* of those statements, as well as the institutional context in which political communication takes place and the characteristics of the receivers; that is, depending on who the president is at the time of a crisis, who is speaking about it, and who is listening to their rhetoric.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

What Politicians Want from the Media**:** The most universally accepted assumption in U.S. electoral politics is that politicians seek, first and foremost, re-election (Mayhew 1974). We generalize Mayhew's famous observation by assuming that politicians seek re-election both for themselves and their fellow partisans. After all, winning a seat in the Congress holds dramatically different implications–both with respect to resources available for subsequent election campaigns, and for a member's ability to influence public policy–if one is a member of the majority party (Cox and McCubbins 1993; Cox and Magar 1999). Winning election or majority party status, in turn, requires making one's self and one's fellow partisans look good, while casting members of the opposition party in a negative light. The implication for politicians' preferences regarding media coverage is straightforward; typical politicians prefer stories that praise themselves and fellow partisans, or criticize their opponents or the opposition party.

In the context of inter-branch relations, this further implies that–notwithstanding any journalistic preferences for *covering* particular statements–members of the president's party in Congress are likely to *offer* rhetorical support for the president, while opposition party members should be more likely to oppose him. While there are certainly periodic incentives for individual members to depart from these strategies–particularly if they are running for president themselves or wish to gain additional press coverage by taking "maverick" stances–the perceived novelty of such instances highlights the prevailing baseline from which they depart.

If journalists *do,* as we shall demonstrate, consistently report discord among the president's fellow

partisans more frequently than affirmation, there can be only two explanations. Either such coverage must reflect journalists' preferences, or elites from the president's own party must be routinely criticizing the president more often than they praise him during times of foreign crises–thereby supporting the passive media assumption of the Media Indexing Hypothesis. We consider the latter possibility highly improbable, especially given that in the most public of all representations–votes for or against presidential initiatives in the legislature–recent presidents have typically received overwhelming support from members of their own party and strong opposition from the opposing party.[3]

What Journalists Want from Politicians: Despite politicians' best efforts to control their public communication, journalists and news organizations maintain ultimate control over the content of their news programs because of their function as "gatekeepers" of political news content. In deciding what political material is or is not "news", certain characteristics of stories or sources make them more (or less) desirable for journalists. In particular, journalists generally prefer stories that are novel, conflictual, balanced, and involve authoritative political actors (Graber 1997, Groeling 2001, PEJ 2002).

The most obvious characteristic of newsworthiness is that it entails a premium on stories that are actually *new*. Informing readers or viewers of unexpected, inconsistent, novel, or surprising information is the core value provided by news organizations. In fact, without novelty it makes very little sense to speak of "news" organizations at all. This preference leads reporters to strongly resist attempts by politicians to deliver "scripted," consistent messages to the public. As CBS's chief White House correspondent noted when covering the 2004 Republican National Convention journalists want "to find the inconsistency here, to find the people who aren't quite agreeing with the script that's going on any given convention night, to get behind the story" (Kurtz 2004). In brief, a preference for novelty implies simply that journalists place a premium on stories that are unusual. More formally, *journalists prefer stories that contain new or unexpected information to stories presenting old or expected information*.

A second characteristic of "good" news is, ironically, a preference for bad news. Numerous

scholars (e.g., Sabato 1991, Patterson 1996, Cappella and Jamieson 1997) have observed that while negativity and conflict have long been staples of American journalism, the news media have increasingly embraced "attack journalism" and cynicism since the 1960s. Indeed, there seems to be consensus within the scholarly literature that negativity is pervasive and dominant in modern news coverage.

While not all politicians go so far as former Vice President Spiro Agnew in characterizing the media as "nattering nabobs of negativism," recent politicians appear to have shared the view that the press favors negativity and conflict in their story choices. Early in his first year in office, President Bill Clinton had already concluded that for the media, "success and lack of discord are not as noteworthy as failure."[4] As one journalist bluntly observed, "Well, journalists are always looking for conflict. That's what we do." (Saunders, in Kurtz 2004). Therefore, we argue that *journalists prefer stories in which political figures attack each other to stories in which political figures praise each other*.

Considerable ink has been spilled debating whether the media might be more likely to attack liberal or conservative points of view in their coverage. Tuchman (1972) famously argued that in part to counter such bias accusations, journalists have a strong incentive to use procedures or strategic "rituals" of objectivity in doing their jobs. The main ritual Tuchman and others discuss is presenting "both sides of the story." News organizations, particularly broadcasters, have long followed this "balancing" practice. For most of the 20th Century, broadcast stations and networks were held to an exceptionally high standard of fairness through FCC regulation (the so-called "fairness doctrine"). Journalists have also internalized these standards through professional ethics and norms, which require them to make every effort "to assure that the news content is accurate, free from bias and in context, and that all sides are presented fairly" (ASNE 2002). We thus assume *journalists prefer stories that include both parties' views to stories that only present the views of members of a single party*.

Finally, journalists place a premium on getting the most authoritative and high-ranking possible source. As Graber (1997, 116) argues, the "gatekeeping process winnows the group of newsworthy

people to a very small cadre of familiar and unfamiliar figures... predominantly political figures." Sigal (1986) adds that "by convention, reporters choose authoritative sources over other potential sources" and that "the higher up an official's position in government, the more authoritative a source he or she was presumed to be, and the better his or her prospects for making the news" (20). Lippmann (1920) concurred, arguing that: "The established leaders of any organization have great natural advantages. They are believed to have better sources of information….It is, therefore, easier for them to secure attention and speak in a convincing tone." More formally stated, *journalists prefer to include sources with greater authority in their stories over less authoritative sources*.

The top section of Table 1 applies these story characteristic preferences to four types of partisan evaluations of the president.[5] This allows us to determine which types of stories are most likely to gain airtime. With respect to such evaluations, Table 1 shows that praise of the president by his own party– which lacks novelty, balance, and conflict–is of little interest to journalists, especially during divided government. In contrast, presidential party criticism of the president is highly attractive to journalists– especially during unified government–because it is conflictual *and* novel.

[Table 1 here]

In contrast, evaluations of the president by the opposition party tend to be newsworthy regardless of which party controls Congress, albeit somewhat more so in divided government. Such comments are always either novel–if they support the president–or conflictual–if they criticize him. Airing opposition party comments also adds balance to stories about the president and his policies. Finally, journalists' preference for authoritative sources leads to an over-representation of the majority party in Congress. If the majority party happens to share the president's party affiliation–i.e., in unified government– this leads to the strongest possible incentive for journalists to air any intra-party criticism of the president: Any such criticism is novel, conflictual, and authoritative. Our first hypothesis follows.

**(H1) Oversampled Presidential Party Criticism**: Because presidential party criticism is far more

newsworthy than presidential party praise, the news media will present more negative than positive evaluations of the president by his own party in the news.

Salient Rally Events as Special Cases for Journalists: If the top section of Table 1 delineates the newsworthiness of "politics as usual," this raises the question of how newsworthiness during a major foreign crisis might systematically differ. For much of the post-World War II era, the Republican and Democratic parties are commonly viewed as having achieved near-consensus in foreign policy, especially with respect to the Cold War. In explaining the shift of many in his party from prewar isolationism, Sen. Arthur Vandenberg, the Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, famously explained, "Politics stops at the water's edge." Implicit in the very notion of a "rally-round-the-flag" is that major international crises will induce each party to close ranks and increase its support for the president.

From a standpoint of newsworthiness, however, the impact is somewhat more complex. If journalists *expect* partisans from both parties to rally behind the president when American troops are in harm's way, criticism of the president by either party should become even more newsworthy than during non-crisis periods. The middle section of Table 1 illustrates this point. While this table tells us little about each party's *intent* to support the president in crisis periods, it does suggest that if any members of either party choose to criticize the president, they should find journalists even more eager to air their comments than during other times. Thus, we derive our second hypothesis:

**(H2) Salient Rally Novelty**: For MC's from both parties, the criticism-to-praise ratio regarding the president appearing in the news (that is, the amount of criticism, relative to praise) will be greater during high-salience rally periods than during other periods.

What is Persuasive to Consumers? We now turn from the suppliers (the news media) to the consumers of news (the audience). In determining each message's effect on viewers, it is important to consider not just the *content* of a message, but also its *credibility*. Parties do not "inject" messages into a passive public; individuals process such messages and can accept or reject them depending in part on

their perceived credibility (Sniderman *et al.* 1991, Kuklinski and Hurley 1994, Druckman 2004).

One source of credibility for a message is the belief that the speaker and listener have common interests (Crawford and Sobel 1982). Restated in partisan terms, this suggests that *statements by a listener's own party will be regarded as more credible than those of the opposing party, all else equal.* We call this our Partisan Credibility Conjecture. This suggests a third hypothesis:

> **(H3) Partisan Credibility**: Presidential evaluations by members of a given party will have a stronger effect on that party's identifiers' propensity to rally than will comments by members of the other party.

Another important source of credibility derives from the interaction of source and message: whether the message is costly to the speaker (Spence 1973). Typical individuals regard messages that are harmful to the interests of the speaker as more credible than those that impose no costs (so-called "cheap talk").[6] In the context of partisan messages, it follows that *messages by partisan speakers that appear to damage their own party or help the other party are regarded as more credible than messages that help their own party or damage the other party.* We term this our **Costly Credibility Conjecture**. Such costly messages should be at least somewhat credible regardless of the party affiliation of the listener.

The bottom section of Table 1 summarizes the relative credibility of different partisan messages about the president based on their partisan and costly credibility. It demonstrates the relatively weak persuasive power of "politics as usual" statements (i.e., non-presidential party attacks on the president, and presidential party praise). Such statements by members of the presidential (non-presidential) party serve only to rally their own partisans, who in all likelihood *already* approved (disapproved) of the president *prior* to any rally event, and hence cannot re-evaluate the president upward (downward) following a use of military force (Baum 2002).

In contrast, non-presidential party praise should be exceptionally persuasive and beneficial to the president, especially among non-presidential party members. If rally events produce bipartisan elite

support for the president, such support should be highly effective at moving public opinion–especially among opposition identifiers–in support of the president. Similarly, if members of the president's own party attack him, the negative effects on public opinion should be dramatic, especially among the president's fellow partisans. In both cases, the media demand for such statements virtually ensures they will receive coverage if offered, further magnifying their potential impact on opinion. Finally, because independents lack a party affiliation and are therefore unaffected by partisan credibility, they should be particularly influenced by the costly credibility of elite rhetoric. Two hypotheses follow:

**(H4) Costly Credibility**: Costly evaluations by members of a party will have a stronger effect on all individuals' propensity to rally than will "cheap talk" evaluations by the same party.

**(H5) Combined Credibility:** Positive (negative) evaluations by non-presidential (presidential) party elites, which have both costly and partisan credibility, will have the strongest effects on presidential approval ratings for fellow members of their respective parties.

Credible Messages and Partisan Control of Government: Returning to the top of Table 1, we see that the newsworthiness of the two most credible types of partisan evaluations noted in H5 (presidential party criticism and non-presidential party praise) is systematically related to the partisan makeup of government. Specifically, because the presidential (opposition) party is more (less) authoritative in unified government, shifting from unified to divided government decreases the newsworthiness of the most damaging type of message (presidential party criticism) while increasing the newsworthiness of the most helpful messages (non-presidential party praise). This, in turn, seems likely to influence the propensity of the public to rally under differing constellations of government. Two hypotheses follow.

**(H6) Divided Rally Media Hypothesis:** The proportion of credible praise to credible criticism in the media will be greater in divided than in unified government.

**(H7) Divided Rally Opinion Hypothesis:** Aggregate public opinion rallies will be more positive during divided than in unified government.

Salient Rally Events as Special Cases For Public Opinion: For the same reasons noted previously for journalists, members of the public should be particularly attentive to such costly evaluations in rally periods that involve U.S. casualties. Considerable research has shown that U.S. casualties attract public attention and mediate public support for U.S. military conflicts (Mueller 1973, Gartner and Segura 2000, Eichenberg 2005), while numerous studies (e.g., Hegre 2000, Oneal, *et al.* 2003, Gartzke and Gleditsch 2005) have employed the existence or absence of casualties in militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) to distinguish relatively serious MIDs from less significant ones.

In addition, criticizing the president during a particularly high-profile foreign crisis is especially risky. Research (e.g., Zaller 1994, Zaller and Chiu 2000) has shown that risk-averse members of Congress typically prefer to avoid such criticism until the political ramifications of the crisis outcome are relatively clear. While many scholars have argued that rising casualties depress public support for a conflict over time (e.g., Mueller 1973, Gartner and Segura 2000), in the vast majority of cases we do not believe this logic applies during the initial stages of a conflict (the rally period). Schwartz (1994), for instance, argues that in the short-term, casualties usually harden the public's resolve, consequently *strengthening* public support for the use of force (see also Kull and Destler 1999).[7] This raises the costly credibility of negative comments by either party during rally periods involving U.S. casualties (in the short-run). Conversely, like journalists, the public is likely to anticipate initial elite support for the president during salient rally periods (e.g., those involving U.S. casualties). This reduces the costly credibility associated with supportive comments by the opposition party, thereby mitigating their persuasive impact. For the presidential party, however, comments supporting the president nearly always lack costly credibility. Thus, such comments have little credibility to lose and should produce similar, limited effects on opinion both during and outside of salient rally periods. Two final hypotheses follow:

**(H8) Salient Rally Criticism:** Negative evaluations by either party, which are most "costly" during rally periods with U.S. casualties, will have a bigger effect on approval ratings than similar

comments during other periods.

**(H9) Salient Rally Praise:** During rally periods with U.S. casualties, positive evaluations by the non-presidential party will produce smaller effects on approval ratings than similar comments during other periods. Because they are cheap talk, positive presidential party comments should be similarly unpersuasive in periods with and without casualties.

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Mueller (1973) argues that for an event to be classified as a potential rally event, it should be international, directly involve the president, and be "specific, dramatic and sharply focused" (1973:209). Oneal *et al.* (1996:265) further restrict their definition of rally events to "major uses of force during a crisis," insuring that they are "considering only cases that were truly consequential for the U.S. and salient to the public, necessary conditions for a rally…" Following Oneal *et al.*, we restrict our analysis to major uses of force during foreign policy crises. We employ an updated version of Baum's (2002) dataset, which, in turn, represents an update of Blechman and Kaplan's (1978) dataset on political uses of force (see also Oneal *et al.* 1996, Fordham and Sarver 2001). Again following Oneal *et al.* (1996), we code all uses of force measuring levels 1-3 on Blechman and Kaplan's (1978) scale as "major uses of force."[8] Our data includes a total of 42 such events between 1979 and 2003 (hereafter "rally events").[9]

We collected data on all congressional comments on the president and the executive branch during 61-day windows surrounding each rally event, from 30 days before to 30 days after the announcement or initiation of the major U.S. force deployment associated with each event. While we would prefer to have gathered comprehensive measures of *all* sources of partisan rhetoric, the exceptional costliness of this content analysis work–representing thousands of hours of research assistant labor over five years–forced us to limit ourselves to the most important subset of these data (Hallin 1986, Bennett 1990, Zaller and Chiu 2000, Althaus et al. 1996, Oneal *et al.* 1996). While presidential rhetoric is, of course, vital to the conduct of modern American politics (Kernell 1997), presidents tend to

uniformly support their own initiatives, leading to almost no variation in our key variables of interest. For instance, in a multi-year content analysis of presidential rhetoric, Groeling (2001) finds that over 90% of presidential self-evaluations are positive. In addition, as we explain below in our analysis of partisan message credibility, such self-serving statements are cheap talk, and so should generally be far less persuasive to typical voters than messages of support from across the aisle.

For each 61-day window, we first searched the Vanderbilt Television News Abstracts to locate every appearance on the evening newscasts of ABC, CBS, and NBC by a senator or representative.[10] Our research assistants watched recordings or read verbatim transcripts of each selected story, coding the statement's valence (positive, negative or neutral) along a number of issue dimensions (e.g. foreign policy, budget, taxation), as well as the characteristics of the speaker (e.g., party, leadership status).[11] (See online data appendix for coding form.) All coded statements were direct quotes of an identifiable member of Congress (hereafter "MC") pertaining directly to the president. Each observation consists of a summary of the content of a statement by a single MC in a single story. Although each statement might contain multiple, distinct instances of praise or criticism of the president, we code all statements dichotomously on both dimensions, separately recording the presence or absence of praise and/or criticism. [12]

We assigned each story to two coders, working independently. Experienced graduate student research assistants then reviewed and arbitrated any disagreements in the coding. *Prior to arbitration,* inter-coder agreement on praise and criticism of the president was 95% and 88% for CBS and 86% and 96% for NBC, respectively.[13] The arbitration process increases the reliability of our coding. In a random sample of our data, our two graduate student arbitrators agreed on over 98% of all arbitration decisions, producing a post-arbitration kappa score for our key causal variables of .86.[14]

We identified a total of 5302 pertinent congressional appearances on network evening news programs during the 2115 days falling within ±30 day windows surrounding our 42 rally events.[15] For our public opinion analysis, we aggregate our data to the level of individual approval polls appearing within

our 61-day windows surrounding each event. This yields an average of 4.1 unique observations per event, of which an average of 2.7 polls took place in the period *after* a major deployment was initiated or announced. To mitigate serial autocorrelation we include the appropriate partisan presidential approval poll lagged one period. This also accounts for the possibility that MC's may base their decisions to rhetorically oppose or support the president on their assessments of his ex ante political capital, or on anticipated public reactions. We also transform our dependent variables into *differences,* for each partisan subgroup, between approval at time $t$+1 and at time $t$. Finally, because the several observations associated with each rally event are clearly not independent of one another, we cluster the standard errors by event.[16]

Control Variables: Many of our controls mirror those employed in previous studies of presidential approval and the rally phenomenon (e.g., Oneal *et al*. 1996, Gartner and Segura 2000, Baum 2002, Nicholson, et al. 2002, Chapman and Reiter 2004). They are intended to account for the domestic political circumstances surrounding each rally event, as well as the characteristics of the speaker evaluating the president, of the adversary nation, of the rally event itself, and of the international environment at the time of the event. For speaker characteristics, in addition to party affiliation (see above), we include a dummy variable measuring whether MC's are identified in a given story as leaders of the House or Senate, their party, or a committee. For domestic political variables, we include the number of mentions-per-poll-period of the adversary nation on the front page of the *New York Times*, the monthly change in consumer sentiment (lagged one month),[17] as well as dummies for presidential and midterm election years, unified government, presidential transition periods, second term presidents, and Democratic presidents. We also account for the number of days in between consecutive approval polls and the number of appearances by MC's on network evening newscasts during each poll period.

For adversary characteristics, we control for U.S. trade dependence and material capability ratio vis-à-vis the adversary, and whether the adversary was a U.S. ally. For the international environment, we include variables measuring the number of U.S. foreign policy crises in the year of a given event and

whether or not the event took place during the Cold War.[18] Finally, for event characteristics, we include dummies for whether an observation took place before or after the start dates of major U.S. force deployments (or announcements of such), whether the U.S. goal was imposing "foreign policy restraint", "internal political change", or "humanitarian intervention" (as defined by Jentleson 1992 and Jentleson and Britton 1998), as well as whether the event was terrorism-related, involved a significant ground invasion by U.S. troops,[19] and lasted only one day. We also account for whether U.S. forces suffered any combat deaths during a given poll period and the total number of U.S. casualties-per-poll-period (logged).

Finally, in order to increase our confidence that we have fully accounted for the unique characteristics of each event, we polled 38 scholars with expertise in American foreign policy, asking them to separately evaluate (on 0-10 scales) the extent to which, in their judgment, the events were "successful" and "worthwhile" (based on their own cost-benefit assessment) for the United States.[20] We added the two items together to form a single "expert assessment" scale. We then regressed all of our control variables on this summary indicator, and saved the residuals. The $R^2$ was .72, indicating that our control variables, *excluding* partisan rhetoric and lagged presidential approval, account for 72% of the variance in our experts' summary assessments of our 42 rally events. We employ the residual of our experts' summary assessments–that is, the exogenous portion–as a causal variable.[21] (See Appendix for more detailed descriptions of our control variables).

## STATISTICAL RESULTS

Media Coverage Hypotheses: We begin with our Oversampled Presidential Party Criticism (H1), and Salient Rally Novelty (H2) Hypotheses. Table 2 summarizes the valence of partisan evaluations in our data. One noteworthy pattern is the overwhelming predominance of negative evaluations. Depending on how we parse the data, between two thirds and four fifths of all evaluations featured on the network news during our 61 day windows were negative. This pattern holds across networks, and also if we limit our comparison to evaluations concerning only the president's handling of foreign policy.[22] Somewhat more

surprisingly, as Table 2 also indicates, the overwhelming predominance of negativity remains largely unchanged during the period following the major U.S. deployments (or announcement of such) surrounding our rally events, or during periods where the U.S. suffered casualties. In fact, regardless of how we parse the data, criticism of the president and his administration actually *increases* modestly following U.S. military deployments, with no statistically significant differences during periods with American casualties. Table 2 also offers strong support for H1; no matter how we slice the evaluations, a majority of all PP evaluations of the president are negative.[23]

One alternate explanation for this negativity may be the disproportionate weight our data places on post-Cold War years, which accounts for a majority of our sample. Some scholars (e.g., Holsti 2004) have conjectured that absent the unifying threat to national survival posed by the Soviet Union, domestic politics may wield a stronger influence on American foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Our results offer at most limited support for this conjecture. While the middle section of Table 2 shows the level of negativity in congressional evaluations by non-presidential party (henceforth "NPP") MC's did rise in the post-Cold War period, that for presidential party (henceforth "PP") MC's actually declined modestly, and both of these differences are small and statistically insignificant.

The middle section of Table 2 also tests our Salient Rally Novelty Hypothesis (H2). As predicted– and contrary to conventional wisdom–due to their exceptional novelty, PP criticism in the news actually *increases* by 12 percentage points (from 55 to 67% of all PP evaluations, $p \leq .01$) following U.S. military deployments (or announcements of such) during rally events. Conversely, PP praise declines by 11 points (from 46 to 35%, $p \leq .05$). Also as predicted, the onset of a major deployment or employment of force yields a smaller and statistically insignificant 3 (2) percentage point increase (decrease) in NPP criticism (praise). As one might expect, however, when we "raise the bar" and focus only on periods where it would arguably be *most* politically risky for MC's to criticize the president – which we operationalize as periods in which the U.S. suffers casualties in early stages of major force deployments--we do in fact find,

inconsistent with H2, modest (albeit statistically insignificant) declines in criticism.

The far-right section of Table 2 provides strong support for H6 (Divided Rally Media Hypothesis). Here, we break down the relative proportion of all partisan messages in unified and divided government according to their partisan and costly credibility. As predicted by H6, the most damaging PP evaluations (PP criticism) drop proportionately by over half from unified to divided government (33 vs. 16% of all evaluations in unified vs. divided government, $p \leq .001$). Also consistent with H6, the most credible form of praise of the president (NPP praise) nearly doubles, proportionately, in unified relative to divided government (6 vs. 10% of all evaluations, $p \leq .02$).[24]

In sum, Table 2 offers strong support for our media hypotheses, including clear support for the Oversampled Presidential Party Criticism and Divided Rally Media Hypotheses, and qualified support for the Salient Rally Novelty Hypothesis; supporting it for pre- vs. post-deployment periods, but (unsurprisingly) less so for non-casualty vs. casualty periods.

Public Opinion Hypotheses: We turn next to our public opinion hypotheses, including the Partisan (H3), Costly (H4) and Combined (H5) Credibility Hypotheses, the Divided Rally Opinion Hypothesis (H7), as well as the Salient Rally Criticism (H8) and Praise (H9) Hypotheses. In order to investigate the sensitivity of our results to model specification, we present three versions of our models. The first excludes all controls, except for two measuring the number of days between each poll and the number of MC evaluations-per-poll period. The second adds a series of domestic political controls, while the third adds controls for characteristics of the event, adversary, and international environment. The key causal variables measure the number of instances of praise or criticism of the president by either party during a given poll period. Models 1-9 in Table 3 present the results from these tests.

[Table 3 here]

The first noteworthy pattern in Table 3 is the impressive consistency of the results on our key causal variables across model specifications. With only one significant exception (PP criticism in the

political model) throwing the proverbial "kitchen sink" at our rhetoric indicators produces surprisingly modest changes in their effects. While many of the controls are statistically significant, their effects appear mostly orthogonal to our key causal variables. We can therefore proceed more confidently to interpreting our results from the fully specified models. For ease of interpretation, we employ Clarify (King *et al.* 2000), a statistical simulation procedure, to calculate the expected values of our dependent variables as the key causal variables vary by two standard deviations. This procedure also derives standard errors surrounding the expected values, thereby allowing us to determine whether the differences in the effects of the causal variables are themselves statistically significant. We present these results in Table 4.

[Table 4 here]

Beginning with party identifiers, Models 7 and 8 in Table 3 present the results from our fully specified models investigating the effects of MC rhetoric on PP and NPP partisans, respectively. The top and middle sections of Table 4 summarize the substantive effects of a two standard deviation increase in each type of MC rhetoric. Among PP partisans, these results show strong support for the Partisan (H3), Costly (H4), and Combined (H5) Credibility Hypotheses. Increased PP criticism, which should (per H5) have the strongest persuasive impact for PP partisan, is associated with a large (3.1 percentage point) and significant ($p \leq .05$) decrease in approval. In contrast, the effect of NPP criticism, which lacks both partisan and costly credibility for PP partisans, is small and insignificant. In addition, a two standard deviation increase in NPP praise, which should (per H4) have a greater persuasive impact than "cheap talk" NPP criticism, is associated with a relatively large (2.2 percentage point) and significant ($p \leq .05$) increase in PP approval. Consistent with H3, which would predict that shared partisanship should convey some degree of credibility on otherwise "cheap" PP praise of the president, PP praise does have a positive, albeit insignificant (somewhat inconsistent with H3) effect.

Turning to NPP partisans, consistent with Hypotheses 4-6, PP praise is not persuasive and is associated with small and statistically insignificant effect. Consistent with H3, a two standard deviation

increase in NPP criticism yields a 5-point drop in NPP approval ($p \leq .10$). The substantial (3.2 percentage point) and highly significant ($p \leq .01$) increase in NPP approval associated with NPP praise, in turn, also provides strong support for Hypotheses 4-6.[25] Presumably due to low partisan credibility, while correctly signed and substantial in magnitude (-1.95), the effect of PP criticism fails to achieve statistical significance. Also consistent with our hypotheses, the differences between the effects on approval ratings of high-credibility evaluation types (PP Criticism and NPP Praise) are themselves statistically significant for both PP and NPP partisans ($p \leq .01$), while those between low-credibility types (NPP criticism and PP praise) are not.

Finally, Model 9 in Table 3 presents the results from our fully specified model for Independents. The substantive results shown in Table 4, in turn, offer strong support for H4 (Costly Credibility). Moving from no MC evaluation to a two standard deviation increase in PP criticism yields about a 3-percentage point decrease in approval ($p \leq .05$). A comparable increase in PP praise, which lacks costly credibility, yields a far smaller and insignificant effect. Costly NPP praise is associated with a 2.8-point increase in approval ($p \leq .05$), while "cheap talk" NPP criticism yields an insignificant (albeit substantial in magnitude) 2.9-point drop in approval. Hence, consistent with H4, both high-credibility evaluation types (PP criticism and NPP praise) produce significant effects, in the predicted directions, while both low-credibility evaluation types (PP praise and NPP criticism) do not. Moreover, as with party identifiers, the difference between the effects of high credibility evaluation types is itself significant ($p \leq .01$), while that between low-credibility types is far smaller and insignificant.

Next, we test H7 (Divided Rally Opinion Hypothesis) by using models 7, 8, and 9 to determine the marginal predicted change in presidential approval, given the actual observed flows of partisan rhetoric in both unified and divided government, across our 42 events. Consistent with H7, our results predict that, on average, the actual partisan evaluations of the president in divided government would add .80 approval points, while the flows in unified government would actually cost the president -.52 approval points. This 1.32 percentage point difference is significant at $p \leq .01$. Even though our model

explicitly controls for divided government, these changes account for a relatively large proportion of the average aggregate opinion changes across our 42 events (increases of .85 approval points overall, and .93 and .55 approval points during divided and unified government, respectively). This is consistent with prior research (Meernik and Waterman 1996) that has found typical rallies –with the exception of major wars (Chapman and Reiter 2004)–to be relatively small and ephemeral.[26]

We turn next to our Salient Rally Criticism (H8) and Praise (H9) Hypotheses which predict that criticism by MC's from either party during rally periods with U.S. casualties will have a bigger effect than such evaluations in other periods, while positive evaluations from NPP MC's (but *not* PP MCs) will have a smaller effect than in other periods. To test these hypotheses we interact each type of rhetoric with a dummy measuring whether or not the U.S. incurred casualties in a given poll period. The results for PP partisans, NPP partisans and Independents are shown in Models 10, 11, and 12, respectively, of Table 3. Because interaction terms are frequently associated with statistically significant effects even when the variables themselves are insignificant, evaluating the substantive importance of such effects requires assessing the significance of the *differences* in the dependent variable(s) produced by variations in the key causal variables and interaction terms. Thus, the bottom section of Table 4 compares the substantive effects of two-standard deviation increases in each type of rhetoric for non-casualty versus casualty periods.

Beginning with PP partisans, Table 4 shows, inconsistent with H8, that increased PP criticism (which has high costly credibility) is associated with similarly large (-3.258 vs. -3.210) and significant ($p \leq .05$) effects during both non-casualty and casualty periods. However, somewhat more consistent with H8, the same increase in NPP criticism is associated with larger and appropriately signed effects (.766 vs. -1.034) during casualty periods. Presumably due to low partisan credibility, however, neither type of evaluation achieves significance. Consequently, this latter difference should be interpreted as at best suggestive. Conversely, and more unambiguously consistent with H9, increased high costly credibility NPP Praise yields considerably larger (2.349 vs. .766) and more significant ($p \leq .10$ vs. insig.) effects

during non-casualty periods. Also consistent with H9, increases in PP praise, which nearly always lack costly credibility, does not produce significant effects during either casualty or non-casualty periods.

Turning to NPP partisans, and consistent with H8, criticism by either party's MC's exerts a far larger effect during casualty periods: 2.6 and 6 times greater for increased PP and NPP criticism, respectively (-.999 vs. -2.644 and -5.230 vs. -29.535, respectively). Presumably due to differences in partisan credibility, the effects of PP rhetoric are insignificant in both casualty and non-casualty periods, while those of NPP rhetoric are significant in both cases ($p \leq .10$ and $p \leq .05$ for non-casualty and casualty periods, respectively). Consistent with H9, in turn, increased PP praise is not associated with a significant effect on NPP approval during either non-casualty or casualty periods. However, the corresponding increase in NPP praise is associated with a far more significant, albeit somewhat smaller in magnitude, increase in approval during non-casualty periods (3.438, $p \leq .01$ vs. 4.137, insig.). Taken together, the results for PP and NPP partisans offer fairly consistent, albeit imperfect support for H8 (Criticism) and H9 (Praise).

Finally, among Independents, the bottom section in Table 4 indicates that increased (high costly credibility) PP criticism is associated with larger (-2.530 vs. -3.347) drops in approval ($p \leq .10$ in both instances) during casualty periods. The corresponding increase in high costly credibility NPP praise also yields larger (.992 vs. 3.254) and more significant (insig. vs. $p \leq .01$) increases in approval during non-casualty periods. Conversely, neither low costly credibility evaluation type (NPP criticism and PP praise) achieves significance in either non-casualty or casualty periods. The latter pattern is consistent with H9. However, the former is at least somewhat inconsistent with H8. Finally, though the effects of NPP criticism are statistically insignificant, it is worth noting that, at least somewhat consistent with H8, they are nearly 5 times larger in magnitude during casualty periods (-3.057 vs. -15.144). Overall, the data support H8 and H9 unambiguously in 9 of 12 possible comparisons, and at least partially, in 10 (and arguably 11) of 12 possible comparisons. Once again, this represents fairly strong support for our theory. (See online appendix for summary of all hypothesis test results.)

A Few Words on Potential Counter-Arguments: We briefly address four potential criticisms, including: (1) reverse causality; (2) that intrinsic characteristics of the events may drive both elite rhetoric and public opinion; (3) MC criticism is intrinsically more significant than praise, and so journalists "should" cover it and the public "should" value it more, and (4) differences in elite rhetoric in the news "could" reflect the *actual* mix of elite rhetoric, rather than journalists' preferences.

Beginning with reverse causality, we believe the concern that the changing patterns of evaluations could *reflect*, rather than cause, changes in presidential popularity is unfounded for at least three reasons. First, approval ratings at the time of the evaluation are directly factored in to our models through inclusion of approval at time *t* as a lag term. Second, because we employ the *difference* between approval at time *t*+1 and at time *t* as our dependent variable, a president's unknown future approval logically cannot *cause* present actions.[27] Lastly, and most importantly, if one assumes that anticipated future increases in presidential approval cause politicians to increase their support for the president, this should affect the political calculations of both PP and NPP MC's. Yet, in most cases we only observe significant effects for praise from the NPP, while PP praise is insignificant in every case. Similarly, by this logic, there would be no reason to expect that PP, but not NPP, criticism would be "caused" by anticipated future drops in PP partisan approval, with NPP partisans responding only to criticism from *their* fellow partisan elites.

The second potential concern is that differences in the intrinsic characteristics of the events, rather than in media coverage, may drive differences in MC rhetoric, and thus in public reactions. Yet our fully specified model includes controls for a wide array of the unique characteristics of the events, including whether the adversary was a U.S. ally, its military capabilities, U.S. trade relations with the adversary, the U.S. "principal policy objectives", the number of U.S. casualties, the number of U.S. foreign policy crises under way at the time, whether the event involved a large-scale U.S. ground invasion or terrorism, whether it took place during the Cold War, and whether it lasted one day. Moreover, wherever possible, we gathered data based on the *poll period*, giving us an average of about four distinct observations per event.

This allows us to account for evolving circumstances as events unfold. Inclusion of our expert assessments further enhances our confidence. The fact that our other controls explain well over 70% of the variance in our experts' summary assessment suggests that we have included a fairly comprehensive set of controls. In the presence of all of these controls (including the exogenous portion of our expert assessments), it seems improbable that some additional, unknown "unique" characteristics of the events are driving our results.

With respect to possible greater intrinsic value of *critical* evaluations, as also noted, our results clearly show that NPP *praise* is strongly persuasive to all respondents save PP partisans. Similarly, if negative evaluations were more intrinsically "important", it seems likely that this would apply to *all* critical statements by MCs of both parties, and not, as we find, just the subsets that are most credible to their own partisans or independents.

Finally, we turn to the possibility that variations in *actual* elite rhetoric–rather than in journalists' preferences–could be driving the differences we observe in elite rhetoric presented in the news. As noted earlier, we believe it would be a truly heroic assumption to presume that, all else equal, elites *prefer* to criticize their fellow partisan president far more than support him – which is the pattern we found in our data. Still, because our dataset does not account for the complete universe of elite rhetoric offered to the media, we cannot determine with certainty whether the observed patterns of coverage accurately reflect the available population of potential evaluations.

While space limitations prohibit us from systematically addressing this concern here, elsewhere (Baum and Groeling 2005) we address precisely this issue. In that study, to isolate the media's independent effect, we investigated a class of stories for which we *can* observe a full population of potential elite rhetoric: all interviews with MC's on NBC's *Meet the Press* (*MTP*). Such interviews allow elites to present their views in an unedited and comparatively unfiltered, "open mic" format, and are routinely combed for fodder by all three networks' evening news programs. While political interview shows are not a perfect measure of the universe of elite rhetoric – after all, journalists select guests based

on presumptions of newsworthiness–examining which MC statements originating on these shows (that is, the complete universe of available MC rhetoric on MTP) were actually selected for broadcast on the evening news allows us far greater leverage to divine journalists' preferences. Consistent with our theory, we find that, relative to *MTP*, the evening news heavily over-represents PP criticism, while under-representing PP praise, especially during unified government. Consequently, we remain confident that the rhetorical patterns we observed likely reflect the preferences of journalists more than the actual population of statements offered by political elites (particularly elites in the presidential party).

## CONCLUSION

The findings presented here hold potentially important implications for future leaders. While the data appear to bear out Brody (1991) concerning the link between elite debate and the magnitude of rallies, the process through which the content of this debate is selected and influences opinion is substantially more complex and nuanced than previously assumed. Whether a given member of the public rallies to support the president following the use of force is not simply a function of the overall tenor of elite debate, but rather of (a) one's own partisan affiliation; (b) the partisan affiliations of the elite debaters selected to appear in the media, (c) the credibility, or lack thereof, that results from the interaction of these two factors, along with the costliness of the messages for the speakers, and (d) the institutional incentives of journalists that lead them to cover or ignore particular speakers and messages.

We find little evidence that presidents can consistently expect to enjoy meaningful rallies when they use force abroad, at least to the extent that rally magnitude does, as our evidence suggests, follow from the nature and extent of elite debate presented in the media. Indeed, one of the most striking patterns in our findings is the seemingly unyielding wave of negativity in media coverage of elite discussion concerning the president and his policies. Most U.S. deployments of military force fail to alter the unrelenting negative tone of elite discussion featured in the media.

Major conflicts may be a partial exception. When we limit our data to U.S. invasions involving

substantial incursions of ground forces (Grenada, Panama, Afghanistan and Iraq in 1991 and 2003), we find somewhat less credible criticism and somewhat more credible praise, relative to the other events in our data. During post-deployment periods surrounding ground invasions, highly credible NPP praise nearly doubles proportionately (from 12 to 22% of all NPP evaluations), while (highly credible) PP criticism falls from 69 to 42% of all PP evaluations. Applying the calculus employed earlier to predict average rally size across our 42 events thus unsurprisingly yields larger predicted rallies during ground invasions – an increase of about three approval points, on average, with, as before, larger rallies during divided government. This is consistent with prior research (Chapman and Reiter 2004) that has found evidence that substantial rallies are mostly limited to major wars and may help reconcile our finding of an overwhelming overall negativity bias with the occasional emergence of substantial rally effects.

In addition to offering support for our theory concerning the effects of individual and institutional factors in shaping the nature and extent of post-use of force rallies, our findings also hold an important implication for diversionary war theory (Levy 1989). If presidents cannot be confident of receiving favorable treatment in the media when they employ military force abroad – at least short of a full-scale war like Operation Iraqi Freedom -- it seems highly unlikely that they would do so for purely domestic political purposes. Our data suggest that attempting to divert public attention from domestic difficulties through a use of force abroad is a highly risky strategy.

Prior to the midterm election of 2002, President George W. Bush crisscrossed the nation in what was described as a "tireless campaign blitz" to win back Republican control of Congress. In relentlessly campaigning for his fellow Republicans, Bush was gambling with the bipartisan prestige he had accumulated following the September 11th attacks and the country's successful war in Afghanistan. But perhaps more importantly for our story, Bush also worked to ensure that his rapidly approaching confrontation with Iraq would take place under unified Republican control of government.

Ironically, our study suggests that while the midterm results may have made it easier for Bush to

win the congressional vote authorizing the war, the subsequent absence of credible praise from authoritative Democratic sources made it far more difficult for him to later rally Democrats and Independents in the electorate to his side. In addition, despite continuing support by the majority of Republican elites, the news media's elevation of highly-credible criticism from fellow Republicans such as Hagel has helped push Bush's approval ratings to historic lows. Viewed in this light, unified government appears to be a mixed blessing, at least with respect to the president's conduct of foreign affairs.

## APPENDIX: CONTROL VARIABLES

**Days Bet. Polls**: Number of days between Gallup polls at time *t* and *t*+1.

**MC Appearances:** Number of appearances by MC's on network newscasts during poll period.

**Pres. Elec. Yr.**: Coded 1 for cases occurring within 365 days of a presidential election, 0 otherwise.

**Mid. Elec. Yr.**: Coded 1 for observations occurring within 365 days of a midterm election.

**Party Leader:** Number of observations-per-poll-period in which MC evaluator was party leader.

**Second Term.** Coded 1 if a President is in second term in office.

Δ**Cons. Sent**: Subtracts prior month's consumer sentiment score from the current month's score as measured by the University of Michigan's Index of Consumer Sentiment.

**Unified Gov't:** Coded 1 if presidential party has majority control of both chambers of Congress. (Control is assumed to pass with the election of a new speaker or majority leader).

**Transition:** Coded 1 if observation occurs after election but prior to inauguration day.

**Dem. President.** Coded 1 if a Democrat was in office at the time of a given poll.

**Any KIA.** Coded 1 if the U.S. suffered any combat deaths during a given poll period.

**Post-Deploy:** Coded 1 if the statement was made on the day of the major U.S. force deployment, or within 30 days after such an event.

**Pre+Post Deploy:** Coded 1 if statement was made both within 30 days *after* a force deployment and within 30 days *before* another deployment.

***ln*KIA:** Total number of U.S. casualties-per-poll-period (logged).

**Major War.** Coded 1 for U.S. invasions of Grenada, Panama, Iraq (1991 and 2003), and Afghanistan.

**Post-Cold War:** Coded 1 if observation occurred after fall of Berlin Wall (November 9, 1989).

**NY Times Cov.** Count of the number of mentions of the adversary nation on the front page of the *New York Times* during a given poll period, divided by the average number of front page stories in the *New York Times* during the same poll period.

**One Day Event:** Coded 1 if a given rally event lasted only one day.

**Cap. Ratio:** Correlates of War (COW) National Material Capabilities summary statistic (Singer & Small 1993). It takes the form of $C_A/(C_A+C_B)$, where $C_A$ = U.S. capabilities and $C_B$ = adversary capabilities.

**Terrorism.** Coded 1 if the event involved international terrorism.

**US Crises-per-yr:** Count of the number of foreign policy crises (Brecher and Wilkenfeld's 2006) in the same calendar year as a given event, in which the U.S. is the crisis actor. (This variable consistently outperforms the number of rally events per year, drawn from the dataset employed in this study.)

**US Ally:** Coded 1 if the adversary is involved in a formal alliance relationship with the United States at the time of a rally event, 0 otherwise. These data are derived from the Correlates of War Interstate Alliance Data set, version 3.03 (Gibler and Sarkees, forthcoming).

**Trade Depend.:** This indicator is derived from the "UN World Trade Flows" data set (Feenstra *et al.* 2005). It represents the sum of U.S. exports to the adversary, as a proportion of all U.S. exports, plus U.S. imports from the adversary, as a proportion of all U.S. imports.

**Foreign Policy Restraint (FPR), Internal Political Change (IPC), Humanitarian Intervention (HI):** Coded 1 if a US goal in conflict was imposing FPR, IPC, or HI, respectively (Jentleson & Britton 1998).

**Expert Assess.:** Scale measuring extent to which, on average, 38 foreign policy experts considered each event "successful" and "worthwhile" for the U.S. The scale runs from -5 to +5, with -5 (+5) indicating least (most) successful or worthwhile ($\mu = 5.57$; $\sigma = 3.67$).

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**TABLE 1. Newsworthiness, Novelty, and Credibility of Rhetoric Regarding President by Elites from Presidential Party (PP) and Non-Presidential Party (NPP)**

| | PP Praise | PP Criticism | NPP Praise | NPP Criticism |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *A. Newsworthiness of Partisan Evaluations of the President* | | | | |
| Novelty | Low | High | High | Low |
| Conflict | Low | High | Low | High |
| Balance | Low | Low | High | High |
| Authority (UG) | High | High | Low | Low |
| Authority (DG) | Low | Low | High | High |
| *B. Change in Novelty During Salient Rally Periods* | | | | |
| Novelty During Salient Rallies | Low | *Higher* | Lower | *Higher* |
| *C. Partisan and Costly Credibility, by Party of Speaker and Viewer* | | | | |
| *Costly Credibility* | | | | |
| All Partisans and Independents | Low | High | High | Low |
| *Partisan Credibility* | | | | |
| Presidential Partisans | High | High | Low | Low |
| Independents | Low | Low | Low | Low |
| Non-Presidential Partisans | Low | Low | High | High |

**TABLE 2: Summary of Valence in Congressional Evaluations of President (Percent of all MC Messages, by Type)**

| | All Issues | FP Only |
|---|---|---|
| *ABC* | *N=361* | *N=148* |
| Percent Negative | 80 | 73 |
| Percent Positive | 21 | 27 |
| *CBS* | *N=384* | *N=143* |
| Percent Negative | 77 | 62 |
| Percent Positive | 26 | 41 |
| *NBC* | *N=459* | *N=188* |
| Percent Negative | 80 | 73 |
| Percent Positive | 21 | 28 |
| *Overall* | *N=1204* | *N=479* |
| Percent Negative | 79 | 70 |
| Percent Positive | 22 | 31 |
| *Pre-Deployment* | *N=560* | *N=238* |
| Percent Negative | 77 | 67 |
| Percent Positive | 24 | 34 |
| *Post-Deployment* | *N=644* | *N=241* |
| Percent Negative | 81 | 72 |
| Percent Positive | 21 | 29 |
| *No Casualties* | *N=1079* | *N=389* |
| Percent Negative | 80 | 70 |
| Percent Positive | 22 | 31 |
| *Any Casualties* | *N=125* | *N=90* |
| Percent Negative | 74 | 68 |
| Percent Positive | 27 | 32 |

| | Pres. Party | Non-Pres Party |
|---|---|---|
| *Cold War* | *N=130* | *N=207* |
| Percent Negative | 64 | 86 |
| Percent Positive | 39 | 15 |
| *Post-Cold War* | *N=262* | *N=605* |
| Percent Negative | 61 | 88 |
| Percent Positive | 40 | 13 |
| *Unified Government* | *N=150* | *N=163* |
| Percent Negative | 69 | 90 |
| Percent Positive | 32 | 12 |
| *Divided Government* | *N=242* | *N=649* |
| Percent Negative | 58 | 87 |
| Percent Positive | 45 | 14 |
| *Pre-Deployment* | *N=171* | *N=389* |
| Percent Negative | 55 | 86 |
| Percent Positive | 46 | 15 |
| *Post-Deployment* | *N=221* | *N=423* |
| Percent Negative | 67 | 89 |
| Percent Positive | 35 | 13 |
| *No Casualties* | *N=341* | *N=738* |
| Percent Negative | 62 | 88 |
| Percent Positive | 40 | 13 |
| *Any Casualties* | *N=51* | *N=74* |
| Percent Negative | 61 | 82 |
| Percent Positive | 39 | 19 |

| Costly Credibility | Partisan Credibility: High | Partisan Credibility: Low |
|---|---|---|
| ***PP viewers*** | | |
| *Unified Government (n=313)* | | |
| High | (PP-) 33 | (NPP+) 6 |
| Low | (PP+) 15 | (NPP-) 47 |
| *Divided Government, (n=891)* | | |
| High | (PP-) 16 | (NPP+) 10 |
| Low | (PP+) 12 | (NPP-) 63 |
| ***NPP viewers*** | | |
| *Unified Government (n=313)* | | |
| High | (NPP+) 6 | (PP-) 33 |
| Low | (NPP-) 47 | (PP+) 15 |
| *Divided Government, (n=891)* | | |
| High | (NPP+) 10 | (PP-) 16 |
| Low | (NPP-) 63 | (PP+) 12 |

*Notes: (1) Sums exceed 100% because some evaluations include both praise and criticism.; (2) ABC=ABC World News Tonight, CBS=CBS Evening News, and NBC=NBC Nightly News; (3) PP+ = praise by presidential party MC's, PP- = criticism by presidential party MC's, NPP+ = praise by non-presidential party MC's, and NPP- = criticism by non-presidential party MC's.*

**Table 3: Results of Base, Political, Full and Interaction Models, by Respondent Party Affiliation.**

| | ----------Base Model---------- | | | ---------Political Model--------- | | | -------Fully Specified Model----- | | | -----Full Interaction Model----- | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. PP | 2. NPP | 3. Indep | 4. PP | 5. NPP | 6. Indep | 7. PP | 8. NPP | 9. Indep | 10. PP | 11. NPP | 12. Indep |
| $Approval_t$ | -0.223 | -0.099 | -0.184 | -0.295 | -0.173 | -0.225 | -0.605 | -0.486 | -0.497 | -0.612 | -0.498 | -0.505 |
| | (0.054)*** | (0.038)** | (0.059)** | (0.075)*** | (0.070)* | (0.082)** | (0.122)*** | (0.105)*** | (0.093)*** | (0.124)*** | (0.106)*** | (0.093)*** |
| PP Criticism | -0.453 | -0.249 | -0.451 | -0.351 | 0.002 | -0.310 | -0.575 | -0.350 | -0.548 | -0.596 | -0.176 | -0.476 |
| | (0.150)** | (0.150)^ | (0.209)* | (0.164)* | (0.147) | (0.240) | (0.226)* | (0.322) | (0.290)^ | (0.286)* | (0.295) | (0.312) |
| NPP Criticism | 0.056 | -0.234 | -0.173 | 0.053 | -0.291 | -0.220 | 0.055 | -0.414 | -0.243 | 0.063 | -0.446 | -0.245 |
| | (0.097) | (0.137)^ | (0.155) | (0.100) | (0.190) | (0.194) | (0.102) | (0.245)^ | (0.189) | (0.109) | (0.250) ^ | (0.194) |
| PP Praise | 0.135 | -0.261 | -0.146 | 0.079 | -0.396 | -0.246 | 0.279 | -0.497 | -0.232 | 0.453 | -0.618 | -0.100 |
| | (0.301) | (0.340) | (0.383) | (0.293) | (0.327) | (0.380) | (0.337) | (0.536) | (0.529) | (0.454) | (0.638) | (0.621) |
| NPP Praise | 0.745 | 1.423 | 1.269 | 0.852 | 1.442 | 1.233 | 0.827 | 1.210 | 1.077 | 0.896 | 1.320 | 1.230 |
| | (0.374)* | (0.417)*** | (0.377)** | (0.426)* | (0.363)*** | (0.422)** | (0.489)^ | (0.390)** | (0.472)* | (0.512)^ | (0.388)** | (0.494)* |
| Days Bet. Polls | -0.093 | -0.005 | -0.038 | -0.072 | 0.006 | -0.022 | -0.016 | 0.075 | 0.044 | -0.002 | 0.086 | 0.064 |
| | (0.041)* | (0.043) | (0.037) | (0.042)^ | (0.040) | (0.043) | (0.053) | (0.045)^ | (0.048) | (0.057) | (0.050)^ | (0.051) |
| Evals-per-period | -0.021 | 0.022 | 0.020 | -0.028 | 0.020 | 0.019 | 0.012 | 0.082 | 0.059 | 0.008 | 0.081 | 0.054 |
| | (0.028) | (0.030) | (0.032) | (0.031) | (0.032) | (0.036) | (0.032) | (0.046)^ | (0.044) | (0.032) | (0.046)^ | (0.045) |
| Pres. Elec. Yr. | | | | -1.257 | -2.561 | -2.120 | 0.107 | -4.389 | -2.352 | 0.115 | -4.629 | -2.418 |
| | | | | (1.126) | (2.221) | (1.886) | (1.378) | (1.973)* | (1.857) | (1.443) | (1.963)* | (1.869) |
| Mid. Elec. Yr. | | | | -0.411 | -0.543 | -0.727 | -0.867 | -2.243 | -3.002 | -0.748 | -2.645 | -3.072 |
| | | | | (0.672) | (1.195) | (1.167) | (1.206) | (1.608) | (1.673)^ | (1.283) | (1.840) | (1.883) |
| Party Leader | | | | 0.010 | -0.008 | 0.020 | -0.120 | -0.079 | -0.030 | -0.128 | -0.078 | -0.041 |
| | | | | (0.065) | (0.117) | (0.120) | (0.076) | (0.156) | (0.132) | (0.093) | (0.164) | (0.135) |
| Second Term | | | | 1.304 | -0.550 | 0.770 | 2.906 | -0.896 | 1.604 | 2.945 | -1.491 | 1.341 |
| | | | | (0.751)^ | (1.448) | (1.428) | (1.291)* | (1.763) | (1.470) | (1.219)* | (1.692) | (1.410) |
| ΔCons. Sent. | | | | -0.006 | -0.232 | -0.226 | -0.092 | -0.429 | -0.413 | -0.102 | -0.517 | -0.463 |
| | | | | (0.080) | (0.222) | (0.189) | (0.093) | (0.235)^ | (0.183)* | (0.101) | (0.255)* | (0.201)* |
| Unified Gov't | | | | -1.241 | -2.080 | -1.087 | -6.931 | -9.619 | -7.554 | -7.232 | -10.614 | -8.377 |
| | | | | (0.907) | (2.018) | (2.152) | (1.854)*** | (2.797)*** | (2.530)** | (2.150)** | (3.347)** | (2.819)** |
| Transition | | | | -6.504 | -2.942 | -2.734 | -2.170 | -1.141 | -0.691 | -2.917 | -1.722 | -1.859 |
| | | | | (3.201)* | (1.795) | (5.928) | (3.377) | (2.791) | (4.976) | (3.359) | (2.718) | (5.082) |
| Dem. President | | | | -1.989 | -3.508 | -1.645 | 1.605 | -1.907 | 2.196 | 1.735 | -1.452 | 2.607 |
| | | | | (0.901)* | (1.472)* | (1.428) | (2.260) | (2.551) | (2.784) | (2.280) | (2.713) | (2.896) |
| Any KIA | | | | | | | 6.162 | 11.84 | 10.01 | 9.167 | 10.08 | 13.069 |
| | | | | | | | (6.008) | (13.94) | (10.03) | (9.122) | (16.00) | (12.56) |
| Post-Deploy | | | | | | | 1.960 | 3.330 | 2.192 | 1.780 | 3.226 | 1.933 |
| | | | | | | | (0.967)* | (1.720)\^ | (1.484) | (0.930)^ | (1.601)* | (1.442) |
| Pre+Post Deploy | | | | | | | -2.511 | -2.816 | -0.722 | -2.452 | -2.281 | -0.436 |
| | | | | | | | (1.058)* | (2.430) | (1.967) | (1.135)* | (2.298) | (1.889) |
| *ln*KIA | | | | | | | -0.672 | -1.488 | -0.800 | -0.915 | -0.510 | -0.696 |
| | | | | | | | (0.721) | (1.665) | (1.284) | (1.127) | (2.001) | (1.847) |
| Major War | | | | | | | 4.674 | 14.377 | 10.84 | 4.893 | 15.23 | 11.44 |
| | | | | | | | (1.901)* | (3.673)*** | (2.146)*** | (1.945)* | (3.858)*** | (2.169)*** |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Post-Cold War | | | | | | | 2.310 | 0.861 | 2.018 | 2.106 | 0.155 | 1.445 |
| | | | | | | | (2.787) | (2.411) | (2.805) | (2.804) | (2.528) | (2.946) |
| NY Times Cov. | | | | | | | 8.850 | 11.65 | 10.07 | 8.638 | 7.870 | 8.118 |
| | | | | | | | (3.637)* | (4.832)* | (4.810)* | (3.775)* | (5.537) | (5.174) |
| Expert Assess. | | | | | | | 0.277 | 0.678 | 0.492 | 0.283 | 0.733 | 0.520 |
| | | | | | | | (0.187) | (0.300)* | (0.258)^ | (0.181) | (0.292)* | (0.255)* |
| One Day Event | | | | | | | 0.091 | -1.418 | 0.017 | 0.111 | -1.337 | 0.077 |
| | | | | | | | (1.016) | (1.646) | (1.565) | (1.004) | (1.612) | (1.615) |
| Capability Ratio | | | | | | | -2.841 | -43.06 | -26.94 | -2.39 | -45.38 | -27.46 |
| | | | | | | | (5.530) | (10.86)*** | (9.59)** | (5.94) | (11.40)*** | (10.09)*** |
| Terrorism Rel. | | | | | | | -0.429 | 4.116 | 2.898 | -0.423 | 4.010 | 2.848 |
| | | | | | | | (1.360) | (1.261)** | (1.655)^ | (1.334) | (1.252)** | (1.696)^ |
| US Crises-per-yr | | | | | | | 1.366 | 3.706 | 4.050 | 1.387 | 4.216 | 4.320 |
| | | | | | | | (1.102) | (1.196)** | (1.310)** | (1.149) | (1.185)*** | (1.400)** |
| US Ally | | | | | | | -10.11 | 6.005 | -0.181 | -10.31 | 5.801 | -0.455 |
| | | | | | | | (2.969)** | (2.334)** | (2.874) | (2.989)*** | (2.346)* | (3.042) |
| Trade Depend. | | | | | | | 193.83 | -225.61 | -86.40 | 208.49 | -227.17 | -70.37 |
| | | | | | | | (68.49)** | (101.43)* | (100.87) | (74.79)** | (101.26)* | (105.74) |
| FPR | | | | | | | -6.735 | -2.804 | -3.847 | -6.987 | -3.466 | -4.468 |
| | | | | | | | (2.793)* | (2.087) | (2.079)^ | (2.840)* | (2.326) | (2.235)* |
| IPC | | | | | | | 3.626 | -5.845 | -3.547 | 3.594 | -6.309 | -3.822 |
| | | | | | | | (2.211) | (1.976)** | (2.444) | (2.206) | (1.626)*** | (2.301)^ |
| HI | | | | | | | -4.311 | 7.733 | 3.998 | -4.142 | 8.118 | 4.379 |
| | | | | | | | (2.587)^ | (2.427)** | (2.850) | (2.665) | (2.321)*** | (2.884) |
| PP Criticism x Any KIA | | | | | | | | | | 0.003 | -0.298 | -0.162 |
| | | | | | | | | | | (0.299) | (0.279) | (0.324) |
| NPP Criticism x Any KIA | | | | | | | | | | -0.140 | -2.010 | -1.017 |
| | | | | | | | | | | (0.613) | (1.099)^ | (1.176) |
| PP Praise x Any KIA | | | | | | | | | | -0.210 | 2.274 | 0.834 |
| | | | | | | | | | | (0.998) | (1.510) | (1.419) |
| NPP Praise x Any KIA | | | | | | | | | | -0.652 | 0.357 | -0.843 |
| | | | | | | | | | | (1.378) | (1.352) | (1.332) |
| Constant | 20.78 | 4.499 | 11.73 | 27.97 | 10.64 | 15.52 | 50.63 | 48.65 | 43.92 | 49.84 | 56.79 | 45.99 |
| | (4.97)*** | (2.02)* | (4.02)** | (7.02)*** | (4.73)* | (6.38)* | (11.28)** | (12.55)*** | (13.47)** | (12.47)*** | (14.74)*** | (16.85)** |
| Observations | 167 | 167 | 165 | 167 | 167 | 165 | 159 | 159 | 157 | 159 | 159 | 157 |
| R-squared | .20 | .08 | .13 | .26 | .16 | .17 | .42 | .42 | .42 | .43 | .44 | .43 |

*Robust standard errors in parentheses;* ^$p \leq .10$, *$p \leq .05$, **$p \leq .01$, ***$p \leq .001$

**TABLE 4. Effect of Different Types of Rhetoric on Presidential Approval**

| | *Marginal Effect of Evaluation** | *Difference from No Evaluation* |
|---|---|---|
| Presidential Party Approval (No evaluation=0.225) | | |
| PP Praise | 1.117 | 0.892 |
| PP Criticism | -2.875 | -3.100* |
| NPP Praise | 2.388 | 2.163* |
| NPP Criticism | 0.916 | 0.691 |
| Non-Presidential Party Approval (No evaluation=2.847) | | |
| PP Praise | 1.288 | -1.559 |
| PP Criticism | 0.901 | -1.946 |
| NPP Praise | 6.081 | 3.234** |
| NPP Criticism | -2.103 | -4.950^ |
| Independents Approval (No evaluation=1.889) | | |
| PP Praise | 1.187 | -0.702 |
| PP Criticism | -1.147 | -3.036* |
| NPP Praise | 4.733 | 2.844* |
| NPP Criticism | -1.054 | -2.943 |

***Casualty (KIA) vs. Non-Casualty (No KIA) Period Interaction Models***

| | **No KIA** | | **KIA** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Marginal Effect of Evaluation* | *Difference from No Evaluation* | *Marginal Effect of Evaluation* | *Difference from No Evaluation* |
| Presidential Party Approval | | | | |
| (No evaluation or KIA = -4.483; No evaluation with KIA = 8.315) | | | | |
| PP Praise | -3.020 | 1.463 | 9.081 | 0.766 |
| PP Criticism | -7.741 | -3.258* | 5.105 | -3.210* |
| NPP Praise | -2.134 | 2.349^ | 8.911 | 0.596 |
| NPP Criticism | -3.717 | 0.766 | 7.281 | -1.034 |
| Non-Presidential Party Approval | | | | |
| (No evaluation or KIA = -0.508; No evaluation with KIA = 13.048) | | | | |
| PP Praise | -2.554 | -2.046 | 18.220 | 5.172 |
| PP Criticism | -1.507 | -0.999 | 10.404 | -2.644 |
| NPP Praise | 2.930 | 3.438** | 17.185 | 4.137 |
| NPP Criticism | -5.738 | -5.230^ | -16.487 | -29.535* |
| Independents Approval | | | | |
| (No evaluation or KIA = -2.256; No evaluation with KIA = 13.210) | | | | |
| PP Praise | -2.539 | -0.283 | 15.506 | 2.296 |
| PP Criticism | -4.786 | -2.53^ | 9.863 | -3.347^ |
| NPP Praise | 0.998 | 3.254** | 14.202 | 0.992 |
| NPP Criticism | -5.313 | -3.057 | -1.934 | -15.144 |

*based on two standard deviation increase in type of rhetoric, with other types of rhetoric held constant at zero

NOTES

[1] Our search of Lexis-Nexis' online transcripts produced 9 hits for stories that only mentioned Allen, and 277 that only mentioned Hagel (61 stories mentioned both).

[2] Individuals also employ other heuristics in evaluating foreign policy, such as accessible "images" of potential adversaries (e.g., enemy vs. friend) and core values, such as isolationism vs. internationalism (Herrmann et al. 1997, Holsti 2004). Still, elite communication plays an important role in priming such images and values, and thereby framing events for individuals. Some research (Herrmann et al 1999) has found that party ID is not a good predictor of public support for military conflict. However, party *does* mediate elites' capacity to successfully frame events for different individuals (Druckman 2004).

[3] *Congressional Quarterly*'s reports that since the Eisenhower Administration, an average of about two-thirds of presidentss' fellow partisans support them on votes where they stake a position, with presidents since Reagan greatly exceeding that average. Conversely, opposition party support for presidents is generally low, with no president managing to break even on such votes (CQ Almanac 1953-2000).

[4] From a May 7, 1993 Clinton press conference, in response to a reporter's question as to why his job approval had dropped by 15 points in two months.

[5] Because these evaluations are all directed at the president or administration, the stories already implicitly contain some exposition of the president's or administration's position.

[6] Related lines of inquiry is research in social psychological into the influence of "incongruous" (Walster *et al.* 1966, Koeske and Crano 1968) or "disconfirming" messages (Eagly *et al*. 1978).

[7] However, we nonetheless seek to isolate the *salience* component of the effects of casualties in our statistical models by separately controlling for expert assessments of whether each U.S. use of force was "successful" and "worthwhile."

[8] Following Baum (2002), we exclude several events inconsistent with these definitions, such as long-

scheduled military exercises, cancellation of a previously scheduled force withdrawals, or events that clearly were not major uses of force during a U.S. foreign policy crisis (e.g., U.S. support for withdrawal of U.N. forces from Somalia in January-March 1995, long after the U.S. withdrew its forces).

[9] Our complete list of rally events may be found in an online data appendix at http://xxx.

[10] Videotapes were acquired from Vanderbilt's Television News Archive and from UCLA's News and Public Affairs video archive. Transcripts were accessed on Lexis-Nexis, where available.

[11] Coders were UCLA and UCSD undergraduates. Before coding, they attended an orientation to the coding scheme with one of the principal investigators or their two graduate research assistants, and then practiced using a series of five online interactive practice-coding sessions.

[12] Any additional utility from coding each individual critique within a member statement would be outweighed by the exponential increase in complexity for our coding scheme. Our *Count* variable also accounts for news appearances by MC's during that did not include a codable evaluation.

[13] Pre-arbitration kappa scores for these variables were .44 and .51, respectively, for CBS, and .52 and .48, respectively, for NBC. Altman (1991: 404) characterizes this as "moderate" agreement. Our inter-coder agreement for ABC was 80%. (Due to differences in coding procedures, Kappa is unavailable for ABC.)

[14] While the coding form has remained constant, we implemented some improvements in the coding process over time. For example, for a subset of ABC data, students hand-coded the stories, met to compare their coding, and submitted their consensus results to a graduate student RA for further examination. All of the NBC and CBS data, and the remainder of the ABC data, were submitted online, with students unaware of the identity of their coding partner. We excluded a small subset of observations in which tapes or transcripts were damaged or unavailable.

[15] About 8.6% of our coded evaluations (457 out of 5302) occur fewer than 30 days before one rally *and* fewer than 30 days after another rally. In all cases where sequence matters in our analysis, we count any

overlapping days as "after" the prior event, rather than "before" the next event.

[16] We tested our models with event-specific fixed effects. The results were in many respects comparable to those with clustered errors. Given our limited number of observations, however, we have insufficient statistical leverage to be confident in the reliability of a fixed effects specification.

[17] Changes in consumer sentiment outperformed a variety of other macro-economic indicators.

[18] A post-9/11 dummy proved insignificant and had no material effect on our results.

[19] Events meeting this definition include Grenada, Panama, Afghanistan, and Iraq (1991 and 2003).

[20] We contacted 96 foreign policy experts via email. Our response rate was 40%.

[21] The summary expert assessments for each event may be found in our online appendix.

[22] Aggregating per rally event, we find 7.14 MC criticisms of the president (1.57 and 5.57 critical comments by PP and NPP MC's, with standard deviations of 1.90 and 5.57, respectively), compared to just 2.25 supportive comments (1.26 and .79 by the PP and NPP, with standard deviations of 1.26 and .79, respectively).

[23] Unfortunately, we cannot, within the confines of our data, definitively prove that this dramatically skewed distribution results from journalists' choices, rather than a conscious choice by PP partisans to attack their leader nearly twice as often as they praise him in the news. However, if one accepts what we consider an extremely modest assumption–that PP partisans do not typically attack their fellow partisan president far more than support him–then our empirical results clearly support the hypothesis. Moreover, even if we exclude the one noteworthy episode in our data where PP partisan attacks on their own president are likely to have been relatively common – during the 1998 Lewinsky scandal – the overall pattern changes hardly at all. Elsewhere, we confront this "unobserved population" problem directly (Groeling and Kernell 1998, Baum and Groeling 2005), and find that the news media do, in fact, over-sample criticism, particularly from the president's party (see discussion in "counter-arguments" section).

[24] Baum (2003) reports evidence of a trend, between 1953 and 1998, toward *larger* rallies among the least educated Americans, but *not* among their highly educated counterparts. At first glance, this seems inconsistent with our findings of (a) overwhelmingly critical elite rhetoric during rally events since 1979, and (b) a strong relationship between such coverage and rally magnitude. However, education levels in America have risen such that the least-educated group has constricted as a proportion of the public since the 1950s. It may simply be the case that smaller rallies among highly educated Americans outweigh the effects of larger rallies among the least-educated citizens, who might, in turn, be less able to reliably distinguish between credible and non-credible praise and criticism. Also, Baum's time series extends far longer than our data, making it difficult to draw direct comparisons between the two studies.

[25] While the magnitude of the difference is actually largest for NPP criticism in the fully specified model, the base and political models show larger, more significant differences for NPP praise.

[26] Our marginal aggregate opinion change for each event represents an equally weighted average of the predicted change for independents, presidential, and non-presidential party members. The average observed change in approval across all of our events was an increase of .846 for presidential party members, 1.06 for members of the non-presidential party, and .87 for independents. If we include all controls, set at their mean values (except the divided government dummy), the model predicts somewhat larger (smaller) rallies in divided (unified) government.

[27] Of course, in some cases future presidential approval can be accurately forecast. In the case of rally events such as the 9/11 attacks, it was probably clear to most politicians that the public would rally around George W. Bush. But in most cases, it seems unlikely an MC could predict a president's future popularity with enough certainty to affect his or her present actions.

*Online Supplemental Appendix*

**SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES, TEST RESULTS, AND LOCATIONS**

| Hypothesis | Where Tested? | Proportion (%) of Tests Supporting Hypothesis |
|---|---|---|
| H1: Oversampled Pres. Party Criticism | Table 2 | 1/1 (100%) |
| H2: Salient Rally Novelty | Table 2 | 1/2 (50%)[a] |
| H3: Partisan Credibility | Models 7&8 of Table 3; Simulations in Table 4 | 3/4 (75%) |
| H4: Costly Credibility | Models 7, 8 &9 of Table 3; Simulations in Table 4 | 5/6 (83%) |
| H5: Combined Credibility | Models 7&8 of Table 3; Simulations in Table 4 | 2/2 (100%) |
| H6: Divided Rally Media Hypothesis | Table 2 | 1/1 (100%) |
| H7: Divided Rally Opinion Hypothesis | Models 7, 8 &9 of Table 3 | 1/1 (100%) |
| H8: Salient Rally Criticism | Models 10, 11, and 12 of Table 3, Simulations in Table 4 | 4/6 (67%)[b] |
| H9: Salient Rally Praise | Models 10, 11, and 12 of Table 3, Simulations in Table 4 | 5/6 (83%)[b] |
| | **TOTALS:** | 23/29 (~80%) |

[a] This represents a conservative criterion for "support" of H2. The unsupportive result represents a case where the theory would arguably *predict* a negative result. Hence, this case "could" be interpreted as supportive.

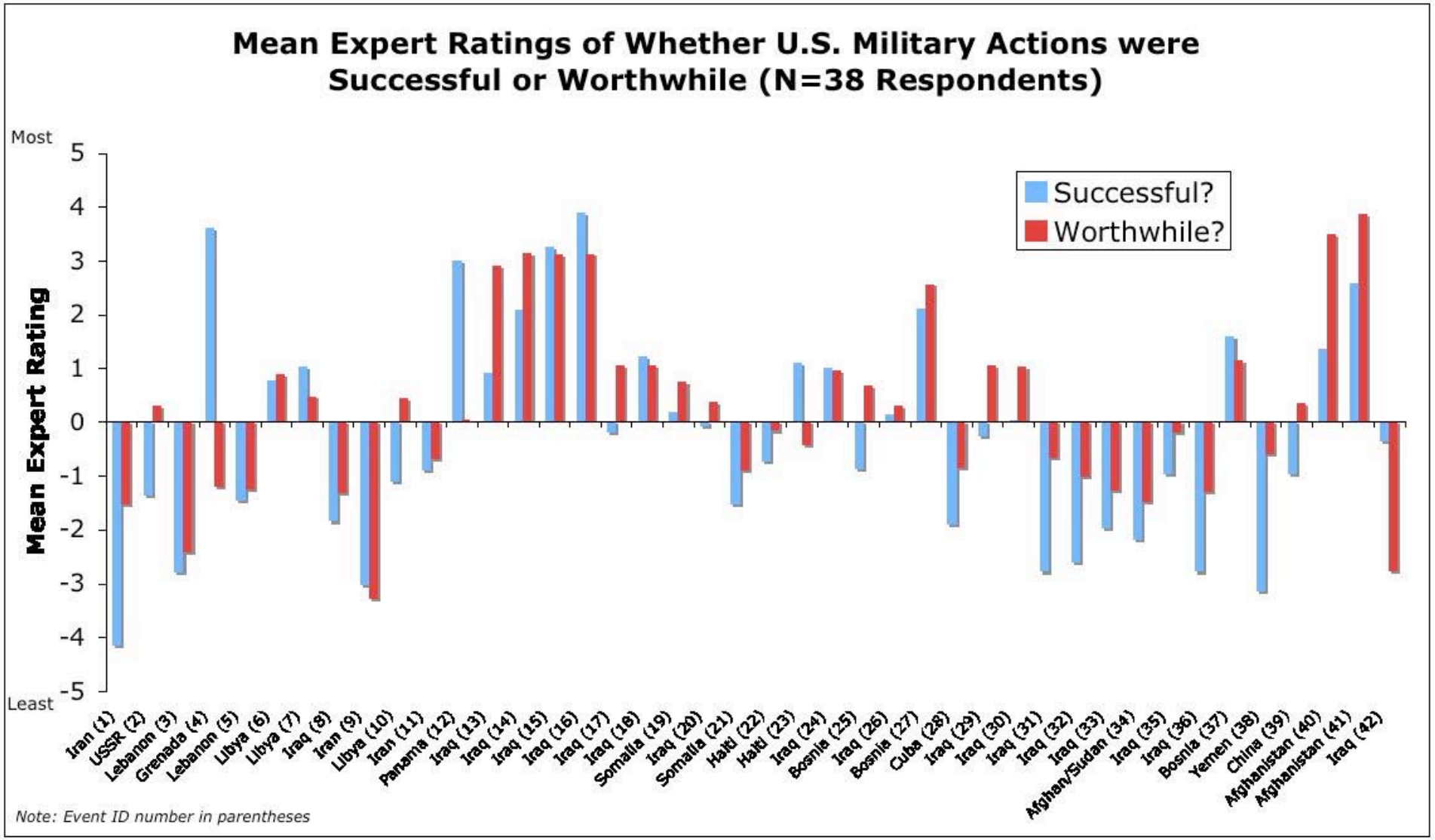
[b] These represent conservative estimates of the proportions of tests supporting H8 and H9. If one counts results consistent with the hypotheses in relative magnitudes and valences, but which fail to achieve standard levels of statistical significance, the overall proportion of supportive results for H8 and H9 increases to 83% or 92% (from the above-reported 75%), depending on the stringency of the criterion for counting a result as "supportive."

**EVENT LIST**

1. Hostage crisis in Iran, November 1979.
2. Soviet invasion of Afghanistan: Carter Doctrine, January 1980.
3. Marine Barracks Bombing, October 1983.
4. Invasion of Grenada, October 1983.
5. Further attacks on/by U.S. troops in Lebanon. December 1980.
6. Operation El Dorado Canyon: U.S. airstrikes against Libya in response to Berlin disco bombing. April 1986.
7. Operation Prairie Fire: U.S. engages Libyan aircraft, ships and missile sites around Gulf of Sidra. April 1986.
8. U.S.S. Stark attacked by a missile. May 1987.
9. U.S.S. Vincennes shoots down Iranian civilian airliner. July 1988.
10. Response to Pan Am Flight 103 destruction. December 1988.
11. Two carriers, battleship groups moved to eastern Mediterranean, Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea after killing of Col. William Higgins in Lebanon. August 1989.
12. Invasion of Panama. December 1989.
13. Immediate U.S. response to Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. August 1990.
14. Larger U.S. deployment to Middle East in response to Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. August 1990.
15. First Gulf War begins (air war). January 1991.
16. First Gulf War begins (ground war). February 1991.
17. Military exercises conducted in Kuwait and the Persian Gulf to get Iraqi compliance with weapons inspections. July 1992.
18. 200 Air Force and Navy aircraft used to enforce "no-fly zone" in Southern Iraq. September 1992.
19. 30,000 American troops, carrier group deployed in Somalia to facilitate famine relief. December 1992.
20. Troop deployed in Kuwait and aircraft and missiles used to attack Iraqi military installations in January 1993.
21. Additional troops, aircraft carrier deployed to Somalia in October and November after U.S. soldiers killed in October 1993 clash with Somalis.

22. Military exercises in Caribbean simulate an invasion of Haiti. July 1994.
23. 20,000 troops occupy Haiti after agreement with military regime on September 1994.
24. Large ground force, ships, aircraft sent to Persian Gulf region in response to Iraqi threats to Kuwait. October1994.
25. Carrier task force, Marine contingent, attack submarine, and other ships move into Adriatic on May 29-30 after UN observers taken hostage by Serbs in Bosnia. May 1995.
26. Troops, ships deployed to Persian Gulf region in response to Iraqi threats in August 1995.
27. Troop deployment to Bosnia as part of Dayton Agreement begins in December 1995.
28. Cuba shoots down American civilian plane. February 1996.
29. The US military launched cruise missile attacks against 14 Iraqi air defense bases following Iraq's invasion of the Kurdish "safe haven." September 1996.
30. Troops mobilized; b-52s, patriot missiles deployed near Iraq in response to Kurdish area invasion and inspection violations. September 1996.
31. Iraq ceases cooperation with UN inspectors. October 1997.
32. Iraq expels UN inspectors. November 1997.
33. Clinton threatens major attack on Iraq. February 1998.
34. Operation Infinite Reach (OBL retaliation) - Cruise missile strikes against Afghanistan and Sudan in response to bombings of two U.S. Embassies in Africa. August 1998.
35. Operation Desert Fox: Attacks on Iraq for inspections violations. November 1998.
36. Iraq orders UN inspectors to leave (again). December 1998
37. Kosovo Air Campaign. March 1999.
38. Bombing of U.S.S. Cole in Yemen- October 2000.
39. Chinese air force forces down US reconnaissance plane- April 2001
40. Initial deployment of troops to Afghanistan- September 2001
41. Afghanistan invasion. October 2001.
42. Second Gulf War. March 2003.

**EXPERT SURVEY RESULTS**



# ONLINE CODING FORM