Learning From Yesterday, Today:
Historical Analogies and Public Support
for Foreign Policy Action*

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Abstract

Politicians frequently use historical analogies to justify their preferred foreign policies. Yet, despite their prevalence, it remains unclear whether, how, and why historical analogies shape public opinion. We conduct the most comprehensive experimental test to date of the impact of historical analogies on the U.S. public's foreign policy preferences (n = 4,444 across three studies) and find compelling evidence that analogical appeals increase mass confidence in leaders' foreign policy decisionmaking. We also illustrate several of the key mechanisms underlying this dynamic and show that analogies are more effective at shaping public opinion than less instinctual rationales like "gut" or intuition. Finally, we demonstrate that analogical reasoning is no more effective at moving public opinion than other types of rational justifications. Together, our results reveal the logic and limitations of an important elite communication strategy in foreign policymaking, and contribute to growing literature on foreign policy attitudes and political communication.

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"The dominant mental methodology of real policymakers is historical reasoning."
— Ashton Carter, Former US Secretary of Defense[1]

Using analogies to justify crucial policy decisions to the public is a ubiquitous strategy in politics. For example, household budget analogies are frequently deployed to advocate for fiscal policies (Barnes and Hicks, 2022); analogies are used to rationalize domestic policy changes, such as police (Thaler, Mueller and Mosinger, 2023) and healthcare reforms (Barabas, Carter and Shan, 2020); and, perhaps most prominently, historical analogies are often used to explain courses of foreign policy action to the mass public (Taylor and Rourke, 1995; Valentino and Weinberg, 2017; Kalhousová, Finkel and Kocián, 2024). By likening a policy proposal to salient past events (history), policymakers can frame the stakes of a current crisis and signal to the public and other elites their views on the optimal policy responses. For instance, President Lyndon Johnson publicly invoked the 1938 Munich Agreement with Hitler as a justification against conciliation in Vietnam (Record, 2002). Vladimir Putin has also used this analogy to justify aggression against Ukraine. The Holocaust is often analogized by pundits advocating U.S. intervention in humanitarian crises (Valentino and Weinberg, 2017). More recently, President Biden publicly likened U.S. support for Ukraine to America's Lend-Lease program during World War II.

While analogies are pervasive in politics, their political value is the subject of significant debate. Some research suggests analogies are compelling tools for political communication, helping politicians advocate and justify proposed policies. By invoking history, officials' analogical appeals help ground their policy proposals in a salient, identifiable, and authoritative foundation—the past (Vertzberger, 1986). Particularly when policymakers' appeals accord with citizens' political memories and experiences, analogies are likely to form a persuasive base for policy arguments (Schuman and Rieger, 1992). Some existing qualitative (Jones, 2022) and experimental (Thibodeau and Boroditsky, 2011; Barabas, Carter and Shan, 2020) work shows analogies increase support for important foreign and domestic policies.

On the other hand, analogical appeals could simply be "cheap talk," with little substantive impact on mass opinion. For one, partisan motivated reasoning often outweighs the influence of factual appeals in elite rhetoric (Slothuus and de Vreese, 2010). This suggests citizens' partisan ideologies may supersede the effects of analogies in the formation of political attitudes. Indeed, analogies employed by policymakers often fulfill simple ideological functions (Mumford, 2015).[2] Further, even when officials wield analogies with the intent to persuade, historical invocations may fail to influence public attitudes.

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[1] Aspen Strategy Group Lecture, August 2018.

[2] In Chile, analogizing police brutality to repression under the Pinochet regime only increased support for police reform among segments of the public already predisposed to support reform, like left-leaning citizens (Thaler, Mueller and Mosinger, 2023).

This could occur because citizens who are poorly-informed about international politics fail to appreciate the subtle implications of analogies (Valentino and Weinberg, 2017), or because politically-aware citizens rebut policymakers' analogies on the basis of inaccuracies or incongruities between historical and current events. For these reasons, the balance of existing evidence suggests analogical appeals have weak or null impacts (Barnes and Hicks, 2022; Blumenau and Lauderdale, 2024).

Whether or not historical analogies impact public opinion on foreign policy issues has important implications for politics. Prior research, including on elites themselves, demonstrates that public views constrain the policies that leaders are able to pursue in foreign affairs (Tomz, Weeks and Yarhi-Milo, 2020; Chu and Recchia, 2022). If leaders cannot effectively sell their foreign policies to the public, they may lack the domestic political support to sustain them, especially in the long-term. Elite-public gaps have also been shown to be smaller than is commonly assumed (Kertzer, 2022). If historical analogies impact the foreign policy preferences of the public, they may also impact the views of policymakers themselves, which is a contested question (Khong, 1992). Therefore, it is important to understand the effect of historical analogies on public opinion.

To advance this debate we investigate three research questions: (1) whether analogizing is an effective communication strategy for leaders interested in mobilizing public support behind foreign policy proposals; (2) the mechanisms by which analogies influence mass attitudes; and (3) whether analogies are more persuasive than other types of policy justifications, such as experts' recommendations or leaders' intuition. The stakes of this empirical debate are high. Political leaders employ analogies to garner support for major foreign policies relating to war, human rights, economic welfare, and democratic accountability. Moreover, understanding the mechanisms underpinning the effects of analogies on public opinion helps illuminate neglected political microfoundations of metaphorical reasoning, an important communication strategy (Khong, 1992; Schlesinger and Lau, 2000).

We argue that foreign policy analogies *are* an effective way to increase public support for proposed policies. We further outline and test various mechanisms—including perceptions of policy success and costs, and beliefs about analogy-invoking leaders—by which historical analogies may persuade the public. Finally, because historical analogies ground policy prescriptions in past experiences, we expect them to serve as effective and persuasive rhetorical devices for foreign policymakers. Specifically, we argue that analogizing holds greater persuasive impact than other types of policy justifications based on instinct or emotion (e.g., leaders' "gut" intuition). By contrast, historical analogies should hold comparable persuasive impact to that of other fact- and logic-based rationalizations, like expert assessments.

To test our argument, we conducted three pre-registered survey experiments on the American pub-

lic (n = 4,444). In each experiment we randomly exposed respondents to different foreign policy scenarios, varying whether and how historical analogies were used by a president to justify a course of foreign policy action. Contrary to mixed results from previous studies, we find robust support for our core hypothesis that historical analogizing is an effective rhetorical strategy in international politics. On average across our three studies, the use of an historical analogy increased perceptions that the president chose the best foreign policy strategy by 7.4 percentage points compared to a control where no analogy was used. We also find evidence that analogies work by shaping perceptions of success, costs, leaders' qualities, and normative considerations. Additionally, we show that historical analogies have a relatively greater impact than intution-based justifications.

Overall, our studies make three major contributions to scholarship on public opinion, communication, and international relations. First, adjudicating the debate on the impact of historical analogies on public opinion is important given the frequency with which policymakers use analogical reasoning—especially in the realm of international politics—and mixed evidence in prior studies. Most extant work has focused on understanding how historical analogies impact elites' decisionmaking during foreign policy crises (e.g., May, 1973; Jervis, 1976; Khong, 1992; Jones, 2022). We shed light on the downstream consequences of analogical appeals for public opinion, a question that warrants particular attention given politicians' increasing use of direct messaging strategies to communicate policy proposals with citizens during important foreign political crises (Barberá et al., 2024). Our study represents the most comprehensive experimental test of the impact of historical analogies on the public's foreign policy preferences to date.

Second, and relatedly, our project offers the most extensive evaluation of the mechanisms by which historical analogies shape mass opinion. As Khong (1992, p. 10) explains, careful consideration of mechanisms is essential for progress in the research program on analogies and metaphors in political speech: "the challenge [for scholars is to] ... specify what it is that historical analogies do and demonstrate how, if at all, such tasks influence decision outcomes." By clarifying mechanisms, our work illuminates heretofore neglected political microfoundations of analogical appeals.

Finally, this project's theory and results bear crucial implications for our understanding of elite foreign policy rhetoric, gridlock, and democratic accountability. To the extent elites can build broad-based support for sensible foreign policies through analogical invocations, our findings are sanguine. Given domestic political gridlock in the realm of foreign policy, generating policy consensus on key international affairs issues is challenging. Historical analogies and appeals may offer policymakers one means for overcoming this gridlock by grounding policy proposals with reference to salient past events. On the

other hand, ample evidence suggests public officials often misapply historical analogies—deliberately or as a result of cognitive errors (May, 1973; Jervis, 1976). If policymakers systematically wield analogical appeals but draw mistaken inferences from history, our findings suggest that analogies could be used to persuade the public in support of strategically-unwise or normatively-dubious foreign policies. For instance, Jones (2022) shows how inappropriately applied analogies to the Vietnam and Soviet-Afghan wars enabled destructive and losing engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. It is important for democratic accountability that scholars, political activists, and journalists pay attention to and correct politicians' misappropriated historical invocations.

The Impact of Historical Analogies on Public Opinion

Humans resort to a variety of cognitive tools and heuristics to simplify the complex processes of policy deliberation, one of which is analogical reasoning (Kahneman, Slovic and Tversky, 1982).[3] Following Khong (1992, p. 6-7), we define historical analogies as "inference[s] that if two or more events separated in time agree in one respect, then they may also agree in another." Analogies work as cognitive tools by offering individuals a recognizable lens through which to view contemporary events. Jervis (1976, p. 217) elaborates: "[w]hat one learns from international history is an important factor determining images that shape the interpretation of incoming information." In other words, by positing a correspondence between unfamiliar present circumstances and familiar past events, analogies and historical appeals assist individuals in responding to complex foreign policy crises (Houghton, 1996; Stapel and Spears, 1996). More specifically, analogical reasoning helps individuals by anchoring the frames they use to interpret the stakes and consequences of current events to salient past events. In this way, memories and allusions to prior developments offer individuals "scripts" and "schema" for understanding complex and uncertain contemporary crises (Shimko, 1994). Drawing historical analogies is an essential way individuals learn from the past to refine future foreign policymaking (Levy, 1994; Reiter, 1994). Further, these impacts of analogical reasoning typically operate subconsciously (Thibodeau and Boroditsky, 2011), wielding covert influence over the frameworks individuals apply.

Existing political psychological scholarship offers important evidence on the precise cognitive functions that analogical appeals support. For instance, Schlesinger and Lau (2000) show that analogies facilitate description, prediction, and prescription. By benchmarking complex real-world events against more readily-understandable "templates" from the past, analogizing can help individuals define interests and determine strategic consequences. More recently, Ghilani et al. (2017) highlight key social functions

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[3]We offer a fuller survey of literature on historical analogies in appendix A.

of analogical invocations. In their framework, historical analogies facilitate understanding and policy-making by defining normative stakes, ascribing social roles to actors involved, prescribing appropriate responses, and persuading audiences about the correct course of action. This social perspective harkens to earlier work by Vertzberger (1986), who shows how analogies can bolster the perceived authority of analogy-invoking decisionmakers by framing their policy proposals as motivated by objective circumstances of the past. A third way historical analogies can shape decisionmaking is by conjuring emotions tied to salient past events (Desch, 2006; Lai, 2023). With an applicable analogical bridge, emotions linked with historical events are carried forward to present crises, lending emotive weight to decisions taken about policy responses.

Unsurprisingly, historical analogies are invoked frequently in foreign policymaking (Axelrod and Forster, 2017). Explicit analogical appeals have been voiced by policymakers in diverse crises ranging from the Korean War (Record, 2002), the Cuban Missile Crisis (Tierney, 2007), the Vietnam War (Khong, 1992), and the Cold War space race (Peterson, 1997) to the Gulf War (Schuman and Rieger, 1992; Taylor and Rourke, 1995), the Balkan Wars (Desch, 2006; Hehir, 2006), the War in Afghanistan (Miller, 2016), the War in Iraq (Angstrom, 2011), the War in Syria (Kaarbo and Kenealy, 2017), and tensions in the South China Sea (Kopper and Peragovics, 2019). Appeals to events a policymaker lived and governed through are particularly common and salient (Schuman and Rieger, 1992; Thaler, Mueller and Mosinger, 2023). In addition to the common invocation of historical analogies by individual officials, international organizations also frequently rely on historical analogies to make sense of ambiguity and overcome coordination problems between members (Dörfler and Gehring, 2021). Policymakers' frequent employment of historical analogies is easy to understand from a political psychological perspective. Analogies are an example of case-based reasoning—the use of previous actions to inform current decisions. Sylvan, Ostrom and Gannon (1994) show that this form of reasoning is particularly common among foreign policy experts appointed into the echelons of the U.S. national security bureaucracy. Outside the U.S. as well, elites are prone to form foreign policy preferences on the basis of case-base reasoning about historical policy successes (Goldsmith, 2005; Kalhousová, Finkel and Kocián, 2024).

For their purported benefits, the educative efficacy of analogies—and more broadly, policymakers' capacities for correctly learning from the past through analogies—is limited. First, analogies may mislead and distract political decisionmakers from important nuances about contemporary situations that do not comport with past, analogized scenarios (Gilovich, 1981). In a prominent study, May (1973) finds that analogies tend to mislead because policymakers do not test their relevance to contemporary circumstances, and instead rely on the first comparison that comes to mind. As Jervis (1976, p. 281-

282) also explains, "[t]here is often little reason why those events that provide analogies should in fact be the best guides to the future ... because outcomes are learned without careful attention to details of causation, lessons are superficial and overgeneralized ... [and] decisionmakers do not examine a variety of analogies before selecting the one that they believe sheds the most light on their situation." Second, psychological biases often plague human judgment as individuals learn and update (Kahneman, Slovic and Tversky, 1982; Levy, 1994). For instance, recency bias, the tendency to discount older information in favor of simple, vivid, and proximate events, can lead policymakers to draw inappropriate analogies (Reiter, 1994). Likewise, negativity bias, the tendency to focus on past failures rather than past successes, may also reduce the quality of analogical reasoning (Johnson and Tierney, 2018). These tendencies are a reflection of broader cognitive barriers that may inhibit rational decisionmaking in the foreign policy process.

As discussed in the introduction, there is a debate in the literature about the impact of analogies on public opinion (Valentino and Weinberg, 2017; Barabas, Carter and Shan, 2020; Barnes and Hicks, 2022; Thaler, Mueller and Mosinger, 2023; Blumenau and Lauderdale, 2024). However, most prior work does not focus specifically on the foreign policy domain, or utilizes qualitative and observational data, which makes causal inference more challenging. Whether or not the use of historical analogies improves policy, our core contention is that they are effective rhetorical devices for persuading audiences to support a particular foreign policy decision. Historical analogies provide accessible and emotionally evocative "scripts" for audiences thinking through potential policy responses to complex foreign policy crises (Sylvan, Ostrom and Gannon, 1994). These predefined and easily recognizable lenses ease the otherwise cognitively-taxing process of foreign policy preference-formation. Lau, Smith and Fiske (1991) show that officials can engage in political persuasion by shaping the information environment, and especially by offering "interpretations" of contemporary policies. This is precisely the function of historical analogies. By offering salient interpretations of current events, analogical appeals help align audiences' understandings of events with policymakers' proposed frames, rendering analogies a politically persuasive rhetorical device.

While more research is needed on the subject, there are some reasons to think that the effects of historical analogies may be particularly strong in the realm of foreign policy. Prior work demonstrates that the public is often relatively ill-informed about international crises at their outset. Information gaps are often largest between leaders and publics at the initial stage of a crisis (Baum and Potter, 2008). Consequently, publics rely heavily on elite messaging (Guisinger and Saunders, 2017), especially at the start of foreign policy events. Historical analogies used by policymakers early in crises may therefore

be particularly effective tools for shaping opinion and justifying proposals. A countervailing argument suggests that historical analogies may lack the resonance required to move public opinion if publics are poorly-informed about foreign policy in general. Analogies work most effectively when they offer familiar scripts of which the public has some knowledge (Shimko, 1994). Since prior research demonstrates that the information gap between the masses and policymakers shrinks over time as the public becomes more interested in learning about prominent or costly conflicts (Baum and Potter, 2008), we expect that historical analogies to particularly salient past events can move public attitudes even if citizens are relatively poorly-informed. The public's greater focus on domestic over foreign policy issues does not mean foreign policy attitudes cannot be shaped by analogical reasoning. Indeed, if leaders' analogical appeals convey to citizens that policy proposals are grounded in measured considerations of historical precedent, members of the public may be moved by historical analogies even if they are unfamiliar with the historical events being analogized.

Mechanisms   We argue there are a variety of ways historical analogies may help leaders justify their proposed foreign policies.[4] Theorizing and testing all possible mechanisms underpinning analogies' persuasive effects is beyond the scope of this paper, but represents an important avenue for future research. Here, we outline and test several primary mechanisms that could explain the persuasive effect of historical analogies. Specifically, we argue that historical analogies can influence perceptions of (1) success, (2) costs and benefits, (3) ethics, and (4) presidential traits. Importantly, multiple of the mechanisms we identify may operate in parallel—a possibility our empirical approach explicitly allows. We would also like to explicitly recognize at the outset that different analogies likely work through different mechanisms. For example, some analogies may be more strategic in nature and thus impact perceptions of success, whereas others may be more ethical in nature and therefore impact views about morality (Tierney, 2007). We do not contend that each of the four primary mechanisms we identify will hold for every analogy. Nevertheless, each of these mechanisms has been shown by prior work to be an important determinant of public support for foreign policies, such as the use of force, and thus they can potentially help explain how an analogy would impact an individual's views. Below, we explain exactly how analogies relate to these four mechanisms.

The most obvious way historical analogies may work to persuade audiences to support leaders' policy proposals is by shaping audiences' estimations of policy success. A large literature in international relations confirms that publics are "defeat-phobic" and care overwhelmingly about whether enacted for-

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[4]We describe these mechanisms in greater detail in appendix B.

eign policies succeeded in furthering national priorities (e.g., Feaver and Gelpi, 2004; Eichenberg, 2005). We argue that historical analogies may persuade audiences by shifting their expectations about the probability that an analogized policy will succeed in an ongoing crisis. For instance, analogies to the Cuban Missile Crisis—widely considered an American victory—may cue respondents to think a similar strategy will succeed, while analogies to the Munich Agreement—a disastrous example of appeasement—are likely to convince the public similar policies will fail. In line with this view, prior work shows that analogies to the Iraq "surge," which quelled insurgent violence in western Iraq in 2006–2007, fueled optimism about the application of a similar approach in Afghanistan in 2010–2011 (Cole, 2009). Today, various pundits analogize America's (arguably) successful Cold War strategy of containment when advocating that the U.S. pursue a similar policy as it competes with China for global influence (Kopper and Peragovics, 2019). Thus, analogies may persuade by increasing audiences' perceptions of the probability of policy success.

Naturally, considerations about policy success must also involve the relative distribution of costs and benefits. The public and elites tend to judge foreign policy effectiveness both in terms of whether policies succeed in furthering important national aims and in terms how much policies cost (Baldwin, 2000). If a policy is expected to bring meager benefits relative to its costs, then it is unlikely to foster public support. Analogies that imply a proposed policy could offer success, but only at a massive expense in blood or treasure, may not foster public support. For instance, during the Second Lebanon War, analogies Israeli policymakers drew to the Gulf War and the First Lebanon War altered estimations of policy costs and benefits (Siniver and Collins, 2015). Israeli officials opted for an airpower-centric strategy in the Second Lebanon War precisely because analogies they drew suggested airpower would be relatively less costly than a ground invasion. In line with this logic, Tobin, Schneider and Leblang (2022) show that foreign policy elites often attempt to generate public support for proposed policies by framing their proposals as relatively less costly than alternatives. We argue analogies can be a particularly effective tool for indicating the benefits of a policy outweigh its costs. For example, an analogy to the Vietnam War implies intervention will be costly, while an analogy to the Gulf War or Cuban Missile Crisis would imply a cheaper and faster military intervention.

Policy effectiveness and cost are important to the public for instrumental reasons. Citizens and officials value foreign policies that promise to succeed in advancing national interests while minimizing expenses. However, publics also hold policy-relevant moral values, and care about the normative contours of contemporary crises. Sartori (1998) shows that citizens value even-handed foreign policies that offer to foster their countries' reputations for honesty. Likewise, attitudes about foreign policy are shaped

by perceptions of harm, fairness, and reciprocity (Kertzer et al., 2014). For this reason, policymakers often frame their policy proposals in morally-laden, prescriptive terms (Busby, 2010; Post, 2023). In the context of analogies, moral frames hold particularly persuasive weight. For example, Tierney (2007) shows how President Kennedy's moral interpretation of the Pearl Harbor attacks impacted his preferences over military responses during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Similarly, politicians advocating humanitarian interventions often invoke the Holocaust analogy, with a desire to frame engagement as a moral obligation (Desch, 2006; Valentino and Weinberg, 2017). Historical analogies' persuasive effects may be attributable to audiences' normative perceptions of analogized policies. In other words, analogies may persuade by bolstering perceptions that a proposed policy is morally justified.

The success, cost-benefit, and morality mechanisms outlined above emphasize how historical analogies may persuade audiences by shifting perceptions of *policies*. A fourth way historical appeals may persuade audiences to support analogized policies is by shifting perceptions of analogy-invoking *leaders*. We argue that invoking historical analogies may help leaders convey to relevant audiences information about three especially beneficial qualities: competence, intelligence, and knowledge of history. Leaders with reputations for competency and consistency are perceived as most likely to implement policies that comport with the national interest. These traits are important because they "serve as an umbrella for a variety of qualities used to evaluate a leader" (Sorek, Haglin and Geva, 2018, p. 662). Ample evidence in social psychology suggests the persuasiveness of messages is tied to source characteristics (DeBono and Klein, 1993). Of particular importance is expertise. When a message is perceived as being conveyed by a subject matter expert, audiences are more likely to view the message as compelling and persuasive (Clark et al., 2012). By analogizing current crises to relevant historical examples, leaders demonstrate analytical skills and related characteristics useful in foreign policy. For publics generally less-informed about foreign policy history, analogizing may help build confidence in leaders' policy proposals by increasing confidence in leaders' own capabilities, even if citizens are not familiar with the specifics of an analogy.

Finally, we consider the relative effectiveness of historical analogies versus other types of policy justifications leaders employ. Is analogizing uniquely effective at mobilizing public support behind proposals, or are other forms of justification just as efficacious? Answering this question is crucial for understanding the limits of historical analogies in political communication. Following Jervis (1976) and Kahneman (2011), we distinguish two categories of policy rationales: instinctual versus rational. Instinctual justifications are based on leaders' intuition, emotions, and "gut" feelings. Rational justifications, by contrast, are rooted in concrete, deliberate, measured, and fact-based assessments. Historical analogies

are a form of rational justification because they represent efforts to ground policy proposals in the context of past cases and decisions (Sylvan, Ostrom and Gannon, 1994).[5] Yet, presidents frequently fall back on their "gut" instincts to determine and defend their policy preferences. For example, Donald Trump said, "I have a gut, and my gut tells me more sometimes than anybody else's brain can ever tell me" (Zhang, 2019). Similarly, in justifying the Iraq War, George W. Bush said, "I'm not a textbook player. I'm a gut player. I rely on my instincts" (Woodward, 2002). In his 1991 State of the Union address, George H.W. Bush said, "Most Americans know instinctively why we are in the Gulf. They know we had to stop Saddam now, not later." This is not to say that leaders always or only use references to their intuition to justify policies. However, these examples provide a useful theoretical contrast to more logically-rooted historical analogies. On balance, we expect historical analogies to have a greater persuasive impact than instinctual justifications since the former are more evidence-based than the latter.

Of course, leaders can justify policy proposals with reference to various logical bases. For example, apart from analogical reasoning, leaders could justify proposals by appealing to advisors' expertise or assessments of intelligence. We expect that analogical appeals will have comparable impacts on policy credibility and support to appeals based on other rational foundations. That is, we expect historical analogies to have similar effects on public opinion as other forms of rational policy justifications, such as appeals to expertise (James and Randall, 2018). All types of rational justifications are evidence-based, and thus should increase the public's perception that a policy choice is wise. In fact, Blumenau and Lauderdale (2024) find that appeals to authority are one of the most persuasive types of justifications. Support for this hypothesis would underscore that the opinion-shaping impact of historical analogies is limited and contingent on the counterfactual.

Experimental Design

To test our theory, we conducted three pre-registered survey experiments on American citizens.[6] The studies were conducted online via Lucid, a high-quality sample provider.[7] We used quota sampling to obtain a respondent pool that approximates the adult population of the U.S. with respect to census benchmarks for race, ethnicity, gender, age, and region (appendix C). Survey instruments and vignettes are described in appendix G.

In Study 1 (n = 1,166), respondents were randomly assigned to one of two issue conditions set

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[5]To be sure, historical analogies are not wholly objective—leaders hold latitude over how lessons from the past are interpreted and framed.

[6]Study 1 was conducted in April 2023, Study 2 in May 2024, and Study 3 in June 2024.

[7]We included a pre-treatment screener to maximize respondent attentiveness. Appendix C describes our sample and research ethics.

in 2030—a hypothetical crisis with China over Taiwan or a hypothetical crisis with China over the construction of a military base in Panama. Within each issue condition, respondents were also randomly assigned to read either a control vignette or a treatment vignette containing an analogical appeal. These conditions were designed to loosely mirror central elements of actual historical crises.

The first scenario involves a Chinese invasion of Taiwan meant to evoke comparisons with the German occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1938. The second scenario involves Chinese construction of a military base in Panama meant to evoke comparisons with Soviet base construction in Cuba in 1962. We chose to study crises between the U.S. and China in Study 1 because U.S.-China competition is geopolitically important and because a major crisis unfolding between these countries in the near future is plausible.[8] In the scenario where China invades Taiwan, the president proposes a strong military response to Chinese aggression in both the control and treatment conditions. The only difference between treatment and control is that in the former the president uses the infamous Munich analogy to justify his proposed course of action. Since the Munich analogy indicates appeasing Hitler's territorial demands was counter-productive and only led to further land conquests, allowing China to annex Taiwan might also be foolish. In the scenario where China is building a military base in Panama, the president opts to impose a naval blockade to prevent Chinese access to the base in both the control and treatment conditions. The only difference between the treatment and control vignettes is that in the former the president justifies his policy by analogizing the Cuban Missile Crisis. Since the United States' imposition of a naval quarantine during the Cuban Missile Crisis was ostensibly effective, so might a similar policy in response to China's base construction. To address concerns about information equivalence across treatment and control conditions, our vignettes explicitly hold constant information about the U.S. president, China's regime type, the relative power and relationship between the U.S. and China, and the policy response the U.S. president proposes. In all conditions, we also randomize the stated partisan affiliation of the U.S. president to mitigate the influence of this factor on respondent attitudes.

Study 2 (n = 1,809) probes the external validity of our findings from Study 1 by testing the impact of different historical analogies on two distinct foreign policy scenarios (again set in the year 2030). The first involves the mass killing of Rohingya ethnic minorities in Myanmar. Thus, instead of a scenario involving great power competition (as in Study 1), this scenario entails a humanitarian crisis. In both the control and treatment conditions, the president decides to intervene militarily to protect the Rohingya. In the treatment condition the president employs a historical analogy to the Bosnian War—a prior humanitarian intervention that is framed by the president as necessary—to justify this policy. The second foreign policy

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[8]Our vignettes build on those of Blair and Schwartz (2023).

scenario in Study 2 involves a nuclear crisis with Iran. The president is deliberating between different policy options, including regime change. In both the treatment and control conditions, he ultimately decides to launch a limited military operation to destroy Iranian nuclear facilities. As before, the only difference between the treatment and control vignettes is that in the former the president deploys an analogy—either to the Vietnam War or the Philippine–American War—to explain why a regime change operation is not the optimal policy. Both the Vietnam and Philippine Wars were costly examples of regime change, and are thus used by the president to argue that adopting a similar strategy against Iran does not make sense.

In Studies 1 and 2, the counterfactual against which we compare historical analogies is one in which the president does not invoke an alternative justification for his policy choice. In Study 3 (n = 1,469), we test whether the nature of the counterfactual matters. This study closely resembles the invasion of Taiwan scenario from Study 1, except we add two additional experimental conditions. One involves the president justifying his decision by appealing to his intuition or "gut," which tells him (much like the Munich analogy suggests) that China "has expansionist goals" and "allowing China to take over Taiwan would likely just embolden them to pursue future land conquests." The other involves a justification based on the recommendations of experts from the Defense and State Departments, who also conclude based on their experience that China "has expansionist goals" and "allowing China to take over Taiwan would likely just embolden them to pursue future land conquests." Overall, our studies provide both easier (Studies 1 and 2) and harder tests (Study 3) of the impact of analogies depending on the nature of the counterfactual.

In all three studies, our primary outcome variable is a five-point measure of perceived policy credibility, or the extent to which respondents believe the president "chose the best strategy for dealing with [the crisis]." This question allows us to assess whether historical analogies accomplish their primary public relations goal: increasing mass confidence in a proposed policy. We also ask several questions, which we combine into multi-item indices, to test our hypothesized causal mechanisms. Each study further includes a battery of demographic and attitudinal questions, including potential moderators such as hawkishness and foreign policy knowledge. The full design and wording of our experiments, in addition to the entire list of pre-registered hypotheses, is included in the appendix (sections G and D.4, E.5, and F.5).

Results

We begin by assessing our core hypothesis that historical analogies increase perceptions of policy credibility. Our findings across all three studies are summarized in Figure 1, and reveal support for our theoretical expectations. The top estimate reflects the meta-analytic average effect of analogical appeals across the three studies.[9] On average, analogies increase perceptions the president chose the best foreign policy strategy by 0.2 points on a 5-point scale ($p = 0.0005$) or 7.4 percentage points on a binary outcome scale ($p < 0.0001$).

Figure 1: Effect of Historical Analogies on Policy Credibility
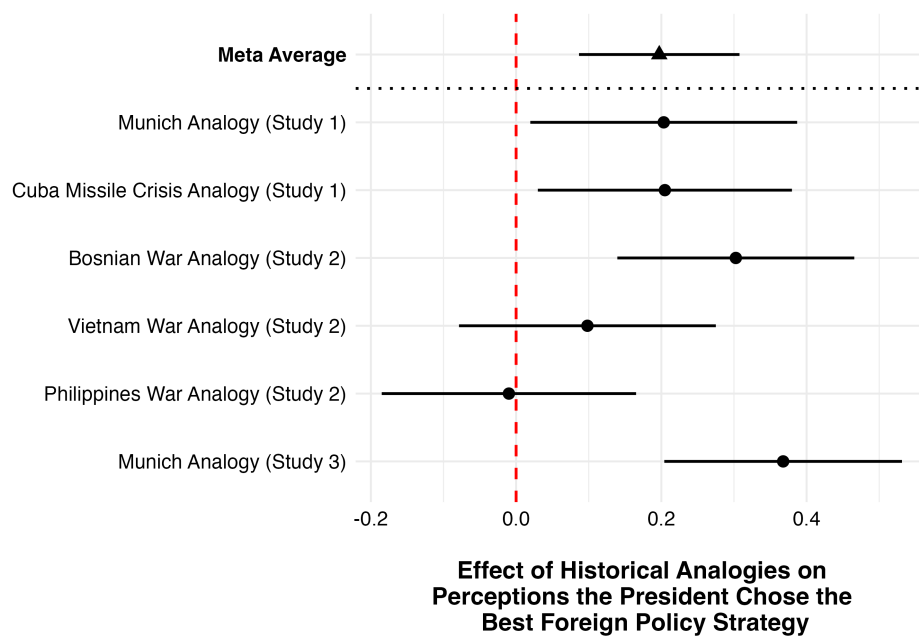
Note: Bars are 95% confidence intervals. Plots depict the effect of historical analogies compared to a control condition where no policy justification is given.

Across studies we observe variation in the efficacy of analogies. Specifically, estimates for the Vietnam and Philippines war analogies in Study 2 are not statistically significant. The likely explanation is that these analogies suggest a regime change intervention against Iran is unwise, but do not directly support the president's chosen policy—a limited strike against Iran's nuclear infrastructure. By comparison, the Munich, Cuban Missile Crisis, and Bosnian analogies more directly suggest that the president's chosen policy is the correct course of action. This result represents suggestive evidence that the efficacy of historical analogies depends on how closely analogies hew to the president's chosen course of action. Future research should test this implication more directly.

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[9]This effect is calculated using the `metafor` packge in R using random effects, which allows for the effect of historical analogies to vary depending on the foreign policy scenario and the specific analogy used.

In the appendix (sections D.3, E.3, and F.3), we test a range of heterogeneous effects and find null results in nearly every case.[10] Furthermore, the effects outlined in Figure 1 generally hold among both Democratic and Republican respondents, as well as hawkish and dovish respondents. Thus, it is not the case that historical analogies are only effective among key population subgroups. Rather, their impact appears to be cross-cutting and general. Together, these results speak to the important persuasive function of analogies in political communication.

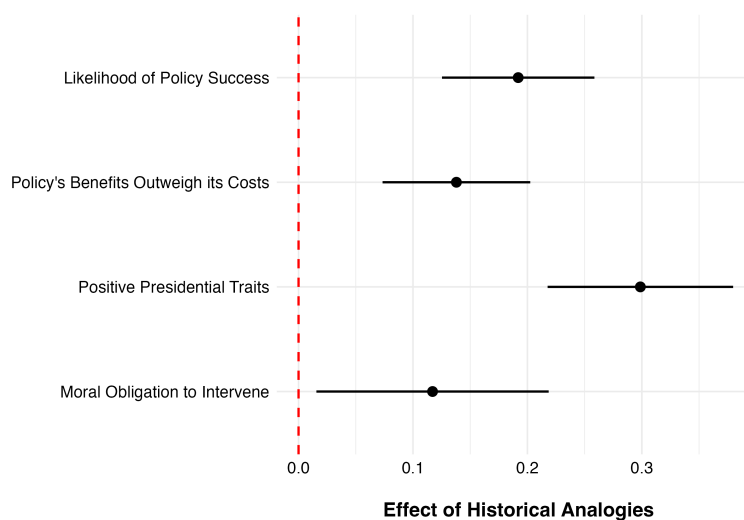Figure 2: Mechanisms Explaining the Effect of Historical Analogies

Note: Bars are 95% confidence intervals. Plots depict the effect of historical analogies compared to a control condition where no policy justification is given.

We also find evidence for our pre-registered hypotheses concerning causal mechanisms. Figure 2 plots meta-analytic averages for our four hypothesized mechanisms across all three studies. On average, analogies increase: the perceived likelihood of policy success by 0.19 points on a 5-point scale or 7.8 percentage points on a binary outcome ($p < 0.0001$); beliefs that the policy's benefits outweigh its costs by 0.14 points on a 5-point scale or 5.8 percentage points ($p < 0.0001$); perceptions of positive presidential traits by 0.30 points on a 5-point scale or 14.2 percentage points ($p < 0.0001$); and perceived moral obligation to intervene by 0.12 points on a 5-point scale or 4.6 percentage points ($p = 0.024$). As we discuss more in the appendix (sections D.3, E.3, and F.3), there is important heterogeneity in mechanisms across our studies. For example, the results for morality are only significant for the Munich analogy.[11] Intuitively, the Munich analogy primes clear ethical considerations given its connection with the Nazis and their atrocities. More broadly, heterogeneity in mechanisms across our studies supports our afore-

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[10]The one exception is that the Bosnian War analogy is less effective among Republican respondents, likely due to ceiling effects.
[11]They are null for the Bosnian analogy due to ceiling effects.

mentioned contention that different analogies shape public through different pathways depending on the particular nature of the analogy. These core results are robust across a range of additional specifications, including regression with covariate adjustment (appendix sections D.1, E.1, and F.1) and causal mediation analysis (appendix sections D.2, E.2, and F.2).

Our third set of tests (appendix section F.4) considers how effective historical analogies are compared to other types of policy justifications. In line with our expectations, we find that compared with instinctual justifications based on "gut" and intuition, historical analogizing increases public confidence that the president chose the best strategy ($p = 0.034$). On the other hand, there is no distinguishable difference in perceived policy credibility between foreign policy decisions explained using historical analogies versus other rational justifications like expert assessments ($p = 0.413$). As a communication device, then, analogies remain one of several effective options policymakers can use to justify policy decisions and persuade publics in support of their proposals.

Future work should probe why leaders choose to justify their policy decisions using analogies when we find other rational justifications are equally persuasive. One possibility, supported by qualitative research (Khong, 1992), is that analogies are uniquely effective at helping leaders themselves make decisions. A second possibility is that leaders simply believe, perhaps mistakenly, that historical analogies are a more effective rhetorical strategy. To disentangle these implications, future scholarship would benefit from replicating our studies on elite samples. However, it is worth noting that Kertzer (2022) shows that experimental effects on the public tend to replicate in elite samples, so we our sanguine that our results would replicate in an elite extension.

Finally, in supplementary analyses of Study 2 we also tested several pre-registered hypotheses about whether certain types of historical analogies are more effective. We expected that due to the well-established human inclination towards negativity bias (Johnson and Tierney, 2018), analogies that prime past foreign policy failures would be more persuasive than those that cue past policy successes. To test this possibility, we created two different versions of the Bosnian War analogy: one in which the intervention was framed as a failure because of the tardiness of American action, which caused innocent lives to be lost, and another in which the intervention was framed as a success because of the lives saved. Surprisingly, we find no evidence that negative analogies are more effective than positive ones (appendix section E.4). We also hypothesized analogies more familiar to the public (e.g., Vietnam War analogy) would be more impactful than less familiar analogies (e.g., Philippine–American War analogy) since the former should be more salient and emotionally-resonant. We find only mixed evidence for this dynamic. We discuss these results in more detail in section E.4 of the appendix. Generally, investigating variation

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across different types of analogies is a ripe avenue for future work.

Conclusion

In this study, we conduct the most comprehensive experimental test to date of the impact of historical analogies on the public's foreign policy preferences. We find compelling evidence that the use of historical analogies to justify different courses of foreign policy action is an effective political communication strategy. Consequently, this project contributes to the high-stakes debate about the political efficacy of analogical policy justifications. By elucidating and testing the causal mechanisms underlying analogical persuasion, and by testing the effectiveness of historical analogies vis-à-vis other types of justifications, this paper also contributes to our understanding of the political microfoundations of foreign policy attitudes and elite messaging.

Overall, our findings help explain why leaders so frequently use historical analogies to justify their chosen foreign policies. By increasing support for policy action and burnishing perceptions of leaders themselves, analogical appeals can generate mass favorability for proposed policies and help overcome decisionmaking gridlock. The downside is that historical analogies may be misapplied—purposefully or accidentally—to build support for strategically-unwise or morally-dubious courses of action (May, 1973). This means citizens should be cautious when confronted with analogical appeals, and should carefully reflect on historical analogies to judge their relevance to current crises. Above all, given the persuasive power of analogies, the press must be prepared to help publics understand and interpret connections between the present and the past in order to constrain leaders from generating policy support on the basis of misapplied historical comparisons.

Future work should build on this study to address several outstanding questions. First, to what extent do these results generalize? We believe that the mechanisms underlying analogical persuasion should apply in other contexts, but future work could test this formally. Second, does the effectiveness of analogies vary based on issue-area? Mixed findings in research on other issue domains (e.g., fiscal policy) and the unique dynamics of foreign policy as a realm may mean historical analogies are most effective in the international political realm. Third, do "inappropriate" historical analogies, which shed little light on a current foreign policy situation, have a smaller impact on public opinion than analogies that are a better fit? This study provides some suggestive evidence that they do, but future work is needed to understand whether misapplied analogies yield similar effects. Finally, are some types of historical analogies more effective than others? Surprisingly, we find no evidence that negative analogies are more effective than positive analogies, and only mixed evidence that more familiar analogies are more persuasive. Making

progress on these questions is an important priority for future work given the widespread prevalence of analogies in political communication.

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Supplementary Materials for

Learning From Yesterday, Today: Historical Analogies and Public Support for Foreign Policy Action

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Contents

A   Literature Review: How Analogies Work

In foreign policy crises, politicians and public officials must engage in important and complex deliberations about appropriate policy responses. Policymaking around contemporary foreign political developments is challenging because of the importance and multifaceted nature of many crises, like wars and economic shocks. In these situations, strategic planning and policy implementation are cognitively taxing. Human decisionmakers resort to a variety of cognitive tools and heuristics to simplify the processes of policy deliberation (Kahneman, Slovic and Tversky, 1982). Historical analogies are one particularly important decisionmaking tool foreign policy officials often rely on to guide policy choice.

Following Khong (1992, p. 6-7), we define historical analogies as "inference[s] that if two or more events separated in time agree in one respect, then they may also agree in another." Analogies work as cognitive tools by offering decisionmakers a recognizable lens through which to view contemporary events. Jervis (1976, p. 217) elaborates: "[w]hat one learns from international history is an important factor determining images that shape the interpretation of incoming information." In other words, by positing a correspondence between unfamiliar present circumstances and familiar past events, analogies and historical appeals assist policymakers in responding to foreign policy crises (Houghton, 1996; Stapel and Spears, 1996). More specifically, analogical reasoning helps policymakers by anchoring the frames they use to interpret the stakes and consequences of current events to salient past events. In this way, memories and allusions to prior developments offer public officials "scripts" and "schema" for understanding complex and uncertain contemporary crises (Shimko, 1994). Drawing historical analogies is an essential way officials learn from the past to refine future foreign policymaking (Levy, 1994; Reiter, 1994). Further, these impacts of analogical reasoning typically operate subconsciously (?), wielding covert influence over the frameworks decisionmakers apply.

Existing political psychological scholarship offers important evidence on the precise cognitive functions that analogical appeals support. For instance, Schlesinger and Lau (2000) show that analogies facilitate description, prediction, and prescription. By benchmarking complex real-world events against more readily-understandable "templates" from the past, analogizing can help decisionmakers define interests and determine strategic consequences. More recently, Ghilani et al. (2017) also highlight key social functions of analogical invocations. In their framework, historical analogies facilitate understanding and policymaking by defining normative stakes, ascribing social roles to actors involved, prescribing appropriate responses, and persuading audiences about the correct course of action. This social perspective harkens to earlier work by Vertzberger (1986), who shows how analogies can bolster the perceived authority of analogy-invoking decisionmakers by framing their policy proposals as motivated by objective circumstances of the past. A third way historical analogies can shape decisionmaking is by conjuring emotions tied to salient past events (Desch, 2006; Lai, 2023). With an applicable analogical bridge, emotions linked with historical events are carried forward to present crises, lending emotive weight to decisions taken about policy responses.

Unsurprisingly, historical analogies are invoked frequently in foreign policymaking (Axelrod and Forster, 2017). Explicit analogical appeals have been voiced by policymakers in diverse crises ranging from the Korean War (Record, 2002), the Cuban Missile Crisis

(Tierney, 2007), the Vietnam War (Khong, 1992), and the Cold War space race (Peterson, 1997) to the Gulf War (Schuman and Rieger, 1992; Taylor and Rourke, 1995), the Balkan Wars (Desch, 2006; Hehir, 2006), the War in Afghanistan (Miller, 2016), the War in Iraq (Angstrom, 2011), the War in Syria (Kaarbo and Kenealy, 2017), and tensions in the South China Sea (Kopper and Peragovics, 2019). Appeals to events a policymaker lived—and governed—through are particular common and salient (Schuman and Rieger, 1992; Thaler, Mueller and Mosinger, 2023). In addition to the common invocation of historical analogies by individual officials, international organizations also frequently rely on historical analogies to make sense of ambiguity and overcome coordination problems between members (Dörfler and Gehring, 2021). Policymakers' frequent employment of historical analogies is easy to understand from a political psychological perspective. Analogies are an example of case-based reasoning—the use of previous actions to inform current decisions. Sylvan, Ostrom and Gannon (1994) show that this form of reasoning is particularly common among foreign policy experts appointed into the echelons of the U.S. national security bureaucracy. Outside the U.S. as well, elites are prone to form foreign policy preferences on the basis of case-base reasoning about historical policy successes (Goldsmith, 2005).

For their purported benefits, the educative efficacy of analogies—and more broadly, policymakers' capacities for correctly learning from the past through analogies—is limited. First, analogies may mislead and distract political decisionmakers from important nuances about contemporary situations that do not comport with past, analogized scenarios (Gilovich, 1981). In a prominent study, May (1973) finds that analogies tend to mislead because policymakers do not test their relevance to contemporary circumstances, and instead rely on the first comparison that comes to mind. As Jervis (1976, p. 281-282) also explains, "[t]here is often little reason why those events that provide analogies should in fact be the best guides to the future ... because outcomes are learned without careful attention to details of causation, lessons are superficial and overgeneralized ... [and] decisionmakers do not examine a variety of analogies before selecting the one that they believe sheds the most light on their situation." Second, psychological biases often plague human judgment as individuals learn and update (Kahneman, Slovic and Tversky, 1982; Levy, 1994). For instance, recency bias, the tendency to discount older information in favor of simple, vivid, and proximate events, can lead policymakers to draw inappropriate analogies (Reiter, 1994). Likewise, negativity bias, the tendency to focus on past failures rather than past successes, may also reduce the quality of analogical reasoning (Johnson and Tierney, 2018). These tendencies are a reflection of broader cognitive barriers that may inhibit rational decisionmaking in the foreign policy process.

In sum, historical analogies are common heuristic devices used by policymakers when deliberating over foreign policy proposals. Yet, the analytical value of analogical reasoning is limited because of human psychological biases. If historical analogies are prone to misleading decisionmakers and inspiring (potentially) misguided foreign policies, a major puzzle emerges. What other function do historical analogies serve that can account for their frequency in elite political rhetoric?

This paper develops a theory and argument about historical analogies' persuasive effects among the mass public. We build on the classical insight that historical analogies may aid foreign policymakers not merely in deciding how to respond to contemporary

crises, but also in *justifying* their foreign policy proposals (Vertzberger, 1986; Khong, 1992). We explore the persuasive effects of historical analogical appeals by assessing how experimentally-primed analogies shape the foreign policy preferences of ordinary citizens. Our project complements recent experimental work on the persuasive consequences of domestic policy analogies related to healthcare (Barabas, Carter and Shan, 2020) and household budgeting (Barnes and Hicks, 2022), as well as nascent international relations scholarship on analogies, justification, and foreign policy beliefs using qualitative (e.g., Kopper and Peragovics, 2019), observational (Axelrod and Forster, 2017), and experimental methods (Valentino and Weinberg, 2017).

B   Causal Mechanisms and Operationalization

There are a variety of ways historical analogies may successfully help leaders justify their proposed foreign policies. Testing all possible mechanisms underpinning analogies' persuasive effects is beyond the scope of this paper but, here, we hypothesize four primary mechanisms that could explain the persuasive effect of historical analogies: perceptions of (1) success, (2) costs and benefits, (3) ethics, and (4) presidential traits. However, two qualifications are in order. First, these mechanisms will not necessarily hold for every type of historical analogy. For example, some historical analogies do not prime respondents to think about ethics, and thus we would not expect that mechanism to operate. Which of these mechanisms is likely to hold in any given case depends on the nature of the analogy used. Second, multiple of these mechanisms can and do operate in parallel. Our theoretical framework and empirical approach explicitly allows for this possibility.

The most obvious way historical analogies may work to persuade audiences to support an analogy-invoking leaders' policy proposals is by shaping audiences' estimations of policy success. Foreign policy success is multidimensional, but in general foreign policy is goal-oriented, meaning effective policies must further pursuit of a country's key goals and interests (Baldwin, 2000). A large literature in international relations confirms that publics care overwhelmingly about whether enacted foreign policies effectively succeeded in furthering national priorities and that it is "defeat-phobic" (e.g., Feaver and Gelpi, 2004; Eichenberg, 2005). We argue that historical analogies may persuade audiences by shifting their expectations about the probability that an analogized policy will succeed in an ongoing scenario. At the tactical up to the strategic level, analogies to past foreign policy successes may assuage audiences' concerns about the likelihood of success in a current crisis. For instance, analogies to the Iraq "surge," which quelled insurgent violence in western Iraq in 2006–2007, fueled optimism about the application of a similar approach in Afghanistan in 2010–2011 (Cole, 2009). At the broader, grand strategic level, historical analogies may similarly operate to bolster audiences' expectations that analogized policies will succeed. Today, various pundits analogize America's (arguably) successful Cold War strategy of containment when advocating that the U.S. pursue a similar policy as it competes with China for global influence (Kopper and Peragovics, 2019). Thus, analogies may persuade by increasing audiences' perceptions of the probability of policy success.

Success Mechanism: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more likely to believe the chosen policy will lead to a successful outcome for their country.

To gauge respondents' perceptions about whether a foreign policy is likely to be successful, we create an index measure based on several different types of questions. Since success is multidimensional, a multi-question index is likely to provide a more comprehensive and accurate measure. First, in all studies, we ask a very broad question about whether respondents believe the policy will generally be successful: "How likely is it that President Richards' chosen policy in the scenario you read above will lead to a successful outcome for the United States?" This enables respondents to mentally define success in whatever manner they believe is most appropriate. Second, we ask a question designed to measure situation-specific perceptions of success, or what might be called tactical success. For example, in the scenario where China builds a military base in Panama, we ask whether "President Richards' chosen policy in the scenario you read above will force China to dismantle its military base in Panama." For the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar scenario, we ask, "How likely is it that President Richards' chosen policy in the scenario you read above will save thousands of innocent lives in a timely manner?" Finally, we ask respondents to assess the longer-term impacts of the president's foreign policy decision, which might be considered a measure of strategic success. For example, for the China scenarios in Studies 1 and 3, we ask, "How likely is it that the President's policy will help prevent China from overtaking the United States as the world's most powerful and influential country?" The index measures load well together, as the Cronbach's alpha measure of reliability averages over 0.80 across the three studies.

Naturally, considerations about policy success must also consider the relative distribution of costs and benefits. The public and elites tend to judge foreign policy effectiveness both in terms of whether policies succeed in furthering important national aims and in terms how much policies cost (Baldwin, 2000). What may matter is how much a proposed foreign policy can achieve at a given cost. Analogies that imply a proposed policy could offer major strategic success, but only at a massive expense in blood or treasure, may not foster public support. In contrast, analogizing policies that provide modest benefits but entail low costs may be more compelling for audiences. For instance, during the Second Lebanon War, analogies Israeli policymakers drew to the Gulf War and the First Lebanon War altered estimations of policy costs and benefits (Siniver and Collins, 2015). Israeli officials opted for an airpower-centric strategy in the Second Lebanon War precisely because analogies they drew suggested airpower would be relatively less costly than a ground invasion.

Cost-Benefit Mechanism: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more likely to believe the benefits of the chosen policy outweigh the costs.

We operationalize this hypothesis with a three-question index measure asking to what extent respondents agree or disagree with each statement. First, we ask about the perceived costs of the president's policy in isolation: "The cost of President Richards' chosen policy are high." Second, we ask about the perceived benefits of the president's

policy in isolation: "The benefits of President Richards' chosen policy are high." Third, we put these two together and ask: "The benefits of President Richards' chosen policy outweigh the costs." Since costs and benefits can be independent factors (e.g., a conflict, such as the Vietnam War, could have high costs but low benefits, or a conflict, such as the Falklands War, could have low costs but arguably high benefits), it is valuable to ask about each separately and then also assess how respondents weigh the costs versus the benefits. Given this discussion, it is no surprise that these three questions are less correlated than the ones above about success. Consequently, the average Cronbach's alpha across the three studies is positive, but lower than for the success measures: 0.48.

Policy effectiveness and cost are important to the public for instrumental reasons. Citizens and officials value foreign policies that promise to succeed in advancing national interests while minimizing expenses. However, publics also hold policy-relevant moral values, and care about the normative contours of contemporary crises. Sartori (1998) shows that citizens value even-handed foreign policies that offer to foster their countries' reputations for honesty. Likewise, attitudes about foreign policy are shaped by perceptions of harm, fairness, and reciprocity (Kertzer et al., 2014). For this reason, policymakers often frame their policy proposals in morally-laden, prescriptive terms (Busby, 2010; Post, 2023). In the context of analogies, moral frames hold particularly persuasive weight. For example, Tierney (2007) shows how President Kennedy's moral interpretation of the Pearl Harbor attacks impacted his preferences over military responses during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Similarly, politicians advocating humanitarian interventions often invoke the Holocaust analogy, with a desire to frame engagement as a moral obligation (Desch, 2006; Valentino and Weinberg, 2017). Historical analogies' persuasive effects may be attributable to audiences' normative perceptions of analogized policies. In other words, analogies may persuade by bolstering perceptions that a proposed policy is morally justified.

> **Morality Mechanism: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more likely to believe that the leader's chosen policy is morally just.**

We test this mechanism with a single, straightforward question: "In this scenario, the United States has a moral obligation to intervene to [prevent China from conquering Taiwan / prevent China from building a base in Panama / protect the Rohingya from being killed / prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability]."

The success, cost-benefit, and morality mechanisms outlined above emphasize how historical analogies may persuade audiences by shifting perceptions of *policies*. A fourth way historical appeals may persuade audiences to support analogized policies is by shifting perceptions of analogy-invoking *leaders*. Intuitively, citizens value leaders who are competent and consistent (Mondak, 1995). Leaders with reputations for competency and consistency are perceived as most likely to implement policies that comport with the national interest. These traits are important because they "serve as an umbrella for a variety of qualities used to evaluate a leader" (Sorek, Haglin and Geva, 2018, p. 662). Kinder et al. (1980) identify a host of other valued traits within this "umbrella," including: honesty, intelligence, open-mindedness, and humility. These qualities are conveyed by leaders to domestic publics, bureaucrats, and foreign adversaries through observable

actions, rhetoric, and biographical experiences (Krcmaric, Nelson and Roberts, 2020). Existing research identifies a host of life factors that influence beliefs about leaders' skills, values, and dispositions. For instance, prior military experience (Horowitz, Stam and Ellis, 2015) and gender (Schwartz and Blair, 2020) shape perceptions of resolve.

We argue that invoking historical analogies may help leaders convey to relevant audiences information about three especially beneficial qualities in foreign policy: competence, intelligence, and knowledge of history. By analogizing current crises to the past, leaders signal that they have thought through policy options with reference to relevant historical examples. For publics generally less-informed about foreign policy history, analogizing may thereby build confidence in leaders' policy proposals. Apart from using analogical appeals to signal their competence, leaders may also use appeals to imply their intelligence and specific historical knowledge. Citizens and policymakers value intelligent leaders because they anticipate that these leaders implement more effective policies. For example, politicians' educational attainments bolster perceptions of their economic leadership (Besley, Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2011). Knowledge of history is specifically valued because leaders educated in history are more likely to implement rule-of-law reforms that bolster national wealth and the quality of governance (Nieman and Allamong, 2023).

To the extent historical analogies signal invoking leaders have favorable traits like competence, intelligence, and historical familiarity, analogies may have added persuasive effects. Ample evidence in social psychology suggests the persuasiveness of messages is tied to source characteristics (DeBono and Klein, 1993). Of particular importance is expertise. When a message is perceived as being conveyed by a subject matter expert, audiences are more likely to view the message as compelling and persuasive (Clark et al., 2012). The qualities that leaders convey by drawing analogies—like competence, intelligence, and historical knowledge—reinforce their perceived expertise, compounding the persuasiveness of analogized policies.

Leader Traits Mechanism: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more likely to believe that the leader is competent, intelligent, and knowledgeable about history.

To test this hypothesis, we again create a three-question index measure. We ask respondents in each study the extent to which they believe the president is (a) intelligent, (b) competent, and (c) knowledgeable about history. The three factors load well, with an average Cronbach's alpha across the three studies of 0.87.

C   Sample Description and Research Ethics

Researchers have a moral imperative to protect human subjects throughout the research process. In conducting surveys, we took the utmost care to comply with standards and obligations described in the APSA Principles and Guidance for Human Subject Research, and detailed in depth in the literature on ethics and survey research (e.g., Desposato, 2018; Phillips, 2021). As described below, we took multiple steps to identify and mitigate risks associated with our research.

We conducted survey interviews with adult members of the U.S. public via the online sampling platform Lucid in 2023 and 2024. Our survey protocol went through an IRB review and approval process at the Authors' institutions in the U.S. to ensure that the activities were in line with regulations regarding the protection of human subjects. We did not engage with vulnerable populations (e.g., children, prisoners), and the questions did not cover sensitive topics. We gathered no potentially identifying information through our survey, and all information about respondents' geographic location was automatically aggregated to a sufficiently high spatial level—the county, rather than the census tract or ZCTA—to prevent possible reidentification. All survey data are stored in a password-protected folder accessible only to the Authors.

Consent   We fielded our survey using Lucid, an online marketplace linking researchers with prospective survey participants through double opt-in panels via partner companies that maintain participant samples. Lucid is a well-known and validated platform for use in political science surveys (Coppock and McClellan, 2019; Peyton, Huber and Coppock, 2022). All interviews proceeded with consent obtained by respondents doubly opting-in to take the survey. All respondents were also informed beforehand that they always had the option to opt-out during any point in the survey. The Authors paid a $1.50 cost-per-completed interview fee to Lucid, while participants were directly compensated by Lucid's suppliers.

Minimizing Risks and "Do No Harm"   The Authors consistently worked to abide by the "do no harm" standard, minimizing risks to human subjects while working to maximize the benefits of our research. We assessed that the potential contributions of our research project were substantial while risks were minimal. Analogical reasoning. The sheer magnitude of climate displacement renders understanding attitudes toward climate migrants essential. Pro-climate policymaking can powerfully influence the integration and well-being of climate migrants, enhancing their access to life-sustaining services, welfare programs, and gainful employment. Understanding mass support for policy action on climate migration and climate change is also a central question for policy planning and crisis response. The research thus stands to contribute to knowledge around a range of academically and policy-relevant questions.

In addition to the potentially substantial benefits of this research, our team also worked to identify and mitigate risks to interviewees. First, we considered power differentials between ourselves and research participants. All interviewees were informed of their rights, including their ability to refuse to participate or to withdraw consent at any time. Second, before, during, and after interviews, we ensured that participants understood their responses would be held confidentially, and that no identifying information

was collected or would be revealed. Third, no deception was used in the study. Fourth, we designed our interviews to reduce any possible harm. Specific steps we took included: (1) prospective respondents were notified via the pre-interview recruitment banner that the survey would be about their attitudes on foreign policy, reducing the risk that anyone who consented to participate would be surprised by or uncomfortable with the topics of conversation; and (2) selecting a context (the U.S.) and field site (online), where safety concerns were minimal.

In Table C-1 we confirm that demographics of our sample closely match the demographics of the U.S. population more broadly. This finding raises confidence in the representativeness of our surveys.

Table C-1: Sample Demographics vs. Census Benchmarks

	Lucid Surveys (N = 4444)			Census Benchmarks
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Study #1	Study #2	Study #3	U.S. as a Whole
White	0.743	0.759	0.764	0.719
Black	0.118	0.144	0.126	0.116
Asian	0.051	0.035	0.066	0.037
Latinx	0.098	0.101	0.112	0.191
Woman	0.512	0.525	0.516	0.504
Age	46	49	47	39
High School Graduate	0.558	0.619	0.591	0.552
College Graduate	0.419	0.348	0.379	0.337
Income	$45,000–$49,999	$50,000–$54,999	$50,000–$54,999	$69,021

D   Study #1

D.1   Robustness

In Table D-2 we show that our core results displayed in Figures 1 and 2 in the main text hold when controlling for a range of covariates. Models 1-3 show that historical analogies significantly increase the public's perceptions that the president chose the best foreign policy strategy. Models 4-6 probe whether historical analogies increase perceptions that the president's chosen policy is likely to be successful. While the coefficient on *Historical Analogy* does not quite cross the threshold for statistical significance in Models 4 and 5 ($p < 0.172$) because of the limited sample sizes, when we pool the Munich and Cuban Missile Crisis analogies in Model 6 the result is estimated more precisely and becomes statistically significant ($p = 0.042$).[1] Models 7-9 demonstrate that historical analogies increase perceptions that the benefits of a policy outweigh its costs,[2] and Models 10-12 shows analogies increase positive presidential traits.[3] While Model 13 illustrates that the Munich analogy increased perceptions that the U.S. had a moral obligation to intervene to protect Taiwan, Model 14 indicates that a similar effect does not hold for the Cuban Missile Crisis analogy. As discussed in the main text, this makes logical sense since the Cuban Missile Crisis analogy does not prime ethical concerns to the same extent as the Munich analogy from World War II, which is viewed much more as a struggle between good and evil over the fate of the free world.

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[1]There is also interesting heterogeneity when disaggregating the success index. For example, the Cuban Missile Crisis analogy significantly increases perceptions that the president's policy will force China to dismantle its military base in Panama ($p = 0.033$), but has no significant effect on the other two measures of success. The logic is likely that the Cuban Missile Crisis analogy speaks more directly to whether a blockade can specifically compel a country to abandon a particular military endeavor than whether it can achieve broader forms of success, such as helping prevent China from overtaking the United States as the world's most powerful and influential country.

[2]The effects are weakest for the cost measure of the cost-benefit index, which makes logical sense since the Munich analogy, for example, does not directly speak to whether the costs of intervention will be low. If anything, the association with World II indicates the costs may be quite high.

[3]The effects are driven more by the questions asking about intelligence and knowledge about history.

Table D-2: Study #1 Robustness Tests

	Best Policy Chosen			Policy Likely to be Successful			Benefits Exceed Costs			Positive Presidential Traits			Moral Obligation		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Historical Analogy	0.208**	0.173**	0.191***	0.099	0.109	0.107**	0.093*	0.138**	0.098**	0.172**	0.198***	0.186***	0.200**	0.058	0.129**
	(0.091)	(0.086)	(0.064)	(0.072)	(0.078)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.040)	(0.074)	(0.068)	(0.051)	(0.089)	(0.082)	(0.062)
Republican President	0.154*	-0.158*	0.008	0.136*	-0.110	0.027	0.077	-0.088	0.001	0.121*	-0.155**	-0.003	0.193**	-0.204**	0.009
	(0.091)	(0.087)	(0.063)	(0.072)	(0.077)	(0.052)	(0.054)	(0.056)	(0.040)	(0.072)	(0.070)	(0.050)	(0.088)	(0.083)	(0.062)
Hawkishness	0.356***	0.265***	0.308***	0.280***	0.244***	0.263***	0.249***	0.125***	0.184***	0.230***	0.285***	0.252***	0.356***	0.376***	0.357***
	(0.064)	(0.058)	(0.044)	(0.051)	(0.050)	(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.040)	(0.028)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.036)	(0.060)	(0.056)	(0.042)
Stronger Republican	-0.045**	-0.025	-0.036**	-0.068***	-0.036**	-0.054***	-0.028**	-0.015	-0.024***	-0.060***	-0.044***	-0.052***	-0.054***	0.002	-0.027*
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.015)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.012)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.014)
Foreign Policy Knowledge	0.281	-0.282	0.004	-0.125	-0.260	-0.199*	-0.189*	0.074	-0.074	0.226	0.094	0.134	0.342*	-0.036	0.133
	(0.192)	(0.190)	(0.136)	(0.155)	(0.178)	(0.117)	(0.107)	(0.120)	(0.081)	(0.186)	(0.162)	(0.113)	(0.186)	(0.182)	(0.131)
Education	0.020	0.050**	0.033*	-0.021	0.007	-0.010	-0.018	0.010	-0.002	0.006	0.030	0.016	-0.022	-0.008	-0.017
	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.011)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.014)	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.017)
Male	0.113	0.010	0.073	0.096	-0.014	0.053	0.037	0.003	0.014	0.057	-0.045	0.015	0.232***	0.149*	0.203***
	(0.092)	(0.086)	(0.064)	(0.071)	(0.078)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.057)	(0.040)	(0.073)	(0.070)	(0.051)	(0.090)	(0.082)	(0.062)
Income	-0.007	0.010	0.002	0.015**	0.003	0.009**	0.001	0.008	0.005	0.011*	0.008	0.010**	-0.006	-0.004	-0.004
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Did Not Disclose Income	-0.293	-0.783*	-0.559***	-0.326	-0.378	-0.335*	-0.479*	-0.571**	-0.513***	-0.043	-0.461**	-0.226	-0.218	-0.184	-0.239
	(0.339)	(0.447)	(0.269)	(0.270)	(0.236)	(0.186)	(0.253)	(0.269)	(0.190)	(0.253)	(0.232)	(0.179)	(0.329)	(0.347)	(0.254)
Age	-0.005*	0.001	-0.002	-0.006***	-0.002	-0.004***	-0.004**	0.004**	-0.000	0.001	0.007***	0.003**	-0.003	0.011***	0.004*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)
White	-0.135	-0.095	-0.111	-0.160*	-0.141	-0.151**	-0.156***	-0.201***	-0.159***	0.043	-0.003	0.027	-0.202*	-0.135	-0.165**
	(0.106)	(0.104)	(0.075)	(0.083)	(0.094)	(0.062)	(0.059)	(0.061)	(0.043)	(0.085)	(0.079)	(0.059)	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.074)
Constant	2.274***	2.669***	2.473***	2.831***	2.851***	2.865***	2.597***	2.608***	2.636***	2.588***	2.414***	2.532***	2.507***	2.321***	2.455***
	(0.259)	(0.228)	(0.173)	(0.209)	(0.214)	(0.150)	(0.150)	(0.149)	(0.108)	(0.198)	(0.189)	(0.138)	(0.249)	(0.235)	(0.173)
Observations	617	549	1166	617	549	1166	617	549	1166	617	549	1166	617	549	1166
Munich Analogy	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×
Cuban Missile Crisis Analogy	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×
Pooled	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * = p < 0.10; ** = p < 0.05; *** = p < 0.01.

D.2   Causal Mediation Analysis

In Table D-3 we conduct a more formal causal mediation analysis using the method described by Imai, Keele and Tingley (2010).[4] We first regress the mediator (e.g., perceived policy success, cost-benefit analysis, etc.) on the explanatory variable (historical analogies) to see if the explanatory variable impacts the hypothesized mediator. We then regress the mediator on the core outcome variable (beliefs the president chose the best foreign policy)—controlling for the explanatory variable—to test whether there's a relationship between the mediator and dependent variable. For this analysis we pool results from the Munich and Cuban Missile Crisis analogies to maximize statistical power. Model 1, for example, shows that historical analogies significantly increase perceptions of policy success, and Model 2 indicates that perceptions of policy success significantly increase views that the president chose the best foreign policy strategy (controlling for the direct effect of historical analogies on the outcome variable). The average causal mediation effect (ACME) is statistically significant at the 5% level (the 95% confidence interval of the ACME is 0.0020 to 0.1302). The ACME is also significant at the 5% level for the other three mediators assessed in Models 3-8.

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[4]We use the `mediation` package in STATA for this analysis (Hicks and Tingley, 2011).

Table D-3: Study #1 Mediation Analysis

	(1) Success	(2) Best Policy	(3) Benefits > Costs	(4) Best Policy	(5) Positive Traits	(6) Best Policy	(7) Moral Obligation	(8) Best Policy
Historical Analogy	0.107** (0.053)	0.126** (0.055)	0.098** (0.040)	0.109** (0.054)	0.186*** (0.051)	0.069 (0.055)	0.129** (0.062)	0.131** (0.057)
Policy Likely to be Successful		0.605*** (0.035)						
Benefits Exceed Costs				0.830*** (0.040)				
Positive Presidential Trait						0.655*** (0.039)		
Moral Obligation to Intervene								0.463*** (0.030)
Republican President	0.027 (0.052)	-0.009 (0.054)	0.001 (0.040)	0.007 (0.054)	-0.003 (0.050)	0.010 (0.054)	0.009 (0.062)	0.004 (0.056)
Hawkishness	0.263*** (0.036)	0.149*** (0.037)	0.184*** (0.028)	0.155*** (0.033)	0.252*** (0.036)	0.143*** (0.035)	0.357*** (0.042)	0.142*** (0.039)
Stronger Republican	-0.054*** (0.013)	-0.003 (0.013)	-0.024*** (0.009)	-0.016 (0.013)	-0.052*** (0.012)	-0.002 (0.013)	-0.027* (0.014)	-0.023* (0.014)
Foreign Policy Knowledge	-0.199* (0.117)	0.124 (0.117)	-0.074 (0.081)	0.065 (0.121)	0.134 (0.113)	-0.084 (0.125)	0.133 (0.131)	-0.058 (0.118)
Education	-0.010 (0.014)	0.039*** (0.015)	-0.002 (0.011)	0.035** (0.015)	0.016 (0.014)	0.023 (0.015)	-0.017 (0.017)	0.041*** (0.015)
Male	0.053 (0.053)	0.041 (0.055)	0.014 (0.040)	0.061 (0.055)	0.015 (0.051)	0.063 (0.054)	0.203*** (0.062)	-0.021 (0.057)
Income	0.009** (0.004)	-0.003 (0.005)	0.005 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.005)	0.010** (0.004)	-0.004 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.005)	0.004 (0.005)
Did Not Disclose Income	-0.335* (0.186)	-0.357 (0.221)	-0.513*** (0.190)	-0.133 (0.208)	-0.226 (0.179)	-0.411* (0.235)	-0.239 (0.254)	-0.449* (0.264)
Age	-0.004*** (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.003** (0.002)	-0.004** (0.002)	0.004* (0.002)	-0.004* (0.002)
White	-0.151** (0.062)	-0.020 (0.070)	-0.159*** (0.043)	0.021 (0.066)	0.027 (0.059)	-0.128** (0.063)	-0.165** (0.074)	-0.034 (0.064)
Constant	2.865*** (0.150)	0.740*** (0.168)	2.636*** (0.108)	0.286 (0.180)	2.532*** (0.138)	0.815*** (0.173)	2.455*** (0.173)	1.336*** (0.168)
Observations	1166	1166	1166	1166	1166	1166	1166	1166
Mediation Effect Significant?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * = p < 0.10; ** = p < 0.05; *** = p < 0.01.

D.3 Heterogeneous Effects

In Table D-4 we test several potential heterogeneous effects, including several outlined in our pre-analysis plan (see section A.4).[5] We find no significant evidence of heterogeneous effects for a respondent's level of hawkishness (Model 1), political identification (Model 2), whether the political identification of the president and the respondent match (Model 3), actual foreign policy knowledge (Model 4), education (Model 5), gender (Model 6), or age (Models 7 and 8). The null finding for age is particularly interesting since some studies show that older respondents / those that lived during the past event are more likely to find a historical analogy emotionally resonant and convincing (Schuman and Rieger, 1992; Thaler, Mueller and Mosinger, 2023).

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[5] We again pool results from the Munich and Cuban Missile Crisis analogies to maximize statistical power.

Table D-4: Study #1 Heterogeneous Effects

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Perceptions the President Chose the Best Foreign Policy Strategy							
Historical Analogy × Hawkishness	0.031							
	(0.084)							
Historical Analogy × Stronger Republican		0.015						
		(0.029)						
Historical Analogy × Co-Partisans			-0.123					
			(0.139)					
Historical Analogy × Foreign Policy Knowledge				0.141				
				(0.266)				
Historical Analogy × Education					0.044			
					(0.031)			
Historical Analogy × Male						-0.072		
						(0.128)		
Historical Analogy × Age							0.003	
							(0.004)	
Historical Analogy × Over 70								0.032
								(0.235)
Historical Analogy	0.093	0.132	0.273***	0.105	-0.009	0.226**	0.032	0.186***
	(0.275)	(0.127)	(0.102)	(0.168)	(0.156)	(0.088)	(0.182)	(0.066)
Hawkishness	0.293***	0.308***	0.271***	0.308***	0.309***	0.308***	0.308***	0.301***
	(0.061)	(0.044)	(0.049)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.043)
Stronger Republican	-0.036**	-0.044**	-0.029*	-0.036**	-0.036**	-0.036**	-0.036**	-0.035**
	(0.015)	(0.021)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Co-Partisans			0.233**					
			(0.101)					
Foreign Policy Knowledge	0.005	0.007	-0.088	-0.066	-0.001	0.004	0.003	-0.013
	(0.136)	(0.136)	(0.151)	(0.194)	(0.136)	(0.136)	(0.136)	(0.136)
Education	0.033*	0.033*	0.029	0.033*	0.011	0.033*	0.033*	0.028*
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.024)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Male	0.072	0.072	0.108	0.072	0.070	0.108	0.069	0.079
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.070)	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.092)	(0.064)	(0.064)
Age	-0.002	-0.002	-0.001	-0.002	-0.002	-0.002	-0.004	
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	
Over 70								0.057
								(0.174)
Republican President	0.006	0.006	-0.007	0.010	0.010	0.005	0.008	0.008
	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.070)	(0.064)	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.063)	(0.063)
Income	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.003
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Did Not Disclose Income	-0.550**	-0.553**	-0.390	-0.558**	-0.550**	-0.559**	-0.554**	-0.559**
	(0.272)	(0.270)	(0.309)	(0.269)	(0.271)	(0.268)	(0.269)	(0.270)
White	-0.110	-0.112	-0.166*	-0.110	-0.110	-0.110	-0.108	-0.134*
	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.086)	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.073)
Constant	2.519***	2.501***	2.555***	2.513***	2.574***	2.452***	2.554***	2.446***
	(0.225)	(0.182)	(0.206)	(0.195)	(0.190)	(0.179)	(0.198)	(0.171)
Observations	1166	1166	984	1166	1166	1166	1166	1166

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * = p < 0.10; ** = p < 0.05; *** = p < 0.01.

D.4   Pre-Registered Hypotheses

- Policy Credibility: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, audiences are more likely to believe the invoking leader chose the best foreign policy strategy.

    - Supported

- Success Mechanism: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more likely to believe the chosen policy will lead to a successful outcome for their country.[6]

    - Mostly Supported: When aggregating the invasion of Taiwan and Chinese military base scenarios, there is a statistically significant effect. However, when analyzing each separately the effect is just under conventional levels of significance.

- Cost-Benefit Mechanism: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more likely to believe the benefits of the chosen policy outweigh the costs.[7]

    - Supported

- Leader Traits Mechanism: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more likely to believe that the leader is competent, intelligent, and knowledgeable about history.[8]

    - Supported

- Morality Mechanism: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more likely to believe that the leader's chosen policy is morally just.

    - Somewhat Supported: Holds for the Munich analogy but not the Cuban Missile Crisis scenario

- Receiver Hawkishness Moderator: Historical analogies that imply a hawkish course of action will be more persuasive among hawkish respondents.

    - Not Supported

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[6]In our original pre-analysis plan for Study #1, this hypothesis was divided into three separate hypotheses corresponding to the variables we utilize to create an index measure of success. We combine them here into a single hypothesis for the sake of parsimony.

[7]In our original pre-analysis plan for Study #1, this hypothesis was divided into three separate hypotheses corresponding to the variables we utilize to create an index measure of costs and benefits. We combine them here into a single hypothesis for the sake of parsimony.

[8]In our original pre-analysis plan for Study #1, this hypothesis was divided into three separate hypotheses corresponding to the variables we utilize to create an index measure of leader traits. We combine them here into a single hypothesis for the sake of parsimony.

- Receiver Party Moderator: Historical analogies that imply a hawkish course of action will be more persuasive among Republicans.

    - Not Supported

- Co-Partisan Moderator: Historical analogies made by co-partisan leaders will be more persuasive.

    - Not Supported

- Foreign Policy Knowledge Moderator: Analogies will be more persuasive among respondents with less actual or perceived foreign policy knowledge.

    - Not Supported

- Gender Moderator: Historical analogies will be more persuasive among men than women.

    - Not Supported

- Age Moderator: Historical analogies will be more persuasive among older respondents.

    - Not Supported

- Cohort Moderator: Analogies will be more persuasive among respondents who were at least ten when the analogized historical event occurred.

    - Not Supported

- Approval Hypothesis: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more approving of the leader.

    - Not Supported

- Electability Hypothesis: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more likely to support their re-election.

    - Not Supported

- Emotions Mechanism: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be less likely to feel worried, angry, or fearful about the leader's chosen policy and more likely to feel patriotic about the leaders' chosen policy.[9]

    - Not Supported: Does not quite reach conventional levels of statistical significance.

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[9]In our original pre-analysis plan for Study #1, this hypothesis was divided into three separate hypotheses corresponding to the variables we utilize to create an index measure of emotions. We combine them here into a single hypothesis for the sake of parsimony.

- Controlling for Success Hypothesis: When the public is informed that a leader's foreign policy decision led to a successful outcome, then the use of a historical analogy to justify that decision should have a smaller impact on that leader's approval than before the public is informed that the foreign policy decision led to a successful outcome.

    - Not Supported

E   Study #2

E.1   Robustness

In Table E-5 we show that our core results displayed in Figures 1 and 2 in the main text hold when controlling for a range of covariates. Model 1 shows that a historical analogy to the Bosnian War significantly increase the public's perceptions that the president chose the best foreign policy strategy. Consistent with the null result in Figure 1 in the main text, there is no significant effect of the Vietnam War and Philippines War analogies on policy credibility (Model 2), though the effect is significant when all the results are pooled (Model 3). Historical analogies in Study 2 also consistently increase perceptions that the foreign policy chosen is likely to be successful (Models 4-6)[10] and that the president has positive traits (Models 10-12).[11] The Bosnian War analogy increases perceptions that the benefits of the chosen policy exceed the costs (Model 7),[12] but no similar effect exists for the Vietnam/Philippines War analogies ($p = 0.223$). The results are also generally weak for the moral obligation mechanism (Models 13-15). This is especially surprising for the Bosnian War analogy, which clearly primes ethical concerns. The explanation is likely ceiling effects, as baseline views that the U.S. has a moral obligation to intervene in Myanmar to protect the Rohingya were high in the control condition (the average equalled over 3.5 on a 5-point scale and the median value equalled 4).

Table E-5: Study #2 Robustness Tests

	Best Policy Chosen			Policy Likely to be Successful			Benefits Exceed Costs			Positive Presidential Traits			Moral Obligation		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Historical Analogy	0.300***	0.018	0.146***	0.277***	0.144**	0.199***	0.148***	0.063	0.100***	0.315***	0.276***	0.287***	0.082	-0.035	0.025
	(0.080)	(0.077)	(0.056)	(0.063)	(0.062)	(0.044)	(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.037)	(0.061)	(0.059)	(0.043)	(0.077)	(0.069)	(0.053)
Republican President	-0.055	0.033	-0.004	0.009	-0.015	-0.000	-0.029	-0.010	-0.019	0.026	0.102*	0.066	-0.051	-0.114*	-0.071
	(0.073)	(0.074)	(0.052)	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.041)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.033)	(0.057)	(0.055)	(0.040)	(0.072)	(0.067)	(0.049)
Hawkishness	0.347***	0.105**	0.231***	0.233***	0.148***	0.190***	0.221***	0.104***	0.166***	0.247***	0.087**	0.172***	0.216***	0.292***	0.263***
	(0.046)	(0.050)	(0.035)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.028)	(0.032)	(0.034)	(0.023)	(0.037)	(0.040)	(0.028)	(0.047)	(0.045)	(0.033)
Stronger Republican	-0.014	-0.012	-0.018**	-0.004	-0.029***	-0.018***	-0.007	-0.016**	-0.014***	-0.019**	-0.026***	-0.025***	-0.028**	-0.006	-0.018**
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.008)
Foreign Policy Knowledge	-0.548***	0.227	-0.188	-0.195	-0.230*	-0.197***	-0.179*	0.070	-0.071	-0.120	0.186	0.019	-0.388**	0.196	-0.118
	(0.162)	(0.166)	(0.117)	(0.131)	(0.133)	(0.093)	(0.103)	(0.104)	(0.074)	(0.125)	(0.120)	(0.087)	(0.156)	(0.158)	(0.113)
Negativity Bias	-0.184***	-0.135***	-0.155***	-0.211***	-0.142***	-0.176***	-0.061***	-0.039*	-0.048***	-0.181***	-0.130***	-0.155***	-0.168***	-0.128***	-0.142***
	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.026)	(0.031)	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.015)	(0.028)	(0.033)	(0.021)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.025)
Education	0.015	0.014	0.014	-0.001	0.004	-0.000	-0.009	0.013	0.003	-0.004	0.000	-0.002	-0.001	-0.067***	-0.032**
	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.010)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.012)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.014)
Male	0.063	-0.131*	-0.039	0.023	0.060	0.032	0.073	0.060	0.065*	-0.034	-0.000	-0.020	-0.015	-0.053	-0.020
	(0.075)	(0.077)	(0.055)	(0.060)	(0.061)	(0.043)	(0.048)	(0.051)	(0.035)	(0.061)	(0.059)	(0.043)	(0.076)	(0.072)	(0.053)
Income	-0.004	0.005	0.001	0.001	0.010**	0.005	-0.004	0.001	-0.001	0.001	0.008*	0.005	-0.007	0.017***	0.006
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Age	-0.001	0.001	-0.000	0.001	-0.006***	-0.003**	-0.003	0.001	-0.000	0.002	0.005**	0.003**	-0.000	0.006***	0.003*
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
White	-0.003	0.019	0.020	-0.032	-0.093	-0.051	-0.031	0.027	0.002	0.018	0.026	0.027	0.084	0.077	0.076
	(0.091)	(0.089)	(0.065)	(0.075)	(0.069)	(0.051)	(0.059)	(0.057)	(0.041)	(0.072)	(0.070)	(0.050)	(0.091)	(0.084)	(0.063)
Constant	3.506***	3.847***	3.675***	3.806***	4.077***	3.971***	2.901***	2.906***	2.891***	3.824***	3.837***	3.827***	4.315***	3.480***	3.804***
	(0.309)	(0.314)	(0.220)	(0.253)	(0.253)	(0.181)	(0.176)	(0.192)	(0.131)	(0.233)	(0.252)	(0.171)	(0.296)	(0.292)	(0.210)
Observations	886	923	1809	886	923	1809	886	923	1809	886	922	1808	886	923	1809
Myanmar Scenario	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×
Iran Scenario	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×
Pooled	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * = p < 0.10; ** = p < 0.05; *** = p < 0.01.

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[10] The Bosnian analogy significantly increases perceptions of policy success for each of the three different measures in our success index.

[11] The Bosnian and Vietnam/Philippines War analogies increase perceptions that the president has positive traits for each of the three different measures that make up our index.

[12] Disaggregating the index, there is a null result for the measure asking about costs, which makes logical sense since the Bosnian War analogy did not mention anything explicitly about the costs of humanitarian intervention.

E.2   Causal Mediation Analysis

In Table E-6 we again conduct a more formal causal mediation analysis. All of the ACMEs are statistically significant at the 5% level, except for the hypothesized morality mechanism.

Table E-6: Study #2 Mediation Analysis

	(1) Success	(2) Best Policy	(3) Benefits > Costs	(4) Best Policy	(5) Positive Traits	(6) Best Policy	(7) Moral Obligation	(8) Best Policy
Historical Analogy	0.199***	0.001	0.100***	0.061	0.287***	-0.056	0.025	0.136***
	(0.044)	(0.046)	(0.037)	(0.046)	(0.043)	(0.047)	(0.053)	(0.052)
Policy Likely to be Successful		0.729***						
		(0.026)						
Benefits Exceed Costs				0.855***				
				(0.031)				
Positive Presidential Trait						0.701***		
						(0.030)		
Moral Obligation to Intervene								0.381***
								(0.027)
Republican President	-0.000	-0.004	-0.019	0.013	0.066	-0.051	-0.071	0.023
	(0.041)	(0.043)	(0.033)	(0.044)	(0.040)	(0.044)	(0.049)	(0.049)
Hawkishness	0.190***	0.092***	0.166***	0.089***	0.172***	0.111***	0.263***	0.131***
	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.033)	(0.032)
Stronger Republican	-0.018***	-0.004	-0.014***	-0.006	-0.025***	0.000	-0.018**	-0.011
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Foreign Policy Knowledge	-0.197**	-0.044	-0.071	-0.127	0.019	-0.199**	-0.118	-0.143
	(0.093)	(0.095)	(0.074)	(0.100)	(0.087)	(0.101)	(0.113)	(0.108)
Negativity Bias	-0.176***	-0.027	-0.048***	-0.114***	-0.155***	-0.047**	-0.142***	-0.101***
	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.015)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.024)
Education	-0.000	0.014	0.003	0.012	-0.002	0.016	-0.032**	0.026*
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.015)
Male	0.032	-0.062	0.065*	-0.094**	-0.020	-0.024	-0.020	-0.031
	(0.043)	(0.044)	(0.035)	(0.047)	(0.043)	(0.047)	(0.053)	(0.051)
Income	0.005	-0.003	-0.001	0.002	0.005	-0.003	0.006	-0.002
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Age	-0.003**	0.002	-0.000	0.000	0.003**	-0.002*	0.003*	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
White	-0.051	0.057	0.002	0.018	0.027	0.000	0.076	-0.009
	(0.051)	(0.055)	(0.041)	(0.055)	(0.050)	(0.056)	(0.063)	(0.061)
Constant	3.971***	0.781***	2.891***	1.204***	3.827***	0.988***	3.804***	2.227***
	(0.181)	(0.196)	(0.131)	(0.204)	(0.171)	(0.212)	(0.210)	(0.226)
Observations	1809	1809	1809	1809	1808	1808	1809	1809
Mediation Effect Significant?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * = p < 0.10; ** = p < 0.05; *** = p < 0.01.

E.3   Heterogeneous Effects

In Table E-7 we test several potential heterogeneous effects for the impact of analogies on policy credibility in the Myanmar scenario.[13] We find no significant evidence of heterogeneous effects for a respondent's level of negativity bias (Model 1), hawkishness (Model 2), whether the political identification of the president and the respondent match (Model 4), actual foreign policy knowledge (Model 5), education (Model 6), gender (Model 7), or age (Models 8 and 9).[14] As indicated in Model 3, we do find some evidence that historical analogies have a smaller effect on policy credibility among respondents that are stronger Republicans ($p = 0.082$). The effect even strengthens when we utilize a binary variable indicating a respondent identified as a Republican rather than the full 10-point measure ($p = 0.037$). The explanation may again be ceiling effects, as baseline views that the U.S. should intervene in Myanmar were high in the control condition among Republican respondents (the average equalled over 3.3 on a 5-point scale and the median value equalled 4). Thus, analogies may simply have had less room to move Republicans.

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[13]Given the different effects of analogies on policy credibility for the Myanmar and Iran scenarios, we conduct separate analyses rather than a pooled one.

[14]We use a binary variable for whether the respondent is 40 years of age or older in Model 9 because that indicates whether they were at least 10 years old when the Bosnian War ended.

Table E-7: Study #2 Heterogeneous Effects for Myanmar Scenario

	Perceptions the President Chose the Best Foreign Policy Strategy								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Historical Analogy × Negativity Bias	-0.046								
	(0.077)								
Historical Analogy × Hawkishness		0.091							
		(0.095)							
Historical Analogy × Stronger Republican			-0.042*						
			(0.024)						
Historical Analogy × Co-Partisans				-0.199					
				(0.192)					
Historical Analogy × Foreign Policy Knowledge					-0.079				
					(0.357)				
Historical Analogy × Education						0.030			
						(0.041)			
Historical Analogy × Male							0.085		
							(0.158)		
Historical Analogy × Age								0.004	
								(0.005)	
Historical Analogy × Over 40									-0.087
									(0.166)
Historical Analogy	0.587	0.010	0.509***	0.349**	0.352	0.172	0.260**	0.097	0.360***
	(0.483)	(0.315)	(0.147)	(0.136)	(0.241)	(0.186)	(0.107)	(0.254)	(0.136)
Negativity Bias	-0.153**	-0.184***	-0.181***	-0.191***	-0.185***	-0.184***	-0.185***	-0.183***	-0.186***
	(0.068)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.042)	(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.036)
Hawkishness	0.346***	0.285***	0.345***	0.359***	0.347***	0.346***	0.346***	0.349***	0.345***
	(0.046)	(0.082)	(0.046)	(0.055)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)
Stronger Republican	-0.014	-0.014	0.014	-0.010	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.021)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Co-Partisans				0.368**					
				(0.164)					
Foreign Policy Knowledge	-0.554***	-0.546***	-0.539***	-0.565***	-0.493	-0.548***	-0.553***	-0.549***	-0.552***
	(0.162)	(0.162)	(0.162)	(0.189)	(0.312)	(0.162)	(0.161)	(0.162)	(0.161)
Education	0.015	0.014	0.015	0.024	0.014	-0.005	0.014	0.015	0.014
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.036)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Male	0.064	0.062	0.059	0.092	0.064	0.062	0.005	0.061	0.067
	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.090)	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.138)	(0.075)	(0.075)
Age	-0.001	-0.000	-0.000	-0.001	-0.001	-0.000	-0.001	-0.003	
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	
Over 40									0.057
									(0.146)
Republican President	-0.054	-0.057	-0.061	-0.087	-0.055	-0.056	-0.057	-0.054	-0.056
	(0.073)	(0.073)	(0.072)	(0.087)	(0.073)	(0.072)	(0.072)	(0.072)	(0.073)
Income	-0.004	-0.003	-0.004	-0.005	-0.004	-0.004	-0.004	-0.004	-0.004
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
White	-0.001	-0.007	0.001	0.003	-0.003	-0.008	-0.002	-0.006	-0.008
	(0.091)	(0.092)	(0.091)	(0.111)	(0.091)	(0.091)	(0.091)	(0.091)	(0.090)
Constant	3.316***	3.699***	3.347***	3.376***	3.473***	3.591***	3.541***	3.633***	3.463***
	(0.463)	(0.374)	(0.324)	(0.369)	(0.349)	(0.324)	(0.313)	(0.353)	(0.319)
Observations	886	886	886	627	886	886	886	886	886

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * = p < 0.10; ** = p < 0.05; *** = p < 0.01.

In Table E-8 we test several potential heterogeneous effects for the impact of analogies on policy credibility in the Iran scenario. We find no significant interaction effects for any variable, including respondent political identification.

Table E-8: Study #2 Heterogeneous Effects for Iran Scenario

	Perceptions the President Chose the Best Foreign Policy Strategy								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Historical Analogy × Negativity Bias	-0.002 (0.073)								
Historical Analogy × Hawkishness		-0.082 (0.100)							
Historical Analogy × Stronger Republican			0.003 (0.023)						
Historical Analogy × Co-Partisans				-0.180 (0.179)					
Historical Analogy × Foreign Policy Knowledge					-0.145 (0.339)				
Historical Analogy × Education						0.014 (0.042)			
Historical Analogy × Male							-0.076 (0.155)		
Historical Analogy × Age								0.005 (0.005)	
Historical Analogy × Over 70									0.101 (0.236)
Historical Analogy	0.034 (0.465)	0.282 (0.327)	0.006 (0.135)	0.121 (0.131)	0.110 (0.227)	-0.044 (0.196)	0.054 (0.109)	-0.251 (0.227)	0.006 (0.082)
Negativity Bias	-0.133** (0.060)	-0.135*** (0.038)	-0.135*** (0.038)	-0.154*** (0.044)	-0.135*** (0.038)	-0.135*** (0.038)	-0.135*** (0.038)	-0.135*** (0.038)	-0.135*** (0.037)
Hawkishness	0.105** (0.050)	0.159* (0.083)	0.105** (0.050)	0.084 (0.059)	0.104** (0.050)	0.105** (0.051)	0.104** (0.050)	0.105** (0.050)	0.104** (0.049)
Stronger Republican	-0.012 (0.012)	-0.012 (0.012)	-0.013 (0.020)	-0.011 (0.012)	-0.012 (0.012)	-0.012 (0.012)	-0.012 (0.012)	-0.012 (0.012)	-0.012 (0.012)
Co-Partisans				0.310** (0.149)					
Foreign Policy Knowledge	0.227 (0.166)	0.223 (0.166)	0.227 (0.166)	0.049 (0.191)	0.324 (0.279)	0.228 (0.166)	0.223 (0.166)	0.222 (0.166)	0.225 (0.166)
Education	0.014 (0.023)	0.013 (0.023)	0.014 (0.023)	0.019 (0.026)	0.014 (0.023)	0.004 (0.035)	0.013 (0.023)	0.013 (0.023)	0.013 (0.022)
Male	-0.131* (0.077)	-0.131* (0.077)	-0.132* (0.077)	-0.037 (0.089)	-0.132* (0.077)	-0.131* (0.077)	-0.080 (0.127)	-0.136* (0.077)	-0.135* (0.077)
Age	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.003)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.004)	
Over 70									0.006 (0.193)
Republican President	0.033 (0.074)	0.032 (0.074)	0.033 (0.074)	-0.011 (0.087)	0.032 (0.074)	0.032 (0.074)	0.033 (0.074)	0.033 (0.074)	0.031 (0.074)
Income	0.005 (0.006)	0.005 (0.006)	0.005 (0.006)	0.003 (0.007)	0.005 (0.006)	0.005 (0.006)	0.005 (0.006)	0.004 (0.006)	0.005 (0.006)
White	0.019 (0.090)	0.019 (0.089)	0.019 (0.089)	0.031 (0.104)	0.018 (0.089)	0.020 (0.089)	0.021 (0.089)	0.019 (0.089)	0.017 (0.088)
Constant	3.836*** (0.429)	3.675*** (0.378)	3.854*** (0.324)	4.025*** (0.365)	3.788*** (0.341)	3.887*** (0.329)	3.823*** (0.321)	4.036*** (0.344)	3.889*** (0.314)
Observations	923	923	923	700	923	923	923	923	923

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * = p < 0.10; ** = p < 0.05; *** = p < 0.01.

E.4 Positive vs. Negative & More vs. Less Familiar Analogies

As discussed in the main text, in Study 2 we also tested how two different features of historical analogies may impact their effectiveness as a political messaging strategy among the public. In other words, we explored whether different types of analogies were more or less effective. The first feature we explored relates to the valence of an analogy. That is, whether it is positive and indicates a prior action is to be repeated, or negative and suggests a prior action should be avoided. Drawing from prior literature, we pre-registered a hypothesis that negatively valenced historical analogies that prime a prior failure should have a greater impact on public opinion than positively valenced historical analogies that prime a prior success. A wide body of psychological literature has found that humans suffer from a "negativity bias," where the bad is prioritized in human cognition over the good, perhaps as a result of evolutionary pressures for humans to avoid lethal perils (Baumeister et al., 2001; Rozin and Royzman, 2001). This negativity bias has also been shown to have a powerful impact in the realm of politics and international relations. For example, Johnson and Tierney (2018) argue and provide evidence that the negativity bias can help explain dynamics like the security dilemma, threat inflation, loss aversion (Kahneman and Tversky, 2013), and even the outbreak of war. Research also finds that learning in international politics is more likely to occur after failures than successes (Levy, 1994; Horowitz, 2010), and policymakers are more likely to draw historical analogies to prior negative events (May, 1973). There is even evidence that other mammals besides humans learn more from failures than successes (Gray, 1987). Thus, although there is some evidence of a "positive bias" in international relations, which can lead to dynamics like overconfidence (Van Evera, 1999; Johnson, 2004), it is the negativity bias that we expected would dominate in the context of historical analogies.

Experimentally varying whether an analogy is positive or negative is difficult. One way to do so would be to deploy analogies relating to two completely different historical scenarios—one where the outcome was positive and the other where it was negative. However, the pitfall with this approach is that using two different historical episodes risks varying many different aspects of the analogy *besides* valence. It would therefore be difficult to know whether any differences in effects owed to variation in positive versus negative valence or due to other factors. To avoid this issue, we instead used the same historical episode (the Bosnian War) and simply varied whether the ultimate, analogized policy choice is framed in a positive or negative light. In the positive valence treatment, the president notes that the Bosnian intervention helped end the war and save thousands of innocent lives. In the negative valence treatment, the president instead says that the U.S. waited too long to intervene in Bosnia, which led to the loss of thousands of innocent lives that could have been saved by prompter action. The president then says he is adopting a similar approach to that taken in Bosnia (positive analogy condition) or a different approach to that taken in Bosnia (negative analogy condition) and acting without delay to help end the killing of civilians in Myanmar. In short, all respondents are informed about the same crisis (the mass killing of Rohingya in Myanmar) with the same historical analogy (Bosnian War) and the same policy choice (humanitarian intervention in Myanmar). The only difference is the valence of the Bosnian War analogy. We also measure a respondent's susceptibility to negativity bias since this could be a key moderator.[15]

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[15]The questions are adapted from Canache et al. (2022).

Table E-9 shows that we generally do not find support for our pre-registered hypothesis related to valence. Positive historical analogies are no less effective than negative analogies in terms of perceptions that the president chose the best foreign policy strategy (Model 1), perceptions that the benefits of the chosen policy outweigh the costs (Model 5), positive presidential traits (Model 7), or a perceived moral obligation to intervene (Model 9). Perhaps unsurprisingly, positive historical analogies that prime a prior success increase respondents' confidence that the current policy will lead to success relative to negative historical analogies that prime a prior failure (Model 3). However, on balance, we find no consistent evidence that negative historical analogies are more persuasive than positive ones. We also find no evidence that negative analogies are more effective than positive analogies among respondent than score higher in a measure of negativity bias.[16]

Table E-9: Study #2 Positive vs. Negative and More vs. Less Familiar Analogies

	Best Policy		Success		Benefits > Costs		Positive Pres Traits		Moral Obligation	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Positive vs. Negative Analogies	0.049		0.115*		0.003		0.074		0.078	
	(0.084)		(0.067)		(0.054)		(0.068)		(0.084)	
More vs. Less Familiar Analogies		0.084		0.144**		0.035		0.129*		0.173**
		(0.091)		(0.070)		(0.057)		(0.068)		(0.082)
Republican President	-0.049	0.032	0.006	0.025	-0.026	0.045	-0.036	0.182***	-0.097	-0.045
	(0.085)	(0.091)	(0.068)	(0.070)	(0.054)	(0.056)	(0.069)	(0.068)	(0.085)	(0.083)
Hawkishness	0.383***	0.063	0.258***	0.118**	0.256***	0.047	0.285***	0.040	0.224***	0.269***
	(0.055)	(0.061)	(0.048)	(0.047)	(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.045)	(0.050)	(0.057)	(0.056)
Stronger Republican	-0.030**	-0.007	-0.018	-0.026**	-0.023***	-0.006	-0.030***	-0.020*	-0.043***	-0.010
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Foreign Policy Knowledge	-0.596***	0.173	-0.281*	-0.273*	-0.100	0.091	-0.083	0.279**	-0.360**	0.161
	(0.187)	(0.204)	(0.157)	(0.159)	(0.121)	(0.127)	(0.147)	(0.140)	(0.182)	(0.191)
Negativity Bias	-0.191***	-0.141***	-0.210***	-0.154***	-0.070***	-0.049**	-0.178***	-0.164***	-0.159***	-0.119***
	(0.042)	(0.047)	(0.037)	(0.035)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.042)	(0.045)
Education	0.020	0.017	-0.002	-0.007	-0.002	0.021	0.002	-0.002	0.003	-0.072***
	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Male	0.094	-0.144	0.059	0.090	0.091	0.091	-0.008	0.009	-0.028	0.020
	(0.088)	(0.096)	(0.071)	(0.073)	(0.056)	(0.060)	(0.074)	(0.073)	(0.093)	(0.089)
Income	-0.002	0.005	0.001	0.012**	-0.005	-0.002	0.001	0.005	-0.001	0.017***
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Age	0.002	0.003	0.002	-0.005**	-0.000	0.003	0.004	0.007***	-0.001	0.008***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)
White	-0.010	-0.059	0.011	-0.202**	0.006	-0.011	-0.036	-0.016	0.032	-0.060
	(0.109)	(0.115)	(0.087)	(0.083)	(0.068)	(0.070)	(0.087)	(0.089)	(0.108)	(0.104)
Constant	3.666***	3.926***	3.961***	4.374***	2.856***	3.047***	3.930***	4.244***	4.379***	3.378***
	(0.365)	(0.393)	(0.297)	(0.312)	(0.204)	(0.224)	(0.284)	(0.301)	(0.357)	(0.373)
Observations	600	617	600	617	600	617	600	616	600	617

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * = p < 0.10; ** = p < 0.05; *** = p < 0.01.

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[16]We estimate interaction models for the full 11-point measure, a binary measure based on the median split, and a binary measure based on the interquartile range.

The second feature of analogies we explored in Study 2 relates to whether it is more or less familiar to respondents. That is, whether respondents are likely to have previously heard about and have an understanding of a historical analogy. We pre-registered a hypothesis that historical analogies that are more familiar to respondents would have a greater impact on their views than less familiar analogies. The logic for why analogies in general may shape actors' views is that they help make a current, unfamiliar situation more familiar by reference to a past situation. Consequently, if an analogy is not particularly familiar to respondents, then it may not effectively fulfill this function. The current, unfamiliar situation may remain relatively unfamiliar since the historical analogy is not itself particularly familiar. In accordance with this logic, prior research has found that distinct cohorts tend to use different analogies (Foster and Palmer, 2006) and that respondents who lived through a historical analogy are more likely to be persuaded by it (Schuman and Rieger, 1992). For example, as discussed in the main text, Thaler, Mueller and Mosinger (2023) run a national survey experiment in Chile whereby the treatment group is given a frame likening current police behavior to the repressive regime of Pinochet in the late 20th century. They find that subjects who lived during Pinochet's reign were more reactive to the historical analogy.

On the other hand, it is plausible that the opposite dynamic could hold, and less familiar historical analogies may actually have a stronger impact on actors' beliefs than more familiar analogies. The rationale for this possibility is that unfamiliar historical analogies provide more *new* information than familiar ones. Therefore, from a Bayesian updating and learning perspective, less familiar analogies have at least the potential to change people's views to a greater extent than more familiar analogies (e.g., Dafoe, Renshon and Huth, 2014; Weisiger, 2016; Hill, 2017). Although both perspectives are plausible and indicate that a finding in either direction—or a null finding—would be interesting and provide a contribution, on balance we expected familiar analogies would be more impactful due to the logic and evidence discussed above.

To experimentally test this hypothesis, we first presented respondents with a hypothetical crisis over Iran's nuclear program. Our vignette describes a scenario in which good-faith diplomacy with Iran over nuclear development has failed, prompting multiple intelligence agencies to reveal that Iran is nearing completion of a nuclear bomb. The U.S. president in the vignette must decide whether to do nothing, to conduct targeted military strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities that could solve the problem in the short-term, or to engage in a regime change operation designed to permanently hinder Iranian nuclear ambitions. We then randomly assigned respondents to read one of two different historical analogies invoked by the president (or a third control condition), which vary in their familiarity to respondents but imply identical policy responses. In the more familiar condition, the president analogizes regime change in Iran to the Vietnam War. The lesson of the analogy is that meddling in another country's internal politics is a bad policy choice. In the less familiar condition, the president analogizes regime change in Iran to the Philippine-American War from 1899 to 1902. The lesson of this conflict is the same as in the Vietnam condition, and we use the exact same language, swapping only country names. Comparing effects across these conditions therefore allows us to assess whether more or less familiar analogies are more persuasive.

Undoubtedly, the U.S. war in Vietnam is more familiar to the general public (on

average) than the U.S. war in the Philippines. To provide empirical evidence for this contention, we asked respondents in Study 2 to what extent they were familiar with the details of the Vietnam War and the Philippine–American War before taking the study. While over 50% of respondents indicated that they were "not at all familiar" with the Philippine–American War, less than 7% of respondents answered similarly when asked about the Vietnam War.

Table E-9 shows we find only mixed evidence for our familiarity hypothesis. Although using a more rather than less familiar historical analogy does increase respondents' perceptions that the president's policy is likely to be successful (Model 4), the president has positive traits (Model 8), and the U.S. has a moral obligation to intervene (Model 10), it does not significantly impact our primary outcome variable: whether the president chose the best foreign policy strategy (Model 2). However, presidents deploying more rather than less familiar analogies does significantly increase approval for the president ($p = 0.026$) and support for the president being re-elected ($p = 0.084$). Thus, there is some—but not fully consistent—evidence for our pre-registered expectations.

E.5   Pre-Registered Hypotheses

- Analogies vs. Control: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more positively disposed towards the policy and the leader compared to when a leader does not use a historical analogy.

  - Somewhat Supported: This hypothesis holds when the Bosnian War analogy is used in the Myanmar scenario, but does not consistently hold when the Vietnam War/Philippine–American War analogy is used in the Iran scenario.

- Positive vs. Negative Analogies: When a leader uses a negative historical analogy that primes a prior failure to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more positively disposed towards the policy and the leader compared to when they use a positive historical analogy that primes a prior success to justify a foreign policy decision.

  - Not Supported

- Negativity Bias Moderator: The above "Positive vs. Negative Analogies" hypothesis should be more likely to hold among respondents that have a stronger negativity bias.

  - Not Supported

- More vs. Less Familiar Analogies: When a leader uses a more familiar historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more positively disposed towards the policy and the leader compared to when they use a less familiar historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision.

  - Somewhat Supported: The results hold when using variables measuring presidential approval, support for re-election, perceived chance of policy success, and positive presidential traits, but not for policy credibility or perceptions about whether the benefits of the policy outweigh the costs.

F   Study #3

F.1   Robustness

In Table F-10 we show that our core results displayed in Figures 1 and 2 in the main text hold when controlling for a range of covariates. Relative to a control condition where the president does not make an affirmative justification for his policy, the use of historical analogies increases perceptions that the president chose the best foreign policy strategy (Model 1), the policy is likely to be successful (Model 2),[17] the benefits of the policy outweigh the costs (Model 3),[18] the president has positive traits (Model 4),[19] and the U.S. has an ethical obligation to intervene to protect Taiwan (Model 5).

Table F-10: Study #3 Robustness Tests

	Best Policy Chosen	Policy Likely to be Successful	Benefits Exceed Costs	Positive Presidential Traits	Moral Obligation
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Historical Analogy	0.344***	0.251***	0.259***	0.435***	0.260***
	(0.077)	(0.062)	(0.050)	(0.059)	(0.080)
Republican President	-0.102	-0.034	-0.083*	-0.142**	-0.045
	(0.078)	(0.062)	(0.050)	(0.058)	(0.081)
Hawkishness	0.513***	0.349***	0.283***	0.290***	0.420***
	(0.051)	(0.045)	(0.036)	(0.043)	(0.056)
Stronger Republican	-0.008	-0.025**	-0.005	-0.029***	-0.037***
	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.013)
Foreign Policy Knowledge	-0.109	0.044	-0.301***	0.223	0.120
	(0.173)	(0.146)	(0.116)	(0.139)	(0.188)
Education	-0.063	-0.100	-0.023	0.028	0.104
	(0.087)	(0.071)	(0.058)	(0.068)	(0.090)
Male	0.255***	0.174***	0.036	0.151**	0.208**
	(0.079)	(0.063)	(0.052)	(0.060)	(0.082)
Income	-0.003	0.002	-0.007	0.002	0.001
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.007)
Age	-0.002	-0.002	-0.003**	0.003	-0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
White	-0.038	-0.104	-0.185***	0.050	0.050
	(0.086)	(0.070)	(0.056)	(0.075)	(0.096)
Constant	1.639***	2.199***	2.351***	2.310***	1.923***
	(0.209)	(0.174)	(0.143)	(0.169)	(0.224)
Observations	756	756	756	756	756

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * = p < 0.10; ** = p < 0.05; *** = p < 0.01.

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[17]This result holds for each of the three different measures that make up our index measure.

[18]As in Study 1, when disaggregating the index measure we find a null effect for the cost measure, but significant effects for the questions asking about benefits in isolation and whether the benefits outweigh the costs.

[19]The use of a historical analogy significantly increases perceptions the president has positive traits for all three of the measures in the index.

F.2 Causal Mediation Analysis

In Table F-11 we again conduct a moral formal causal mediation analysis. All of the ACMEs are statistically significant at the 5% level, as in Study 1. The consistent results across Studies 1 and 3, which deployed nearly identical experimental designs, helps build confidence in the findings.

Table F-11: Study #3 Mediation Analysis

	(1) Success	(2) Best Policy	(3) Benefits > Costs	(4) Best Policy	(5) Positive Traits	(6) Best Policy	(7) Moral Obligation	(8) Best Policy
Historical Analogy	0.251***	0.178***	0.259***	0.117*	0.435***	0.071	0.260***	0.211***
	(0.062)	(0.066)	(0.050)	(0.065)	(0.059)	(0.071)	(0.080)	(0.067)
Policy Likely to be Successful		0.663***						
		(0.040)						
Benefits Exceed Costs				0.878***				
				(0.047)				
Positive Presidential Trait						0.628***		
						(0.044)		
Moral Obligation to Intervene								0.512***
								(0.033)
Republican President	-0.034	-0.079	-0.083*	-0.028	-0.142**	-0.012	-0.045	-0.079
	(0.062)	(0.065)	(0.050)	(0.064)	(0.058)	(0.069)	(0.081)	(0.066)
Hawkishness	0.349***	0.282***	0.283***	0.265***	0.290***	0.331***	0.420***	0.298***
	(0.045)	(0.042)	(0.036)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.046)	(0.056)	(0.044)
Stronger Republican	-0.025**	0.009	-0.005	-0.003	-0.029***	0.010	-0.037***	0.011
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.010)
Foreign Policy Knowledge	0.044	-0.138	-0.301***	0.156	0.223	-0.249	0.120	-0.170
	(0.146)	(0.155)	(0.116)	(0.152)	(0.139)	(0.157)	(0.188)	(0.150)
college	-0.100	0.003	-0.023	-0.043	0.028	-0.080	0.104	-0.116
	(0.071)	(0.073)	(0.058)	(0.072)	(0.068)	(0.076)	(0.090)	(0.073)
Male	0.174***	0.139**	0.036	0.223***	0.151**	0.160**	0.208**	0.149**
	(0.063)	(0.067)	(0.052)	(0.065)	(0.060)	(0.071)	(0.082)	(0.067)
Income	0.002	-0.004	-0.007	0.003	0.002	-0.004	0.001	-0.003
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Age	-0.002	-0.000	-0.003**	0.001	0.003	-0.003	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
White	-0.104	0.031	-0.185***	0.125	0.050	-0.069	0.050	-0.063
	(0.070)	(0.074)	(0.056)	(0.077)	(0.075)	(0.076)	(0.096)	(0.072)
Constant	2.199***	0.182	2.351***	-0.426**	2.310***	0.189	1.923***	0.655***
	(0.174)	(0.189)	(0.143)	(0.209)	(0.169)	(0.199)	(0.224)	(0.189)
Observations	756	756	756	756	756	756	756	756
Mediation Effect Significant?	—	✓	—	✓	—	✓	—	✓

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * = p < 0.10; ** = p < 0.05; *** = p < 0.01.

F.3 Heterogeneous Effects

In Table F-12 we test several potential heterogeneous effects. As in Study 1, all tests yield null results.

Table F-12: Study #3 Heterogeneous Effects

	Perceptions the President Chose the Best Foreign Policy Strategy							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Historical Analogy × Hawkishness	-0.064 (0.094)							
Historical Analogy × Stronger Republican		-0.031 (0.024)						
Historical Analogy × Co-Partisans			0.006 (0.173)					
Historical Analogy × Foreign Policy Knowledge				0.549 (0.341)				
Historical Analogy × Education					0.185 (0.159)			
Historical Analogy × Male						-0.051 (0.153)		
Historical Analogy × Age							-0.003 (0.004)	
Historical Analogy × Over 70								-0.053 (0.267)
Historical Analogy	0.544* (0.300)	0.496*** (0.133)	0.348*** (0.128)	-0.026 (0.245)	0.273*** (0.097)	0.369*** (0.108)	0.491** (0.211)	0.350*** (0.081)
Hawkishness	0.543*** (0.073)	0.512*** (0.051)	0.518*** (0.056)	0.513*** (0.051)	0.516*** (0.051)	0.513*** (0.051)	0.514*** (0.051)	0.508*** (0.051)
Stronger Republican	-0.008 (0.012)	0.008 (0.018)	-0.009 (0.012)	-0.008 (0.012)	-0.008 (0.012)	-0.008 (0.012)	-0.008 (0.012)	-0.008 (0.012)
Co-Partisans			0.208 (0.127)					
Foreign Policy Knowledge	-0.107 (0.173)	-0.115 (0.173)	-0.004 (0.190)	-0.364 (0.233)	-0.113 (0.173)	-0.109 (0.173)	-0.106 (0.173)	-0.112 (0.173)
Education	-0.064 (0.087)	-0.064 (0.087)	-0.058 (0.095)	-0.066 (0.087)	-0.155 (0.119)	-0.062 (0.087)	-0.062 (0.087)	-0.064 (0.086)
Male	0.254*** (0.079)	0.256*** (0.079)	0.298*** (0.089)	0.255*** (0.079)	0.254*** (0.079)	0.280** (0.112)	0.252*** (0.079)	0.258*** (0.079)
Age	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.003)	
Income	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.007)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.006)
Republican President	-0.102 (0.078)	-0.104 (0.078)	-0.006 (0.088)	-0.101 (0.078)	-0.098 (0.078)	-0.101 (0.078)	-0.102 (0.078)	-0.100 (0.078)
White	-0.038 (0.086)	-0.043 (0.086)	-0.074 (0.096)	-0.032 (0.086)	-0.040 (0.086)	-0.037 (0.086)	-0.041 (0.086)	-0.046 (0.085)
Constant	1.548*** (0.265)	1.570*** (0.218)	1.454*** (0.241)	1.815*** (0.240)	1.670*** (0.212)	1.629*** (0.214)	1.568*** (0.232)	1.581*** (0.201)
Observations	756	756	618	756	756	756	756	756

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * = p < 0.10; ** = p < 0.05; *** = p < 0.01.

F.4 Historical Analogies vs. Appeals to Intuition/Experts

There were two primary goals of Study 3. First, to test the external validity of our findings from Study 1. Second, to assess how effective the use of historical analogies are as a political communications strategy relative to other types of potential justifications. In Study 1, the counter-factual we compared historical analogies against was a situation where the president does not invoke any kind of justification for their policy choice. In Study 3, we tested whether the nature of the counter-factual matters. This study closely resembled the invasion of Taiwan scenario from Study 1, except we add two additional experimental conditions. One involves the president appealing to their intuition, or "gut," to justify their decision, and the other involves an appeal to experts.

In the control condition, the president announces his decision to "deploy the American military to directly prevent a Chinese takeover of Taiwan", but does not provide additional justification. In the historical analogy condition, the president explains his policy decision by saying, "after studying the lessons of history, I believe that failing to act would simply lead to more Chinese aggression in the future." He then goes on to outline how the Munich analogy is applicable. In the expert condition, the president says, "after consulting with Department of Defense and State Department experts who have studied China extensively over a period of decades, I believe that failing to act would simply lead to more Chinese aggression in the future."[20] Finally, in the intuition condition, the president says,

> "I am doing so because my gut and intuition are strongly telling me that failing to act would simply lead to more Chinese aggression in the future. I have a feeling in my stomach that China has expansionist goals, the psychology of their leaders disposes them to aggression, and China has strong military capabilities that could enable them to expand their territory further beyond Taiwan. Allowing China to take over Taiwan would likely just embolden them to pursue future land conquests."

Our pre-registered expectation was that historical analogies would impact public opinion to a greater extent than less logically-based explanations, such as appeals to intuition, but would not be significantly more effective as a public relations strategy than more logically-based explanations, such as an appeal to the views of experts. We test these hypotheses in Table F-12. Compared to when the president references their gut/intuition as a policy justification, historical analogies increase respondents' perceptions that the president chose the best strategy (Model 1), the benefits of their policy outweigh the costs (Model 5), and the president has positive traits, such as competence and intelligence (Model 7). On the other hand, the results are not significant for perceived policy success and views about whether the U.S. has a moral obligation to intervene. Still, the fact that there is a significant result for our primary dependent variable indicates that there are some types of justifications that are less effective at moving public opinion in the realm of foreign policy than historical analogies.

Also as expected, historical analogies are generally not more effective than an appeal to experts, which is a similarly logic-based explanation. There is not a significant

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[20]We include both State Department and Defense Department experts to mitigate any bias respondents might have to either of those specific agencies.

difference between the analogy and expert treatment for our primary policy credibility outcome variable (Model 2), for perceptions of policy success (Model 4), or beliefs about whether the U.S. has a moral obligation to intervene (Model 10). On the other hand, there is a significant difference for the positive presidential traits variable (Model 8). However, note that the results for this index measure of positive presidential traits are driven by the knowledge of history measure rather than the intelligence or competence measures. Since the use of historical analogies directly signals the president is knowledgeable about history, the statistically significant result for the positive traits index measure should be taken with a grain of salt.

Finally, we asked a battery of pre-treatment questions taken from Bertsou and Caramani (2022), which were designed to measure anti-expert sentiment. We pre-registered a hypothesis that respondents high in this measure would be less likely to be persuaded by the expert treatment. Surprisingly, we find no evidence for our expectation. In fact, we find evidence for the opposite: respondents that are more supportive of expertise are more convinced by the historical analogy relative to when the president appeals to experts. Perhaps this is because this category of respondents respects the *president's* expertise when he employs a historical analogy.

Table F-13: Study #3 Historical Analogies vs. Gut and Expert Justifications

	Best Policy		Success		Benefits > Costs		Positive Pres Traits		Moral Obligation	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Historical Analogy vs. Gut/Instinct Explanation	0.172**		0.030		0.099*		0.263***		0.085	
	(0.083)		(0.066)		(0.051)		(0.063)		(0.085)	
Historical Analogy vs. Appeal to Experts		0.080		0.034		0.099**		0.131**		0.131
		(0.078)		(0.063)		(0.049)		(0.059)		(0.083)
Republican President	-0.013	-0.004	0.040	0.012	0.040	0.010	-0.024	-0.119**	0.018	0.030
	(0.083)	(0.078)	(0.065)	(0.063)	(0.051)	(0.049)	(0.062)	(0.059)	(0.084)	(0.082)
Hawkishness	0.455***	0.481***	0.356***	0.390***	0.257***	0.240***	0.273***	0.285***	0.403***	0.400***
	(0.051)	(0.049)	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.043)	(0.039)	(0.057)	(0.056)
Stronger Republican	-0.012	-0.015	-0.016	-0.014	-0.004	0.004	-0.031***	-0.027***	-0.042***	-0.019
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Foreign Policy Knowledge	-0.074	0.179	0.046	0.089	-0.227*	-0.084	0.277*	0.425***	-0.016	0.312
	(0.200)	(0.195)	(0.158)	(0.169)	(0.131)	(0.120)	(0.160)	(0.150)	(0.206)	(0.211)
Education	0.055	0.019	0.065	-0.057	0.053	-0.014	-0.016	0.010	0.116	0.061
	(0.096)	(0.091)	(0.074)	(0.073)	(0.061)	(0.058)	(0.072)	(0.066)	(0.097)	(0.093)
Male	0.120	0.236***	0.054	0.137**	0.061	0.010	0.064	0.030	0.076	0.195**
	(0.084)	(0.079)	(0.066)	(0.064)	(0.053)	(0.051)	(0.064)	(0.059)	(0.086)	(0.083)
Income	-0.004	-0.014**	-0.002	-0.000	-0.003	-0.005	-0.001	0.001	0.002	-0.004
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Age	0.003	-0.002	-0.003	-0.005***	-0.001	-0.005***	0.003	0.003	0.001	-0.001
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
White	-0.159*	-0.136	-0.091	-0.121*	-0.156***	-0.113**	0.037	-0.057	0.002	-0.148
	(0.093)	(0.084)	(0.074)	(0.071)	(0.059)	(0.057)	(0.075)	(0.069)	(0.096)	(0.096)
Constant	1.832***	1.941***	2.347***	2.332***	2.270***	2.427***	2.538***	2.624***	2.252***	2.073***
	(0.224)	(0.212)	(0.183)	(0.182)	(0.152)	(0.141)	(0.185)	(0.163)	(0.227)	(0.227)
Observations	736	733	736	733	736	733	736	733	736	732

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * = p < 0.10; ** = p < 0.05; *** = p < 0.01.

F.5   Pre-Registered Hypotheses

- Historical Analogies vs. Control & Gut Justification: When a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should be more positively disposed towards the policy and the leader compared to when a leader does not use a historical analogy or uses their intuition/gut to justify a policy.

    - Mostly Supported

- Historical Analogies vs. Expert Justification: Relative to other forms of expert justification, when a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then audiences should not be more positively or negatively disposed towards the policy and the leader.

    - Mostly Supported

- Anti-Expert Moderator: Relative to other forms of expert justification, when a leader uses a historical analogy to justify a foreign policy decision, then respondents more skeptical of experts should be more positively disposed towards the policy and the leader.

    - Not Supported

G Survey Questionnaires

G.1 Pre-Treatment Items

[Some Demographic Information Collected by Lucid]

Informed Consent[21]

[Standard Consent Form]

I have read the consent form, and I want to continue with this study	I do not want to participate in this study
○	○

Age Eligibility & Attention Screener

- Are you eighteen years of age or older?[22]

  - Yes
  - No

We would like to get a sense of your general preferences.

Most modern theories of decision making recognize that decisions do not take place in a vacuum. Individual preferences and knowledge, along with situational variables, can greatly impact the decision process. To demonstrate that you've read this much, just go ahead and select both red and green among the alternatives below, no matter what your favorite color is. Yes, ignore the question below and select both of these options.

- What is your favorite color?[23]

  - Black
  - Red
  - Pink
  - Green
  - Blue

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[21] If respondents answer "No" to the consent, then they are removed from the study.

[22] If respondents answer "No" to the age eligibility question, then they are removed from the study.

[23] If respondents do not answer exactly "red" and "green" then they are removed from the study. This question is adapted from Berinsky et al. (2021).

U.S. Sample Party Identification

- Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a...

    - Democrat
    - Republican
    - Independent
    - Other

- Would you call yourself a strong [Democrat/Republican] or a not so strong [Democrat/Republican]?[24]

    - Strong [Democrat/Republican]
    - Not so strong [Democrat/Republican]

- Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or Republican Party?[25]

    - The Democratic Party
    - The Republican Party
    - Neither

Political Ideology

- In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?

    - Very liberal/left-wing
    - Liberal/left-wing
    - Moderate
    - Conservative/right-wing
    - Very conservative/right-wing

---

[24]This question is only presented to respondents who chose "Democrat" or "Republican" for the first question in this section.

[25]This question is only presented to respondents who chose "Independent" or "Other" for the first question in this section.

Foreign Policy Dispositions[26]

Please select the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The best way to ensure world peace is through [*Respondent's Country*] military strength.	○	○	○	○	○
Going to war is unfortunate, but sometimes the only solution to international problems.	○	○	○	○	○
The use of military force only makes problems worse.	○	○	○	○	○

Foreign Policy Knowledge[27]

- Who was the U.S. engaged in the Cold War against?

    - Soviet Union
    - People's Republic of China
    - Mexico
    - Federal Republic of Germany
    - Democratic People's Republic of Korea

- Osama Bin Laden was the leader of which group?

    - al-Qaeda
    - Lord's Resistance Army
    - Irish Republican Army (IRA)
    - Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)
    - The Red Army Faction

- The League of Nations is the predecessor to which international organization?

    - The United Nations
    - The European Union
    - Commonwealth of Nations
    - Association of Southeast Asian Nations
    - Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries

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[26]We randomize the question order.

[27]We randomize the question and answer order.

- Which of the following countries is not a permanent member of the United Nations (U.N.) Security Council?

    - Germany

    - China

    - Russia

    - France

    - United Kingdom

- Which U.S. president effectively ended the Bretton Woods system?

    - Richard Nixon

    - Dwight Eisenhower

    - Gerald Ford

    - Ronald Reagan

    - George H.W. Bush

Self-Reported Foreign Policy Knowledge

- Some people seem to follow what's going on in foreign and international affairs most of the time, whereas others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in foreign and international affairs...

    - Most of the time

    - Some of the time

    - Only now and then

    - Hardly at all

    - Never

Negativity Bias[28]

Please select the extent to which the following words make you feel happy or unhappy:[29]

- Hardship

- Messy

- Death

- News

- Bus

- Body

- Laughter

- Party

- Waterfall

Anti-Elitism, Anti-Expertise, and Anti-Politics Measures[30]

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:[31]

- Ordinary people don't know what policies are good for them.

- Political leaders should make decisions according to their best judgment, not the will of the people.

- I'd rather put my trust in the wisdom of ordinary people than the opinions of experts.

- If people were knowledgeable enough, everyone would agree on the political decisions that are best for the country.

- Politicians should be like managers and fix what does not work in society.

- The leaders of my country should be more educated and skilled than ordinary citizens.

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[28] Only respondents in Study 2 receive these questions. See Canache et al. (2022) for a similar approach to measuring negativity bias.

[29] 11-Point Likert Scale: Very Unhappy, Quite Unhappy, Moderately Unhappy, Somewhat Unhappy, Mildly Unhappy, Neutral, Mildly Happy, Somewhat Happy, Moderately Happy, Quite Happy, Very Happy. The first three words have a negative valence (mean = 2.43), the second three are more neutral (mean = 4.93), and the last three have a positive valence (mean = 8.06). See bradley1999affective.

[30] These questions are only presented to respondents in Study 3.

[31] This question is measured on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The order of questions is randomized.

- Social problems should be addressed based on scientific evidence, not ideological preferences.

- The problems facing my country require experts to solve them.

- The best political decisions are taken by experts who are not politicians.

- Political parties do more harm than good to society.

- Politicians just want to promote the interests of those who vote for them and not the interest of the whole country.

- Politicians spend all their time seeking re-election instead of fixing problems.

G.2   Study #1 Vignettes

On the next page, you will read a hypothetical foreign affairs scenario. Please read the scenario carefully because you will be asked questions to check your attention and comprehension.

Study #1: U.S. Munich Control

The year is 2030. A major security concern for the US in 2030 is its very tense relationship with China. China remains a non-democracy. In 2030, the Chinese military is equally as strong as the US military. The US and China disagree over many important foreign policy issues.

One very tense issue relates to Taiwan. Taiwan is an island located near China. China is much bigger than Taiwan: whereas Taiwan has about 23 million people, China has about 1.4 billion people. Taiwan has been governing itself for several decades and is a democracy. However, China claims that Taiwan has always been part of China.

While this hostility over Taiwan's status has existed for decades between China and Taiwan, a new political leader emerges in China in 2030 threatening to use the Chinese military to make Taiwan part of China. Satellite imagery shows that China has put significant military assets in a position to attack Taiwan.

The U.S. President in 2030 is Stephen Richards, who is a lifelong [Republican/ Democrat]. He has said that his situation is unprecedented in U.S. history. Below is a quote from President Richards:

"This situation is unprecedented in U.S. history. China is actively preparing to seize Taiwan. We have never faced a threat like this before. Both political parties are very concerned about this. I am weighing every option to respond."

After deliberating with his advisors, President Richards decided to pursue a policy of deploying the American military to directly prevent a Chinese takeover of Taiwan. If China decides to go through with their invasion plans and fighting does take place, then casualties are expected to be very high for both China and the United States.

Study #1: U.S. Munich Treatment

The year is 2030. A major security concern for the US in 2030 is its very tense relationship with China. China remains a non-democracy. In 2030, the Chinese military is equally as strong as the US military. The US and China disagree over many important foreign policy issues.

One very tense issue relates to Taiwan. Taiwan is an island located near China. China is much bigger than Taiwan: whereas Taiwan has about 23 million people, China has about 1.4 billion people. Taiwan has been governing itself for several decades and is a democracy. However, China claims that Taiwan has always been part of China.

While this hostility over Taiwan's status has existed for decades between China and Taiwan, a new political leader emerges in China in 2030 threatening to use the Chinese military to make Taiwan part of China. Satellite imagery shows that China has put significant military assets in a position to attack Taiwan.

The U.S. President in 2030 is Stephen Richards, who is a lifelong [Democrat/ Republican]. He has said that this situation is similar to the Munich Agreement with Nazi Germany in 1938. Below is a quote from President Richards:

"China is actively preparing to seize Taiwan. Both political parties are very concerned about this. I am weighing every option to respond.

This scenario is very similar to the Munich Agreement. Prior to World War Two, Hitler wanted the Sudetenland. The Sudetenland was a part of Czechoslovakia where many ethnic Germans lived. Neville Chamberlain, the prime minister of Great Britain at the time, wanted a peaceful resolution to the situation. Chamberlain organized a meeting with Hitler, as well as leaders of France and Italy, and agreed to a peaceful resolution to the crisis called the Munich Agreement. In the Munich Agreement, these countries agreed to appease Hitler by giving him the Sudetenland in return for a promise by Germany not to make additional attempts to conquer territory outside of its borders. However, rather than serving to prevent future aggression by Hitler, many historians point to this appeasement of Hitler as a failed policy that motivated Hitler to pursue future land conquests, resulting in World War II."

After deliberating with his advisors, President Richards decided to pursue a policy of deploying the American military to directly prevent a Chinese takeover of Taiwan. If China decides to go through with their invasion plans and fighting does take place, then casualties are expected to be very high for both China and the United States. This policy is the opposite approach to the Munich Agreement of 1938.

Study #1: U.S. Cuban Missile Crisis Control

The year is 2030. A major security concern for the US in 2030 is its very tense relationship with China. China remains a non-democracy. In 2030, the Chinese military is equally as strong as the US military. The US and China disagree over many important issues.

One very tense issue is Chinese investment in the Western Hemisphere, namely in Central and South America. Traditionally, countries in Central and South America have proven close military allies and economic trading partners of the US. For much of US history, American leaders have declared that they will not tolerate foreign military bases in the Western Hemisphere. In 2030, China is expanding its military and economic influence with Central and South American countries. US officials are particularly concerned about growing Chinese influence in Panama, which could threaten US interests throughout the region.

Recent US intelligence reports revealed that China is building a military base in Panama. Construction is in the early stages, but dozens of Chinese and Panamanian military officials are living at the base. China has also deployed nuclear missiles at the base that experts believe could strike the continental US.

The U.S. President in 2030 is Stephen Richards, who is a lifelong [Democrat/ Republican]. He has said that this situation is unprecedented in U.S. history. Here is a quote from President Richards:

"China has built a military base in America's backyard. We have never faced a threat like this before. Both political parties are very concerned about this. I am weighing every option to respond."

In a series of meetings with advisors, President Richards considered several options to respond to China:

- Diplomacy: The United States will not take any steps to prevent China from having a military base in Panama and in return China promises not to build any additional bases in Central or South America.

- Naval Blockade: Using U.S. Navy ships to block further Chinese access to the base in Panama.

- Airstrikes: Using U.S. aircraft to destroy the Chinese base.

- Boots on the Ground: Deploying American military personnel to Panama in order to destroy the Chinese base.

After deliberating, President Richards elected the naval blockade option to respond to China's base construction in Panama.

Study #1: U.S. Cuban Missile Crisis Treatment

The year is 2030. A major security concern for the US in 2030 is its very tense relationship with China. China remains a non-democracy. In 2030, the Chinese military is equally as strong as the US military. The US and China disagree over many important issues.

One very tense issue is Chinese investment in the Western Hemisphere, namely in Central and South America. Traditionally, countries in Central and South America have proven close military allies and economic trading partners of the US. For much of US history, American leaders have declared that they will not tolerate foreign military bases in the Western Hemisphere. In 2030, China is expanding its military and economic influence with Central and South American countries. US officials are particularly concerned about growing Chinese influence in Panama, which could threaten US interests throughout the region.

Recent US intelligence reports revealed that China is building a military base in Panama. Construction is in the early stages, but dozens of Chinese and Panamanian military officials are living at the base. China has also deployed nuclear missiles at the base that experts believe could strike the continental US.

The U.S. President in 2030 is Stephen Richards, who is a lifelong [Democrat/ Republican]. He has said that this situation is similar to the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Here is a quote from President Richards:

"China has built a military base in America's backyard. Both political parties are very concerned about this. I am weighing every option to respond. We faced a threat like this in 1962, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the Soviet Union built a military base in Cuba and deployed nuclear missiles that could strike the continental US. John F. Kennedy, the US president at the time, decided to impose a naval blockade around Cuba in order to block the Soviet Union from being able to deploy any additional missiles or military personnel to Cuba. In the end, the Soviet Union decided to back down and agreed to withdraw all of their missiles from Cuba. Many historians point to the imposition of the naval blockade as a successful policy that enhanced the United States' security."

In a series of meetings with advisors, President Richards considered several options to respond to China:

- Diplomacy: The United States will not take any steps to prevent China from having a military base in Panama and in return China promises not to build any additional bases in Central or South America.

- Naval Blockade: Using U.S. Navy ships to block further Chinese access to the base in Panama.

- Airstrikes: Using U.S. aircraft to destroy the Chinese base.

- Boots on the Ground: Deploying American military personnel to Panama in order to destroy the Chinese base.

After deliberating, President Richards elected the naval blockade option to respond to China's base construction in Panama. This is the same approach the U.S. took during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

G.3 Study #2 Vignettes

On the next page, you will read a hypothetical foreign affairs scenario. Please **read the scenario carefully** because you will be **asked questions to check your attention and comprehension**.

Study #2: Control Condition Myanmar Scenario

The year is 2030 and there is currently a humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. The government of Myanmar is killing civilian members of the Rohingya minority group. The US President in 2030 is Stephen Richards, who is a lifelong member of the [Democratic/Republican] Party.

After deliberating with his advisors, President Richards decided to promptly and without delay pursue a policy of conducting airstrikes against the military forces of Myanmar in order to prevent them from killing civilian members of the Rohingya minority group. President Richards said the following to justify his policy:

Study #2: U.S. Positive Valence Bosnia Analogy

The year is 2030 and there is currently a humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. The government of Myanmar is killing civilian members of the Rohingya minority group. The US President in 2030 is Stephen Richards, who is a lifelong member of the [Democratic/Republican] Party.

After deliberating with his advisors, President Richards decided to promptly and without delay pursue a policy of conducting airstrikes against the military forces of Myanmar in order to prevent them from killing civilian members of the Rohingya minority group. President Richards said the following to justify his policy:

"This scenario is very similar to the US intervention in Bosnia in the 1990s. In the early 1990s, Bosnia was part of the country of Yugoslavia. It consisted of three main ethnic groups: Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs. In 1992, Bosnia passed a referendum calling for independence from Yugoslavia. Serbs, who did not want to separate from Yugoslavia, responded by engaging in significant violence against Bosniak and Croat civilians, which resulted in tens of thousands of deaths. In 1995, the US intervened by conducting significant airstrikes against the Serb aggressors. The Bosnian military intervention was a major humanitarian success. By helping end the war, America's decision to use force played a major role in saving tens of thousands of innocent lives.

The United States must take the same approach in Myanmar we took in Bosnia. Doing so will help end the killing of civilians in Myanmar."

Study #2: U.S. Negative Valence Bosnia Analogy

The year is 2030 and there is currently a humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. The government of Myanmar is killing civilian members of the Rohingya minority group. The US President in 2030 is Stephen Richards, who is a lifelong member of the [Democratic/Republican] Party.

After deliberating with his advisors, President Richards decided to promptly and without delay pursue a policy of conducting airstrikes against the military forces of Myanmar in order to prevent them from killing civilian members of the Rohingya minority group. President Richards said the following to justify his policy:

"This scenario is very similar to the US intervention in Bosnia in the 1990s. In the early 1990s, Bosnia was part of the country of Yugoslavia. It consisted of three main ethnic groups: Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs. In 1992, Bosnia passed a referendum calling for independence from Yugoslavia. Serbs, who did not want to separate from Yugoslavia, responded by engaging in significant violence against Bosniak and Croat civilians, which resulted in tens of thousands of deaths. In 1995, the US intervened by conducting significant airstrikes against the Serb aggressors. Although this military action may have helped end the war sooner and save innocent lives, the Bosnian intervention was a major humanitarian failure. By waiting so long to intervene, tens of thousands of innocent lives were lost that could have been saved if the United States had acted sooner.

The United States must take a different approach in Myanmar we took in Bosnia. Acting without delay will help end the killing of civilians in Myanmar."

Study #2: U.S. Control Condition Iran Scenario

The year is 2027. A major security concern for the US in 2027 is its very tense relationship with Iran. Iran remains a non-democracy. In 2027, the Iranian military is still significantly weaker than the United States military. The US and Iran disagree over many important foreign policy issues.

One very tense issue relates to Iran's nuclear program. Despite the genuine efforts by the US and other major powers, Iran has not been willing to rejoin a diplomatic agreement that would prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons in return for relief from economic sanctions. Instead, Iran has continued to produce and stockpile highly enriched uranium, which could be used to build a nuclear weapon.

Moreover, in 2027, the United States, United Kingdom, French, and German intelligence agencies have received credible information from multiple sources that Iran intends to build a nuclear weapon within the next 4 weeks. Satellite imagery also confirms that the Iranian government is taking concrete steps to assemble a nuclear weapon in the next few weeks.

The US President in 2027 is Stephen Richards, who is a lifelong member of the [Democratic/Republican] Party. Some foreign policy experts are urging President Richards to conduct a limited military operation that would use only airstrikes in an attempt to destroy Iran's nuclear infrastructure and thus prevent them from building a nuclear weapon in the short-term. Other foreign policy experts argue that this does not go far enough. Since Iran's government seems intent on acquiring a nuclear weapon, only a larger-scale military operation with "boots on the ground" that overthrows the Iranian government will prevent them from acquiring a nuclear weapon in the medium or long-term. These experts also argue that because many of Iran's nuclear facilities are buried deep underground, airstrikes alone may not be able to fully destroy Iran's capacity to build a nuclear weapon in the short-term. A third group argues the US should not get involved at all given the risks of American casualties and the possibility that Iran will retaliate against US soldiers stationed in the region or our allies.

After deliberating with his advisors, President Richards decided to conduct a limited military operation rather than attempt to overthrow the Iranian government and meddle in Iran's internal politics.

Study #2: U.S. High Familiarity Vietnam Analogy

The year is 2027. A major security concern for the US in 2027 is its very tense relationship with Iran. Iran remains a non-democracy. In 2027, the Iranian military is still significantly weaker than the United States military. The US and Iran disagree over many important foreign policy issues.

One very tense issue relates to Iran's nuclear program. Despite the genuine efforts by the US and other major powers, Iran has not been willing to rejoin a diplomatic agreement that would prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons in return for relief from economic sanctions. Instead, Iran has continued to produce and stockpile highly enriched uranium, which could be used to build a nuclear weapon.

Moreover, in 2027, the United States, United Kingdom, French, and German intelligence agencies have received credible information from multiple sources that Iran intends to build a nuclear weapon within the next 4 weeks. Satellite imagery also confirms that the Iranian government is taking concrete steps to assemble a nuclear weapon in the next few weeks.

The US President in 2027 is Stephen Richards, who is a lifelong member of the [Democratic/Republican] Party. Some foreign policy experts are urging President Richards to conduct a limited military operation that would use only airstrikes in an attempt to destroy Iran's nuclear infrastructure and thus prevent them from building a nuclear weapon in the short-term. Other foreign policy experts argue that this does not go far enough. Since Iran's government seems intent on acquiring a nuclear weapon, only a larger-scale military operation with "boots on the ground" that overthrows the Iranian government will prevent them from acquiring a nuclear weapon in the medium or long-term. These experts also argue that because many of Iran's nuclear facilities are buried deep underground, airstrikes alone may not be able to fully destroy Iran's capacity to build a nuclear weapon in the short-term. A third group argues the US should not get involved at all given the risks of American casualties and the possibility that Iran will retaliate against US soldiers stationed in the region or our allies.

After deliberating with his advisors, President Richards decided to conduct a limited military operation rather than attempt to overthrow the Iranian government and meddle in Iran's internal politics. President Richards said the following to justify his policy:

"My decision not to engage in regime change and attempt to overthrow the Iranian government is informed by America's War in Vietnam in the 1960's and 1970's. During the War in Vietnam, the United States deployed tens of thousands of soldiers. Broadly speaking, the goal of the conflict was to intervene in Vietnam's internal politics such that the Vietnamese government would not oppose core US interests. However, the decision to get involved in Vietnam's internal politics and engage in regime change was a disaster. Predictably, this kind of military operation angered the people of Vietnam and caused many of them to engage in armed resistance against the deployed US troops in order to regain their independence. As a result, thousands of US soldiers were killed. I have therefore chosen not to repeat the mistakes of the Vietnam War in the current crisis with Iran."

Study #2: U.S. Low Familiarity Philippines Analogy

The year is 2027. A major security concern for the US in 2027 is its very tense relationship with Iran. Iran remains a non-democracy. In 2027, the Iranian military is still significantly weaker than the United States military. The US and Iran disagree over many important foreign policy issues.

One very tense issue relates to Iran's nuclear program. Despite the genuine efforts by the US and other major powers, Iran has not been willing to rejoin a diplomatic agreement that would prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons in return for relief from economic sanctions. Instead, Iran has continued to produce and stockpile highly enriched uranium, which could be used to build a nuclear weapon.

Moreover, in 2027, the United States, United Kingdom, French, and German intelligence agencies have received credible information from multiple sources that Iran intends to build a nuclear weapon within the next 4 weeks. Satellite imagery also confirms that the Iranian government is taking concrete steps to assemble a nuclear weapon in the next few weeks.

The US President in 2027 is Stephen Richards, who is a lifelong member of the [Democratic/Republican] Party. Some foreign policy experts are urging President Richards to conduct a limited military operation that would use only airstrikes in an attempt to destroy Iran's nuclear infrastructure and thus prevent them from building a nuclear weapon in the short-term. Other foreign policy experts argue that this does not go far enough. Since Iran's government seems intent on acquiring a nuclear weapon, only a larger-scale military operation with "boots on the ground" that overthrows the Iranian government will prevent them from acquiring a nuclear weapon in the medium or long-term. These experts also argue that because many of Iran's nuclear facilities are buried deep underground, airstrikes alone may not be able to fully destroy Iran's capacity to build a nuclear weapon in the short-term. A third group argues the US should not get involved at all given the risks of American casualties and the possibility that Iran will retaliate against US soldiers stationed in the region or our allies.

After deliberating with his advisors, President Richards decided to conduct a limited military operation rather than attempt to overthrow the Iranian government and meddle in Iran's internal politics. President Richards said the following to justify his policy:

"My decision not to engage in regime change and attempt to overthrow the Iranian government is informed by America's War in the Philippines between 1899 and 1902. During the War in the Philippines, the United States deployed tens of thousands of soldiers. Broadly speaking, the goal of the conflict was to intervene in the Philippines' internal politics such that the Filipino government would not oppose core US interests. However, the decision to get involved in the Philippines' internal politics and engage in regime change was a disaster. Predictably, this kind of military operation angered the people of the Philippines and caused many of them to engage in armed resistance against the deployed US troops in order to regain their independence. As a result, thousands of US soldiers were killed. I have therefore chosen not to repeat the mistakes of the Philippines War in the current crisis with Iran."

G.4   Study #3 Vignettes

Study #3: Control

The year is 2030. A major security concern for the US in 2030 is its very tense relationship with China. China remains a non-democracy. In 2030, the Chinese military is equally as strong as the US military. The US and China disagree over many important foreign policy issues.

One very tense issue relates to Taiwan. Taiwan is an island located near China. China is much bigger than Taiwan: whereas Taiwan has about 23 million people, China has about 1.4 billion people. Taiwan has been governing itself for several decades and is a democracy. However, China claims that Taiwan has always been part of China.

While this hostility over Taiwan's status has existed for decades between China and Taiwan, a new political leader emerges in China in 2030 threatening to use the Chinese military to make Taiwan part of China. Satellite imagery shows that China has put significant military assets in a position to attack Taiwan.

The U.S. President in 2030 is Stephen Richards, who is a lifelong [Republican/ Democrat]. He has said that

"China is actively preparing to seize Taiwan. We have never faced a threat like this before. Both political parties are rightly very concerned about this.

After much consideration, I have decided to deploy the American military to directly prevent a Chinese takeover of Taiwan. If China decides to go through with their invasion plans and fighting does take place, then I expect casualties will be very high for both China and the United States, but, in the end, I believe America will prevail on the battlefield."

Study #3: Munich Analogy

"China is actively preparing to seize Taiwan. Both political parties are rightly very concerned about this.

After much consideration, I have decided to deploy the American military to directly prevent a Chinese takeover of Taiwan. If China decides to go through with their invasion plans and fighting does take place, then I expect casualties will be very high for both China and the United States, but, in the end, I believe America will prevail on the battlefield.

Why have I decided to risk the lives of American soldiers and risk a war with China? I am doing so because after studying the lessons of history, I believe that failing to act would simply lead to more Chinese aggression in the future. For example, prior to World War II, European leaders like British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain appeased Hitler in the infamous Munich Agreement with the Nazis in 1938. This diplomatic agreement gave Hitler land in Czechoslovakia in return for a promise by Germany not to make additional attempts to conquer territory outside of its borders. However, rather than serving to prevent future aggression by Hitler, appeasing Nazi Germany was a failed policy that motivated Hitler to pursue future land conquests, resulting in World War II. Like Nazi Germany, China may have expansionist goals, the psychology of its leaders may dispose them to aggression, and China has strong military capabilities that could enable them to expand their territory further beyond Taiwan. Allowing China to take over Taiwan would likely just embolden them to pursue future land conquests."

Study #3: Expert

"China is actively preparing to seize Taiwan. Both political parties are rightly very concerned about this.

After much consideration, I have decided to deploy the American military to directly prevent a Chinese takeover of Taiwan. If China decides to go through with their invasion plans and fighting does take place, then I expect casualties will be very high for both China and the United States, but, in the end, I believe America will prevail on the battlefield.

Why have I decided to risk the lives of American soldiers and risk a war with China? I am doing so because after consulting with Department of Defense and State Department experts who have studied China extensively over a period of decades, I believe that failing to act would simply lead to more Chinese aggression in the future. This is based on the assessment of experts that China has expansionist goals, the psychology of their leaders disposes them to aggression, and China has strong military capabilities that could enable them to expand their territory further beyond Taiwan. Allowing China to take over Taiwan would likely just embolden them to pursue future land conquests."

Study #3: Intuition

"China is actively preparing to seize Taiwan. Both political parties are rightly very concerned about this.

After much consideration, I have decided to deploy the American military to directly prevent a Chinese takeover of Taiwan. If China decides to go through with their invasion plans and fighting does take place, then I expect casualties will be very high for both China and the United States, but, in the end, I believe America will prevail on the battlefield.

Why have I decided to risk the lives of American soldiers and risk a war with China? I am doing so because my intuition and gut are strongly telling me that failing to act would simply lead to more Chinese aggression in the future. I have a feeling in my stomach that China has expansionist goals, the psychology of their leaders disposes them to aggression, and China has strong military capabilities that could enable them to expand their territory further beyond Taiwan. Allowing China to take over Taiwan would likely just embolden them to pursue future land conquests."

G.5 Dependent Variables

<u>Dependent Variable Questions</u>[32]

- To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

  President Richards chose the best strategy for dealing with [China/Iran/Myanmar].

  - Strongly agree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- Based on this information, do you approve of how President Richards is doing his job?

  - Strongly approve
  - Somewhat approve
  - Neither approve nor disapprove
  - Somewhat disapprove
  - Strongly disapprove

- Based on this information, how likely would you be to vote to re-elect President Richards?

  - Very likely
  - Unlikely
  - Neither likely nor unlikely
  - Likely
  - Very likely

To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?[33]

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The cost of President Richards' chosen policy are high.					
The benefits of President Richards' chosen policy are high.					
The benefits of President Richards' chosen policy outweigh the costs.					

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[32]Question order is randomized.

[33]The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

- How likely is it that President Richards' chosen policy in the scenario you read above will lead to a successful outcome for the United States?

    - Very unlikely
    - Unlikely
    - Neither likely nor unlikely
    - Likely
    - Very likely

- How likely is it that President Richards' chosen policy in the scenario you read above will prevent China from invading other countries besides Taiwan?[34]

    - Very unlikely
    - Unlikely
    - Neither likely nor unlikely
    - Likely
    - Very likely

- How likely is it that President Richards' chosen policy in the scenario you read above will force China to dismantle its military base in Panama?[35]

    - Very unlikely
    - Unlikely
    - Neither likely nor unlikely
    - Likely
    - Very likely

- How likely is it that President Richards' chosen policy in the scenario you read above will save thousands of innocent lives in a timely manner?[36]

    - Very unlikely
    - Unlikely
    - Neither likely nor unlikely
    - Likely
    - Very likely

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[34] Asked only to subjects in the China invades Taiwan scenarios in Studies 1 and 3.

[35] Asked only to subjects in the China builds a military base scenario in Study 1.

[36] Asked only to subjects in the Myanmar scenario in Study 2.

- How likely is it that President Richards' chosen policy in the scenario you read above will prevent a military disaster for the United States resulting in the loss of thousands of American lives?[37]

    - Very unlikely

    - Unlikely

    - Neither likely nor unlikely

    - Likely

    - Very likely

- How likely is it that the President's policy will help prevent China from overtaking the United States as the world's most powerful and influential country?[38]

    - Very unlikely

    - Unlikely

    - Neither likely nor unlikely

    - Likely

    - Very likely

- How likely is it that the President's policy will help prevent [Iran/Myanmar] from threatening the US' core foreign policy interests?[39]

    - Very unlikely

    - Unlikely

    - Neither likely nor unlikely

    - Likely

    - Very likely

To what extent do you agree that President Richards is:[40]

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Intelligent					
Competent					
Knowledgeable about History					

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[37] Asked only to subjects in the Iran scenario in Study 2.

[38] Asked only to subjects in Studies 1 and 3.

[39] Asked only to subjects in Study 2.

[40] The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

Based on the scenario you read about [China/Iran/Myanmar], how does the proposed course of action by President Richards make you feel?[41]

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Worried					
Angry					
Fearful					
Patriotic					

How does [China's/Iran's/Myanmar's] action in the scenario you read make you feel?[42]

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Worried					
Angry					
Fearful					
Patriotic					

- To what extent do you agree with that President is:

  - A Pacifist
  - A Warmonger

- To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

  In this scenario, the United States has a moral obligation to intervene to prevent China from conquering Taiwan.[43]

  - Strongly agree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

  In this scenario, the United States has a moral obligation to intervene to prevent China from building a base in Panama.[44]

  - Strongly agree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Somewhat disagree

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[41] The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

[42] The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

[43] Asked only to subjects in the China invades Taiwan scenarios in Studies 1 and 3

[44] Asked only to subjects in the China builds a military base scenario in Study 1.

- Strongly disagree

- To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

  In this scenario, the United States has a moral obligation to intervene to protect the Rohingya from being killed.[45]

    - Strongly agree
    - Somewhat agree
    - Neither agree nor disagree
    - Somewhat disagree
    - Strongly disagree

- To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

  In this scenario, the United States has a moral obligation to intervene to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.[46]

    - Strongly agree
    - Somewhat agree
    - Neither agree nor disagree
    - Somewhat disagree
    - Strongly disagree

  What are your thoughts about President Richards and the situation with [China/Iran/Myanmar] described above?

  Text Response

- What are four words that come to mind when you think about President Richards?

    - Word 1:
    - Word 2:
    - Word 3:
    - Word 4:

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[45]Asked only to subjects in the Myanmar scenario in Study 2.

[46]Asked only to subjects in the Iran scenario in Study 2.

- What are four words that come to mind when you think about the situation with [China/Russia/Myanmar] described above?

    - Word 1:
    - Word 2:
    - Word 3:
    - Word 4:

- Here is a summary of the situation, for your reference: The year is 2030 and China has threatened to invade Taiwan. President Richards has decided to deploy the U.S. military to directly prevent a Chinese takeover of Taiwan.[47]

  Here's what happened next: The American military deployment convinced China not to invade Taiwan.

  Based on this new information, do you approve of how President Richards is doing his job?

    - Strongly approve
    - Somewhat approve
    - Neither approve nor disapprove
    - Somewhat disapprove
    - Strongly disapprove

- Here is a summary of the situation, for your reference: The year is 2030 and China has built a military base in Panama. President Richards has decided to enact a Naval blockade around Panama to block further Chinese access to the base.[48]

  Here's what happened next: The American naval blockade stopped Chinese ships delivering supplies to the base in Panama. Soon after the blockade was imposed, China agreed to withdraw its base in Panama.

  Based on this new information, do you approve of how President Richards is doing his job?

    - Strongly approve
    - Somewhat approve
    - Neither approve nor disapprove
    - Somewhat disapprove
    - Strongly disapprove

---

[47]Asked only to subjects in the China invades Taiwan scenario in Studies 1 and 3.

[48]Asked only to subjects in the China invades Taiwan scenario in Studies 1 and 3.

Before participating in this study, to what extent were you familiar with the details of the following wars?:[49]

	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Somewhat familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
Vietnam War (1955-1975)					
Philippine-American War (1899-1902					

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[49]The order of questions in this matrix is randomized. This question is only presented to respondents in the Iran scenario in Study 2.

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