Pre-Analysis Plan
Spy and Tell?
Intelligence Disclosures in International Politics

Lee-Or Ankori-Karlinsky*
Isabella Bellezza†

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1 Introduction

Does publicizing evidence about an adversary's covert actions increase public support for foreign policy measures against them? Why? Under what conditions?

1.1 Motivation

A striking feature of the run-up to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was the public disclosure of intelligence by the U.S. government about Russian troop movements and Russian plans for false flag operations. The objective of the disclosures was not to deter an invasion but, rather, to preemptively discredit the Russian pretext for invading and, by extension, mobilize elites and the public in support of an anti-Russia coalition when deterrence failed.[1] Practitioners have since claimed that the public deployment of intelligence in furtherance of foreign policy objectives is a rare but accelerating trend that is "set to become a durable feature of the U.S. foreign policy landscape."[2] Yet we know very little

*Brown University
†Brown University
[1] As observed by Riemer and Sobelman [2023], Dylan and Maguire [2022], andBuluc et al. [2024].
[2] Gioe and Morell [2024]

about whether intelligence disclosures increase support for foreign policy actions against an adversary and, if they do, when and why.

Understanding the efficacy of intelligence disclosures is an important policy-relevant question, but it also offers an opportunity to investigate longstanding questions about the role of secrecy in international politics in light of a changing information environment. Existing work largely implies that states prefer to keep, rather than to disclose, information about the covert actions of their adversaries from domestic publics.[3] This is because secrecy[4] has historically been a strategic asset: by preserving deniability[5] – the ability to deny involvement in covert, hostile actions – it has helped states control escalation pressures[6] and coerce adversaries behind closed doors with the threat of exposure.[7].

But state secrets are becoming harder to come by and harder to keep. The commercialization of technologies like satellites and proliferation of non-state private and non-profit groups who supply open source intelligence (OSINT) products are eroding the states' traditional monopoly on secrecy.[8] In the resulting saturated information environment, a governments ability to craft a compelling narrative is becoming an increasingly important aspect of statecraft. Unsurprisingly, governments appear to be re-evaluating the strategic value-add of sitting on national security "secrets" and gambling, instead, with a new strategy: publicly deploying intelligence to cut through the noise and shape the narrative in their favor.[9]

The lead-up the the war in Ukraine helps illustrate this aim. From December 2001 to the Russian invasion on February 24, 2022, the U.S. and UK deployed national security intelligence as evidence in the public domain to undermine Russia's ability to conceal

[3]Carnegie [2021], Carson [2016]
[4]Or simply non-acknowledgment
[5]For a discussion on the concept of deniability, see Cormac and Aldrich [2018]
[6]Bloch and McManus [2024], Carson [2016], Hedgecock and Sukin [2023], Kurizaki [2007]
[7]Carson and Yarhi-Milo [2017], Nutt and Pauly [2021]
[8]Lin-Greenberg and Milonopoulos [2021], Sage-Passant [2024], Zegart [2022]
[9]Note that intelligence disclosures are not leaks, but "the purposeful, state-authorized revelation of genuine intelligence about another entity's secrets"Riemer and Sobelman [2023], p. 277.

its true objectives. They sought to make Russia's covert actions overt and, by extension, to deny Russia the ability to plausibly deny wrongdoing in the court of public opinion if and when it decided to invade Ukraine. President Biden clearly stated that "we've shared declassified evidence about Russia's plans and cyberattacks and false pretexts *so that there could be no confusion* or cover-up about what Putin was doing,"[10] and Sir Jeremy Fleming, the Director of British signals intelligence (GCHQ), commented that "deeply secret intelligence is being released *to make sure the truth is heard.*"[11] The public was a key target of the disclosures, including reluctant European publics, who, as put by the U.S. ambassador to Russia at the time "had a hard time believing that there was going to be a major land war in Europe."[12] U.S. officials believe that they "eventually brought people around [to an anti-Russia coalition] by bombarding them with *information that you could not ignore.*"[13]

The Ukraine case illustrates a *predictive* intelligence disclosure (PID): one that forecasts an event taking place in the future. It stands in contrast to *retrospective* disclosures that reveal intelligence about an event that has already taken place, usually for the purpose of attribution.[14] For instance, NATO governments spend considerable resources aimed at "removing the veil of deniability" surrounding the alleged cutting of underwater sea cables by Russia and China.[15] Compared to retrospective disclosures, predictive disclosures are rare events. However, they are high impact and high risk events that senior practitioners believe will increase in frequency now that "the genie is out of the bottle"[16]. Given the growing incentive for states to compete for attention in the information space in order to mobilize their publics in support of foreign policy objectives – particularly

[10]President Biden's Remarks of Russian Invasion of Ukraine aired on CNN Newsroom [2022]

[11]"Director GCHQ's speech on global security amid war in Ukraine," Australian National Defense University, 31st March 2022.

[12]Banco et al. [2023]

[13]Former deputy U.S. national security adviser Jon Finer cited in a 2023 oral history by Banco et al. [2023] in *Politico*

[14]We thank Austin Carson for raising this point.

[15]Grylls [2025]

[16]Gioe and Morell [2024]

ones that require measures that are costly to the public, like sanctions on Russian energy exports – it is reasonable to assume that the use of PIDs will increase. In this study, we focus on predictive intelligence disclosures (PIDs).

We use a two-wave survey experiment to better understand if, when, and why PIDs mobilize public support for a range of costly foreign policy measures against an adversary. Notably, our design is structured to evaluate not only (i) *why* disclosures may mobilize the public in line with the disclosing states' aims; but also (ii) how resilient the effect of disclosure is to counter-messaging from the adversary and (iii) whether the effect of disclosure is conditioned on the performance. This set up enables us to contribute to research on rhetorical contestation in international politics.

The meaning of world events is not self evident. Crises do not "come with instruction sheets"[17] detailing the appropriate level of public outrage and support for policy responses. Instead, actors compete to imbue material developments with meaning. As put by Goddard and Krebs [2015], "threats are constructed, not merely revealed,"[18] and national publics must draw inferences in a messy information environment characterized by competing narratives about whether a transgression occurred. Existing work shows that states invest significant effort into managing their public image, both by carefully curating their public acts[19] and through rhetorical strategies, like justifying transgression with normative claims or denying them altogether.[20]

1.2 Theoretical framework and hypotheses

We argue that public and predictive intelligence disclosures (PIDs) increase public support for costly foreign policy measures by making it harder for adversaries to deny wrongdoing. Disclosures reduce the plausibility of denials by aligning the public's perception

[17] Blyth [2003]
[18] p.16
[19] Andreas [2022], Carson [2016]
[20] Goddard [2018], Goddard and Krebs [2015], Pratt and Morse [2025]

with the intelligence community's narrative. We believe this is the case for the following reasons. First, intelligence agencies have access to privileged information and rarely make public statements due to the risk of compromising sources and methods. When disclosures are made, they signal that the issue is serious enough to warrant those risks. Second, disclosures place the disclosing state's reputation on the line. If the information is proven false or misleading, the state risks reputational damage. In addition, disclosure usually requires action: if states do not act on the information, then they may suffer additional reputational damage. Third, leaders of states and the heads of their military-intelligence agencies carry unique symbolic power.[21] In short, disclosure functions as a costly and authoritative signal to the public that makes the disclosing states' claims more credible or imaginable and, on the flip side, the accused states' claims less credible.

We therefore arrive at our main hypothesis, Hypothesis 1a, that intelligence disclosures generate greater support for costly foreign policy actions than no disclosure. If events follow the prediction made by the disclosure, we expect that intelligence disclosures would increase public support for costly foreign policy actions even further (1b). Additionally, the intelligence disclosure should increase public support for costly foreign policy measures through our hypothesized primary mechanism: by decreasing the plausibility of an adversary's denial of wrongdoing (Hypotheses 1c and 1d).

Hypothesis 1a (Support): Intelligence disclosures about an adversary's likely deceptive action(s) increase public support for costly foreign policy and personal measures, compared to no disclosure.

Hypothesis 1b (Time): The effect of intelligence disclosures on public support for costly foreign policy and personal measures increases after the anticipated deceptive action occurs, compared to before it occurs.

[21] Warren [2014]

Hypothesis 1c (Plausible deniability at time 1): Intelligence disclosures increase the public's belief that the alleged misdeed is possible, compared to no disclosure.

Hypothesis 1d (Plausible deniability at time 2): Intelligence disclosures increase the public's belief that the accused state is, in fact, guilty as charged, compared to no disclosure.

1.2.1 Mechanisms

Once the ability of an adversary to deny wrongdoing is muted – that is, the deniable and ambiguous has been made undeniable and unambiguous – we argue two mechanisms drive public support for costly foreign policy responses. First, intelligence disclosures increase public support for costly foreign policy action by increasing perceptions of *reputational damage* absent a response. This expectation is consistent with research that shows policymakers are motivated to preserve their country's reputation and that the public punishes leaders who damage it.[22] The intuition is simple: a public and attributed hostile operation by an adversary is perceived as a challenge that cannot be declined without losing face.[23] This echoes Schelling's famous adage that if you decline a game of chicken, you've lost the game.[24]. We call this **The Peacock Effect** because it has to do with lost status and reputation.

Hypothesis 2a (Reputation): Intelligence disclosures will increase public support for costly foreign policy measures *because they increase the perceived reputational cost of inaction.*

Second, intelligence disclosures increase public support for costly foreign policy action by increasing two dimensions of threat perception: urgency and priority. Individuals tend

[22]Tomz [2007], Yarhi-Milo [2018]
[23]O'Neill [2001]
[24]Schelling [1980]

to underestimate the likelihood of rare but catastrophic events, like war, due to cognitive biases (e.g. normalcy bias). These biases can prevent the public from supporting proactive foreign policy actions to address emerging threats. In the case of Taiwan, the concern is significant enough that a new Taiwanese television drama, Zero Day, portrays an attempt by China to seize the island. The producers aim to awaken Taiwanese citizens from what they perceive as widespread complacency regarding the potential for war.[25]

Intelligence disclosures are similarly aimed at countering the tendency towards complacency by vividly presenting evidence that unpleasant and rare events are not only possible but imminent, heightening the public's sense of the threat's *urgency*. In other words: disclosures counter the tendency towards an **Ostrich Effect**, in which individuals bury their heads in the sand, by making the threat appear imminent and dangerous, generating fear.[26] They activate a countervailing **Gazelle Effect** because a gazelle sensing a predator is unable to ignore the threat and must act.

In addition to increasing the perceived urgency of the threat, intelligence disclosures may also raise the *priority* of the threat relative to competing concerns, like economic stability. Because there are other priorities and interests threatened by costly action, there is an additional incentive to exercise willful ignorance, practice avoidance, and fail to imagine dangerous outcomes and changes to the status quo. In this way, intelligence disclosures are aimed at neutralizing the Ostrich Effect and activating the Gazelle Effect.

Hypothesis 2b (Urgency of threat): Intelligence disclosures will increase public support for costly foreign policy measures *because they heighten the perceived urgency of the threat.*

Hypothesis 2c (Priority of threat): Intelligence disclosures will increase public support for costly foreign policy measures *because they make the threat posed by the adversary a more*

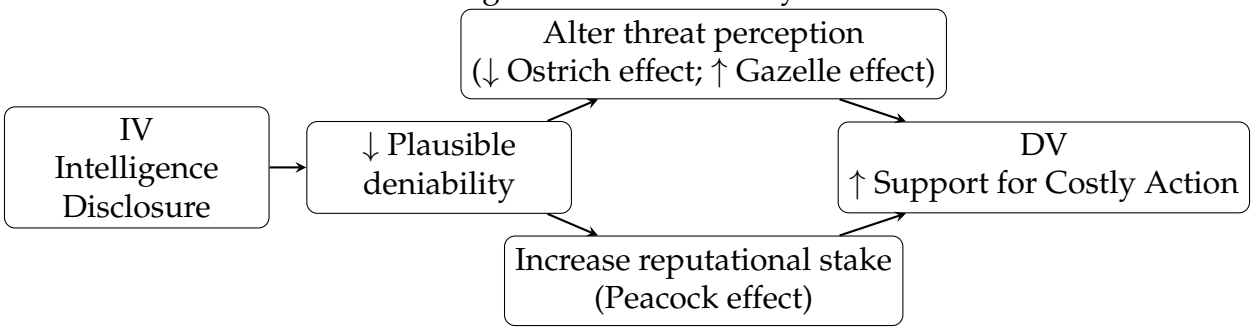
[25] "What if China Invades? For Taiwan, a TV Show Raises Tough Questions." `The New York Times`, 25 August 2024.

[26] Landau-Wells [2024]

pressing priority than other competing priorities.

In sum, we hypothesize that the mechanisms of reputational pressure and heightened threat perception drive public support for costly responses. Leaders face a double constraint: the risk of reputational harm from inaction on one hand, and the increased public demand for protection against a now-salient threat on the other. We will compare the mediating impact of the three mechanisms against each other, but we do not pre-specify a direction. Figure 1 illustrates the theory.

Figure 1: DAG of theory



1.2.2 Conditions

We expect that two variables will condition the effect of disclosures on public support for costly action: how the message is delivered and how the accused responds.

First, disclosures can be conceived as a form of political theater. From this perspective, intelligence disclosures are not simply the revelation of facts, they are symbolic acts staged for an audience, and the resonance of the message can be amplified or muted by the quality of the performance. Indeed, Riemer [2021] provides excellent interview evidence that government officials grapple seriously with how to present intelligence to the public—debating which evidence, framing devices, or "props" are most likely to dramatize the threat and legitimize a policy response.

More broadly, this logic aligns with a constructivist tradition in international relations

that emphasizes the symbolic and performative dimensions of state action. Drawing on Erving Goffman's work, IR scholars have shown how states strategically manage their public image by staging actions for domestic and international audiences.[27] Intelligence disclosures, in this light, are impression management tools: carefully choreographed performances that frame the adversary as duplicitous and malign. Drawing on this work, we expect that the effect of disclosures on public support for costly action will be greater when presented with vivid evidence than with no evidence (Hypothesis 3).

Hypothesis 3 (Vividness): Intelligence disclosures provided with vivid evidence about an adversary's likely deceptive action(s) increase public support for costly foreign policy and personal measures compared to disclosures provided with no evidence.

Second, like most arenas of international politics, the information space is contested. Any state actor accused of wrongdoing is likely to devise some type of counter-messaging strategy aimed at muddying the waters and swaying public opinion in their favor.[28] The accused state can opt to legitimate its actions by "appealing to recognized norms and rules to justify its demands to its audience."[29] In so doing, the accused state hopes to escape punishment by making its actions understandable. Alternatively, it may deny the allegation altogether, attacking not the normative underpinning of the disclosure but the facts. The true test of the effect of a PID, then, is whether it survives contact with counter-messaging attempts.

We expect that support for costly U.S. actions will be resilient to both (i) a denial of wrongdoing by the adversary and (ii) justification of such actions.[30] This has to do with the timing of predictive disclosures: rebutting a false claim *before* it is made. The timing of the disclosures in the lead up to the Russia invasion of Ukraine was deemed important

[27] Andreas [2022], Carson [2016], Goffman [1959], Jervis [1970]
[28] Pratt and Morse [2025]
[29] Goddard [2018], p. 18.
[30] In line with Pratt and Morse [2025].

by public officials precisely because "it's important to get the truth out before the lies come"[31] This belief is consistent with psychology research rooted in "inoculation theory" that shows "prebunking" interventions boost cognitive resistance to misleading information and reduce susceptibility to fake news.[32]

Hypothesis 4a [counter message 1]: The effect of intelligence disclosure on public support for costly foreign policy measures is resilient to a *denial* from the adversary compared to a disclosure with no comment.

Hypothesis 4b [counter message 1]: The effect of evidenced intelligence disclosure on public support for costly foreign policy measures is more resilient to a *denial* from the adversary compared to a disclosure with no evidence.

Hypothesis 4c [counter message 2]: The effect of intelligence disclosure on public support for costly foreign policy measures is resilient to *justification* compared to a disclosure with no comment.

Hypothesis 4d [counter message 2]: The effect of evidenced intelligence disclosure on public support for costly foreign policy measures is more resilient to *justification* than disclosure with no evidence.

Last, we will test for heterogeneous treatment effects. We will interact our treatments with dispositional characteristics that have been found to vary systematically in extant research about the micro-foundations of foreign policy attitudes – like militant assertiveness,[33] international or "generalized" trust, [34] and national chauvinism[35] – as well as

[31] UK Defence Intelligence General James Hockenhull quoted in Beale [2022]
[32] Lewandowsky et al. [2017], Roozenbeek et al. [2020]
[33] Herrmann et al. [1999], Kertzer and Brutger [2016]
[34] Brewer [2004], Mercer [2010]
[35] Herrmann et al. [2009]

other respondent characteristics, like trust in the news and trust in the intelligence community. We will also test for the conditional effects of partisanship and gender. We don't pre-specify in what direction we expect the treatment effects to vary with these pre-treatment co-variates.

2 Experimental Design

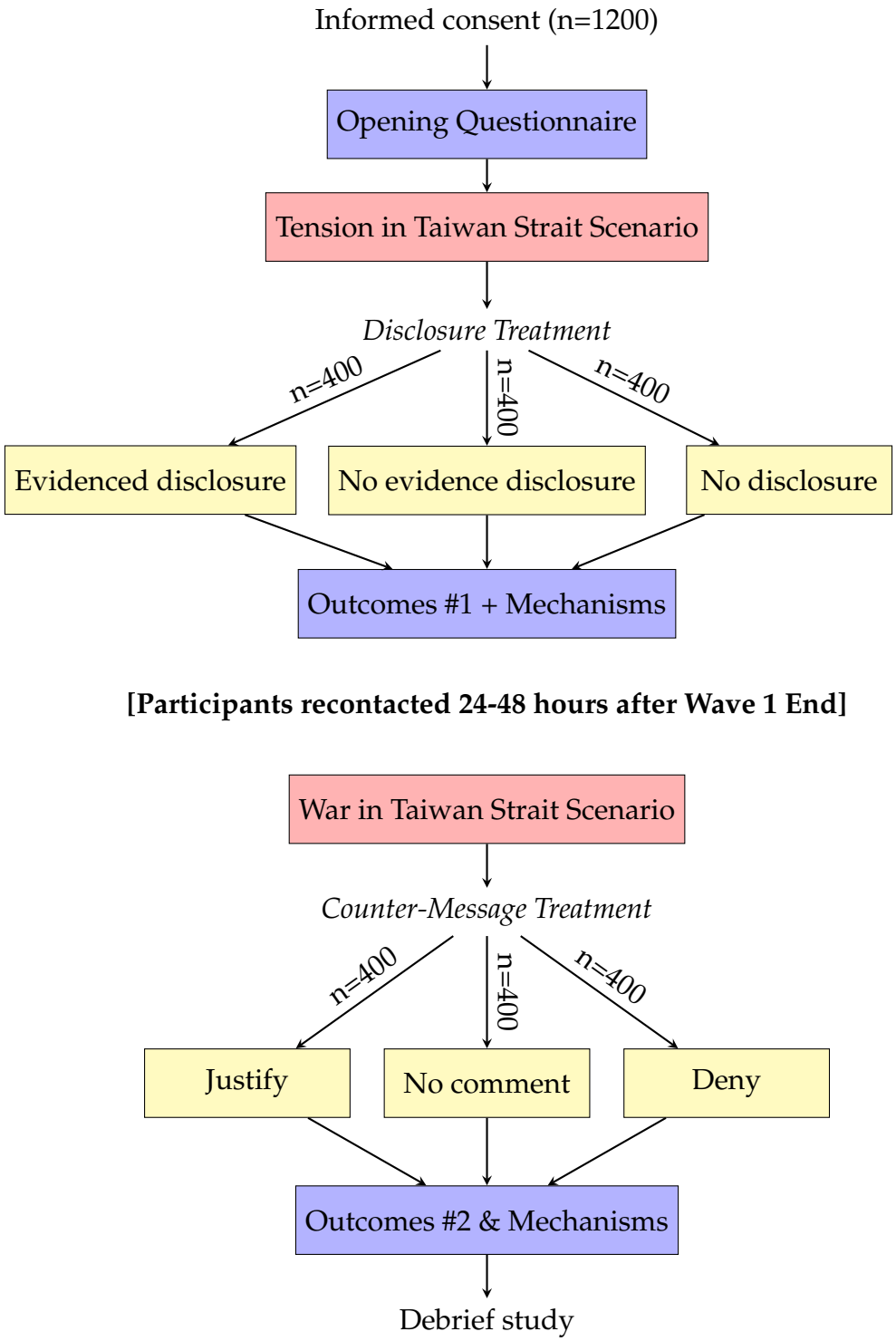
To test our theory, we will administer a two-wave vignette survey experiment to 1,200 adults in the United States. The samples will be recruited using the survey firm Prolific, which will select participants to resemble the gender, age, geographic, and racial distribution of the adult population in the US.

The survey will proceed in two waves – the first occurring *before* a hypothetical Chinese invasion of Taiwan in the year 2030 and the second occurring *after* the invasion. In the first wave, respondents receive a scenario as a news article that described growing tensions in the Taiwan Strait in which we manipulate the message from the U.S. government. This treatment has three conditions: a disclosure with evidence, a disclosure with no evidence, and a control with no disclosure. In the second wave, respondents receive a second scenario as a news article where we manipulate the Chinese strategic counter-message *after* the invasion has occurred. This treatment has three conditions: a justification, denial, and no comment. These are our two interventions, which randomize the strategic messaging surrounding the scenario. We chose the year 2030 because it is after the terms of the current U.S. and Chinese leaders end.

After each wave, respondents will be asked about their support for various U.S. foreign policy responses, our main outcome of interest. They will also be asked about their concerns about the reputational costs of inaction and perception of threat posed by Chinese behavior – our mediator variables. We will additionally ask two wave-specific questions. At the end of wave 1, we will ask respondents to predict how likely it is that China will

invade Taiwan in the near future. At the end of wave 2, we will ask respondent to identify who they believe is the aggressor. Figure 2 overviews the survey design, which we describe in detail in the following section, and Table 1 below presents the different experimental conditions across both waves.

Figure 2: Survey Flow



Notes: Survey flow of waves 1 and 2. Opening questionnaire includes demographic questions and other pre-treatment variables. Outcomes and mechanisms are identical for wave 1 and wave 2.

Table 1: Experimental Conditions by Message Type and Evidence Treatment

	Control (n=400)	**No evidence (n=400)**	**Evidence (n=400)**
Denial (n=400)	Denial + Control	Denial + No evidence	Denial + Evidence
No comment (n=400)	No comment + Control	No comment + No evidence	No comment + Evidence
Justification (n=400)	Justification + Control	Justification + No evidence	Justification + Evidence

The hypothetical Chinese invasion of Taiwan is an appropriate scenario to test our theory for several reasons. First, a Chinese invasion of Taiwan is a plausible scenario which the U.S. government monitors closely and towards which it likely devotes substantial intelligence resources. Second, while the U.S. has claimed it would support Taiwan's defense, Taiwan is not a formal U.S. ally, and the U.S. commitment to Taiwan has been called into question repeatedly. As a result, it seems likely that a successful defense of Taiwan would require the mobilization of U.S. and Allied public opinion. Third, U.S. intelligence disclosure ahead of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 is the most high-profile, and arguably successful, instance of intelligence disclosure to date. The defense of Ukraine - another non-formal ally - also required mobilizing U.S. and Allied support. Importantly, these disclosures are believed to have largely worked despite intense partisan polarization on the topic. The two instances, while not perfect parallels, bear a striking resemblance to one another. Finally, the U.S.-China rivalry is the primary geopolitical competition in the current global environment, making the case highly policy relevant.

2.1 Intervention and Scenarios

At the beginning of the study, participants complete a questionnaire that measures the following demographic characteristics: gender, age, race, income, state, education, party identification, and ideology. In addition to this standard battery of demographic items, we include items that measure a range of dispositional characteristics, such as hawkishness and trust levels.

After respondents complete the opening questionnaire, they will be presented with a fictional news article that takes place in year 2030 — presented as plausible and realistic — that describes growing tensions in the Taiwan Strait. The article describes increased Chinese naval and drone activity, as well as indications of Chinese troop movements on the mainland, noting that similar activity has been observed over the past decade. For each participant, we randomly assign whether the news article is received with a disclosure from the U.S. intelligence community with no evidence (treatment 1), a disclosure with rich evidence (treatment 2), or with no disclosure (control). The disclosure in both no-evidence and rich-evidence treatments presents a high-confidence assessment by the IC of a planned false flag operation and implies it will be used as a pretext to justify an imminent invasion of Taiwan. The rich evidence disclosure includes a visual and audio prop,[36] whereas the no evidence disclosure simply states the IC assessment as text.

The control scenario is presented in Figure 3 while the treatment scenarios are presented in Figures 4 and 5.

[36]We used Narakeet to generate an audio file in Mandarin from text and Flixier to edit the audio file into a video with subtitles and audio waves. The text and audio were then verified by a native Mandarin speaker.

Figure 3: Control Scenario, Wave 1

Breaking News

TENSIONS RISE IN TAIWAN STRAIT
October 10th, 2030

In recent months, independent analysts have noticed an uptick in ongoing tensions between China and Taiwan in the Taiwan Strait. Long-time observers of the region have noted increased Chinese naval and drone activity, as well as indications of Chinese troop movements on the mainland. While similar activity has been detected over the past decade, independent analysts worry that China is preparing to take Taiwan by military force.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which rules the People's Republic of China, has long claimed that Taiwan is an integral part of Chinese territory. Taiwan, on the other hand, seeks to maintain its independence as a sovereign state, separate from CCP control.

The United States provides military aid to Taiwan, and has said that it would come to Taiwan's aid in the event of an attempt by China to take the island by force. Military escalation in the South China Sea has been a decades-long concern.

Observers believe that a Chinese attempt to take Taiwan by force would lead to military involvement by the United States and its East Asian allies, such as Japan and South Korea. Such an escalation could soon engulf the whole region in military conflict.

Figure 4: Treatment 1, Wave 1 [no evidence]

Breaking News

U.S. INTELLIGENCE BELIEVES CHINA PREPARES FOR IMMINENT TAIWAN TAKEOVER
October 10th, 2030

In recent months, U.S. intelligence agencies have detected increased Chinese naval and drone activity around Taiwan, as well as indications of Chinese troop movements on the mainland. While similar activity has been observed over the past decade, the U.S. Intelligence Community now believes that China is preparing to take Taiwan by military force.

In a rare public statement, James Smith, the U.S. Director of National Intelligence, has said: "This is the real deal. Based on our best intelligence, the arrangement of Chinese military forces as detected via satellite, and our understanding of the thinking within the Chinese leadership, China is getting ready to take Taiwan by force. The United States and its allies must prepare accordingly."

Smith added that, based on intercepted signals intelligence, U.S. intelligence believes that the assault is planned to begin with the Chinese government "creating some fabricated provocation, in which a Chinese military asset is harmed by Taiwan." This false pretext will be followed by "a massive disinformation campaign accompanied by cyber attacks designed to create chaos," Smith warned.

[end with same final three paragraphs as in control scenario]

Figure 5: Treatment 2, Wave 1 [rich evidence]

Breaking News

U.S. INTELLIGENCE BELIEVES CHINA PREPARES FOR IMMINENT TAIWAN TAKEOVER
October 10th, 2030

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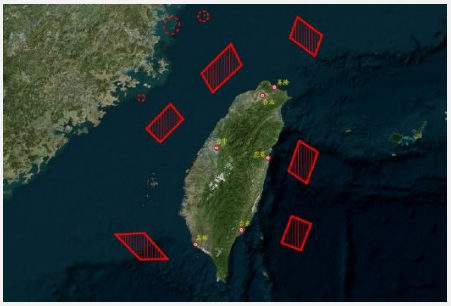

Declassified satellite image showing Chinese troop mobilization near Taiwan.

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Intercepted Signals Intelligence (translated excerpt)

• **Play Audio**

Voice 1: "The decoy vessel will enter the exclusion zone at 0600. We'll report hostile fire from the Taiwanese side."
Voice 2: "Understood. Footage will be edited and distributed to state media by noon. The Taiwan 'incident' will be in place before end of week."

[end with same final three paragraphs as in control scenario]

Following this first treatment – which varies *the message* of the allegation against China – and a comprehension check, participants answer to what extent they support the following five US foreign policy responses: (i) publicly condemning China, (ii) imposing economic sanction, (iii) increasing military aid to Taiwan, (iv) conducting airstrikes, and (v) declaring war on China.[37] Additionally, we ask questions pertaining to our hypothesized mechanisms: credibility of the allegation, reputational cost of inaction, and threat perception. We always ask the outcome questions first and then randomize the order of the mediator questions.

Wave 2 will be conducted 24-48 hours after Wave 1. In it, respondents will receive a second fictional news article, titled "China Invades Taiwan," shown in Figure 6 below. Participants are then randomly assigned to one of three counter-messaging strategies from China: (i) China justifies the invasion as "restoring territorial integrity," emphasizing Taiwan as an inseparable part of China; (ii) China denies being the aggressor and sticks with its false flag narrative; (iii) no comment. These three conditions are shown in Figure 7 below. After a comprehension check, we once again ask our dependent variable and mediator variable questions.

Wave 2 will occur 24-48 hours after Wave 1 for two reasons. First, to ensure more realistic exposure to information and counter-information. Second, to enable us to use delayed outcome measurement to assess treatment effects beyond the immediate aftermath of treatment. On both counts, this design presents a harder test for our theory: that intelligence disclosures are harder for adversaries to deny compared with other sources of information and therefore better able to mobilize public opinion.

[37] These are similar to the outcome measures used in Bloch and McManus [2024], to facilitate comparison.

Figure 6: Wave 2 Invasion Article

Breaking News

WAR IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT
November 10th, 2030

War has broken out in the Taiwan Strait. The Taiwanese Defense Ministry has claimed via a spokesperson that a Chinese invasion of Taiwan has started: "We have been unjustifiably invaded by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)." Chinese forces have been spotted in Taiwan, where they encountered fierce resistance from Taiwanese defenders. A Pentagon spokesperson has also confirmed that China has invaded Taiwan.

The fighting has followed months of tensions in the Strait. Observers have noted a Chinese military buildup for several months. Approximately one week ago, a Chinese helicopter was downed near the island of Taiwan, and the pilot was killed. The Chinese government accused Taiwan of shooting down the helicopter unprovoked, although Taiwan has denied this allegation, calling it a "transparent and false pretext to justify aggression." In response, China has imposed a maritime blockade against Taiwan.

In the past 36 hours, there have been reports of gunfights throughout the island of Taiwan although telecommunications disruptions have made confirmation of these reports difficult.

The United States Government is currently weighing different responses and has placed its U.S. forces in the Asia Pacific theater on high alert.

Figure 7: Counter-messaging treatments

Deny

Through a spokesperson, the Chinese government has denied that it has invaded Taiwan: "There is no basis for these false assertions by warmongers. The People's Liberation Army has imposed a blockade on Taiwan in response to the downing of the helicopter and is conducting special operations to enforce the blockade."

Justify

A Chinese Government spokesperson has released the following statement: "Today, the People's Liberation Army launched a targeted operation in the Taiwan Strait to uphold national sovereignty and restore stability in the face of escalating separatist activities and foreign interference. For years, Beijing has shown restraint, but recent collusion between Taiwanese authorities and external forces has crossed a red line with the downing of our helicopter. Taiwan is an inseparable part of China's territory, recognized by the international community under the One China Principle."

No Comment

The Chinese government has declined to respond to repeated requests for comment on the matter.

2.2 Randomization

In wave 1, participants will be randomized using simple randomization into two treatment arms: one involving intelligence disclosure and one involving no disclosure. In wave 2, participants who begin the survey will be randomized into three groups of equal size: one for each counter-message offered by the Chinese government (denial, no comment, justification).

We will randomly assign the order of mediator questions, but we will not randomly as-

sign the order of the outcome questions. The outcome question will come first. We choose this "outcome-mediator" (OM) design because mediator items (e.g., asking about the reputational costs of inaction) are plausible cues that influence our outcome item (support for various foreign policy actions). By asking the DV question first, we avoid mediator-induced priming and preserve the validity of the DV measurement.

2.3 Sampling, Recruitment, and Power Calculation

1,200 participants will be recruited from Prolific's online panel. We will use quota-based sampling (age, ethnicity, sex) based on the U.S. census to achieve rough representativeness of the U.S. population. Once quotas are filled to reach 1,200 participants, we will screen the initial 1,200 for attentiveness, speeding, and the possibility of bots. Additional participants will be recruited to reach 1,200 attentive, non-bot participants.

24-48 hours after completing wave 1, participants will be invited to participate in wave 2 of the study. All participants who consented to participate in study will be invited to participate in wave 2, regardless of the quality of their responses in wave 1. Participants will be compensated $10/hr for completing the first study and $12/hour for completing the follow up within 24-48 hours after they have completed the first study.

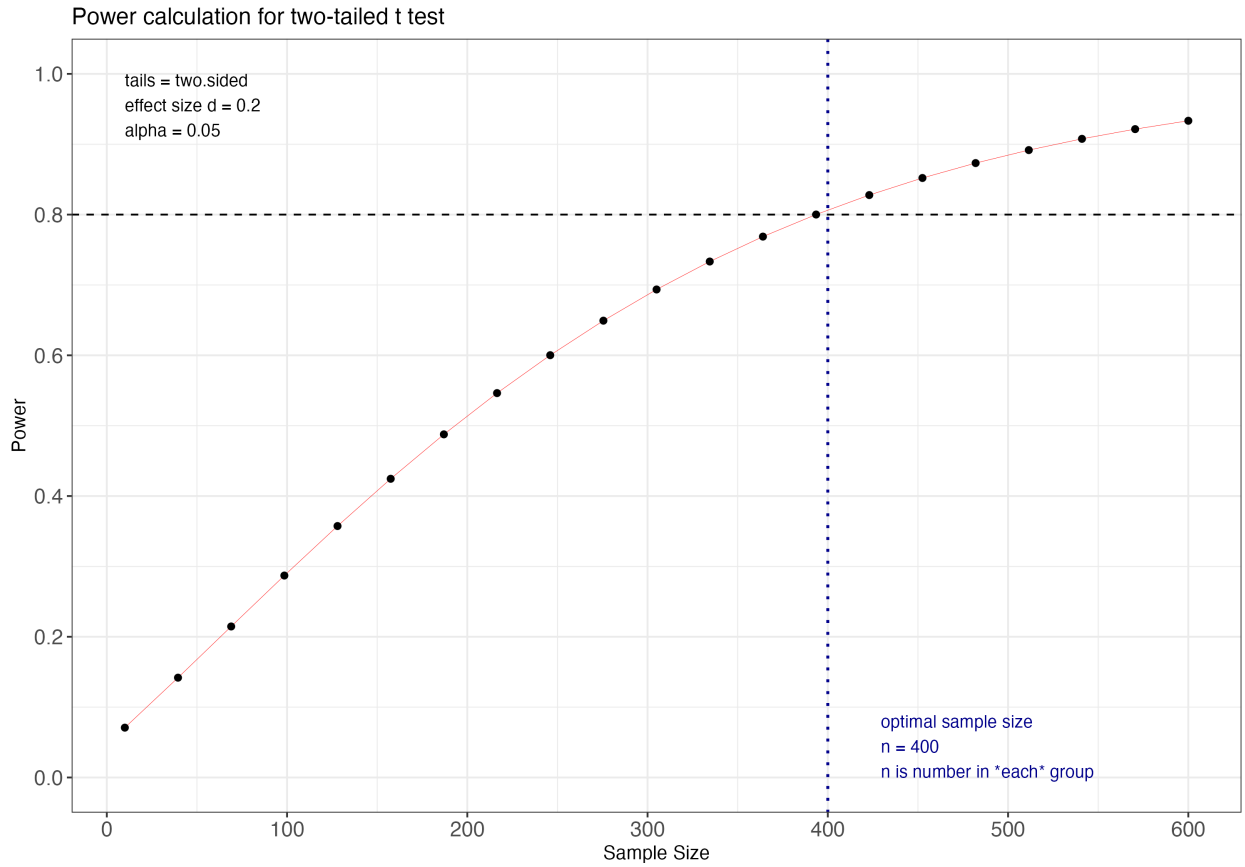
Based on previous studies conducted by Prolific, we assume a 10-20% attrition rate between wave 1 and wave 2. We therefore expect approximately 1000 participants to complete both wave 1 and wave 2, roughly 500 in each condition.

A power calculation using the pwr package suggests that with a small effect size of $d = 0.2$, conventional power of 0.8, and conventional levels of statistical significance $\alpha = 0.05$, 400 participants per condition (800 total) would be sufficiently powered to detect treatment effects of small magnitudes. Figure 8 below illustrates this.

For hypothesis 1c, we plan comparing the three treatment conditions to each other. In that case, a power calculation for one-way ANOVA with three groups shows that a total

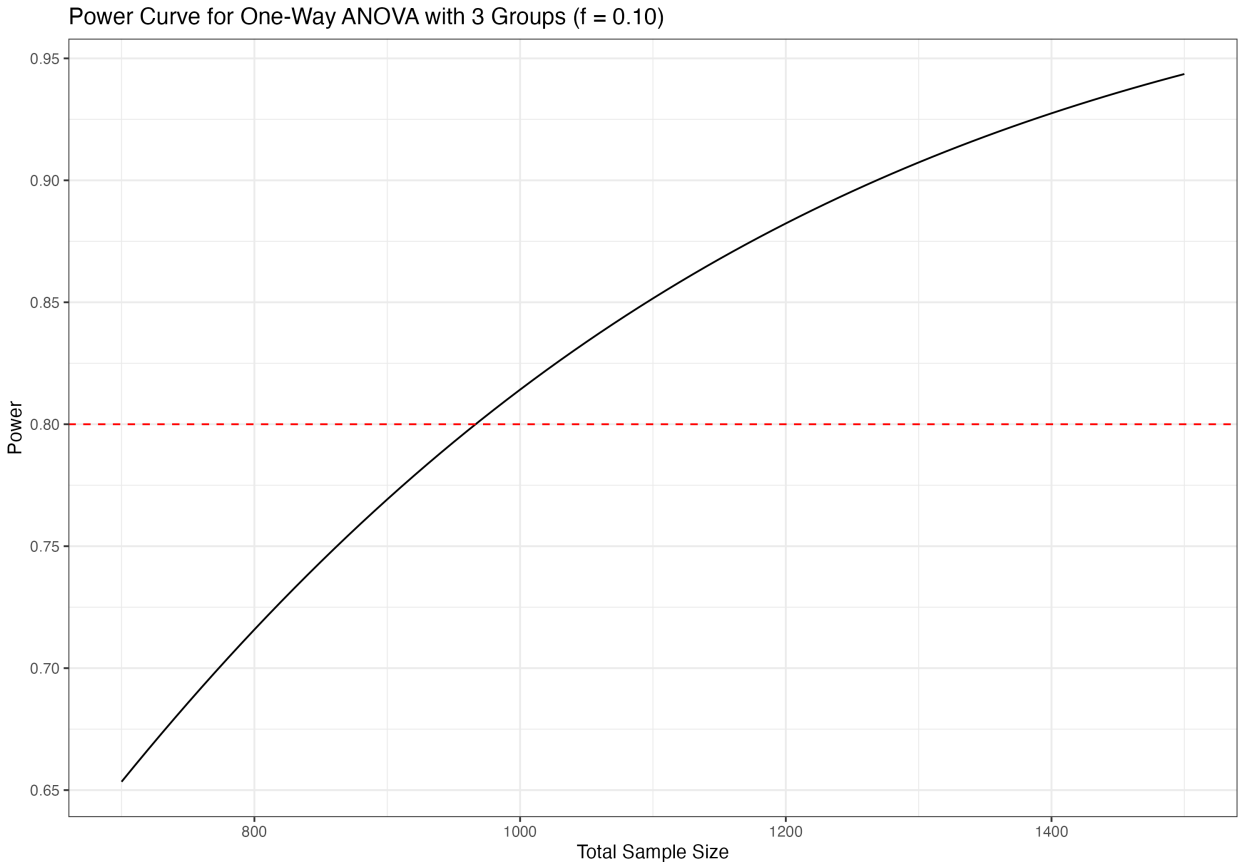
sample size of 1000 would be sufficient to detect small effect sizes (f=0.10). See Figure 9.

Figure 8: Power calculation and sample size considerations, t-test



Notes: Power calculation used for sample size considerations using two-sided t-tests and 0.05. The y-axis is power levels, the x-axis is sample size per condition. The red curve represents the interaction between power and sample size.

Figure 9: Power calculation and sample size considerations, ANOVA



Notes: Power calculation used for sample size considerations using ANOVA and an alpha of 0.05. The y-axis is power levels, the x-axis is the total sample size. The black curve represents the interaction between power and sample size. The dashed red line is a conventional power threshold of 0.8

2.4 Estimation

We will estimate our main treatment effect using an Intention-To-Treat (ITT) estimate, including all participants randomized into one of the two arms. We will use an unsaturated OLS specification to estimate our treatment effects:

For all hypotheses, we plan on estimating the intention to treat effect (ITT). This means that any participant who consents to participate in the study and is assigned to one of our two conditions will be included in the study even if the treatment was not properly received. We expect that given our design, the ITT will be very similar to the average

treatment effect on the treated (ATT).

For **hypothesis 1a**, estimation of the ITT will be done using a simple Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression, laid out in Equation 1. Where Y is the outcome at wave 1, an index of support for costly foreign policy or personal measures. α is the intercept, D is a binary treatment indicator, X is a matrix of pre-treatment covariates, and u are unobservables or the error term. The subscript i is the unit indicator, in our case, an individual participant. The subscript t indicates the wave number, with t_1 indicating wave 1 outcomes and t_2 indicating wave 2 outcomes. Our main specification will be without covariates (without X), however, as a robustness check, we will also report results with covariates. The parameter of interest is β_1. The main test of hypothesis 1a will use the wave 2 outcome (t_2).

$$Y_{it_2} = \alpha + \beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 X_i + u_i \tag{1}$$

To test **hypothesis 1b**, which aims to understand whether an intelligence disclosure has greater effect during wave 2 (post-invasion) compared with wave 1 (pre-invasion), we will estimate Equation 1 but using Y_{it_1} as the outcome of interest. We will then compare the results of both.

To test **hypotheses 1c and 1d**, we will use the same specification as in Equation '1. The difference is the outcome. In the case of hypothesis 1c, Y_{it_1} will be participants' perception that an invasion is likely before it actually takes place. While in the case of hypothesis 1d, Y_{it_2} will be participants' perception that the event is better interpreted via the counter-messaging narrative or the disclosure narrative.

To test **hypothesis 3**, we will modify the specification in Equation 1 by redefining D_i as a factor variable with three levels: pure control (reference category), non-evidenced disclosure, and evidenced disclosure. This allows us to separately estimate the effects

of each disclosure type relative to the control, and to test whether evidenced disclosures produce significantly different outcomes than non-evidenced ones. The model is shown in Equation 1, with covariates included as controls.

We will test **hypotheses 4a and 4c** by constructing the counter-messaging variable as a factor variable with 'no comment' as the baseline category, and 'justification' and 'denial' as two separate levels (C). To estimate whether the effect of intelligence disclosures differ across these counter-messaging conditions, we will interact C with the treatment indicator (D). The coefficient on the interaction term β_3 is the parameter of interest, comparing no comment and the two other counter-messaging strategies. Equation 2 presents specification. We will include covariates as a robustness check.

$$Y_{it_2} = \alpha + \beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 C_i + \beta_3 (D_i * C_i) + u_i \tag{2}$$

To test **hypotheses 4b and 4d**, we will estimate the same interaction model described above (Equation 2) by redefining D_i as a factor variable with three levels: pure control (reference category), non-evidenced disclosure, and evidenced disclosure. This allows us to compare the effect of each counter-messaging strategy, conditioned on whether the disclosure is presented with vivid supporting evidence or not.

2.4.1 Mediation analysis

We test hypotheses **2a, 2b, and 2c** using causal mediation analysis as implemented by Tingley et al. [2014]. We will do this by estimating two separate OLS regressions, once for each mediator, and then for the outcome including the mediator. We will then use the *mediation* package to calculate the Average Causal Mediation Effect (ACME) for each of our proposed mediators. For our primary specification we will not include covariates. We will include covariates as a robustness check.

2.4.2 Heterogeneous treatment effects

In order to estimate heterogeneous treatment effects, we will fit the following OLS model using pretreatment covariates, laid out in Equation 3. Equation 3 provides the specification. Where Y is the outcome, an index of support for costly foreign policy or personal measures. α is the intercept, D is a binary treatment indicator, Z is a pre-treatment covariate of interest (i.e. hawkishness), and u are unobservables. The subscript i is the unit indicator, in our case, an individual participant. The parameter of interest is the interaction term: β_3. We will also use this specification to extract conditional average treatment effects (CATEs). We will include covariates as a robustness check.

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 Z_i + \beta_3 (D_i * Z_i) + u_i \tag{3}$$

2.5 Measurements

2.5.1 Demographics

We collect demographic information about age, gender, race, party identification, political ideology, religious affiliation, and education.

2.5.2 Moderators and pretreatment variables

Militant Assertiveness / Hawkishness To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? (1-5 point scale)

- The best way to ensure world peace is through US military strength.
- The use of military force only makes problems worse (reverse-coded).
- Going to war is unfortunate, but sometimes the only solution to international problems.

We will standardize and average these three statements into a single scale for hawkishness with higher values indicating greater hawkishness/militant assertiveness.

Trust To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? (1-5 point scale)

- Information provided by the U.S. *Government* is generally reliable.
- Information provided by the U.S. *Intelligence Community* is generally reliable.
- Information provided by the *Media* is generally reliable.
- Most *people* can be trusted.

National Chauvinism How warmly or coldly do you feel towards the following countries? (0-100 sliding scale)

- China
- Taiwan
- United States
- Australia
- South Korea
- Japan
- Russia

We will construct two versions of this variable. First, we will subtract the average scores of all other countries from that of the United States. We will standardize the variable. Second, we will subtract the average of the scores for U.S. adversaries (Russia and China) from the score for the United States. We will standardize the variable.

Taiwan To what extent do you agree with the following statement? (1-5 point scale)

- It is unacceptable for China to take control of Taiwan by force.
- China's claim that Taiwan is part of its territory is legitimate.
- The people of Taiwan have the right to determine their own political status, independent of China.

We will average and standardize these three questions into a single scale.

Foreign Affairs How frequently do you follow the news about the following subjects? (1-5 point scale)

- Foreign affairs
- General news
- Domestic affairs

Conspiracy thinking Conspiracy thinking is an additive scale (rescaled to range from 0 to 1) consisting of responses (on a 5-point scale, where 5 indicates strong agreement) to the following prompts:

- Much of our lives are being controlled by plots hatched in secret places.
- Even though we live in a democracy, a few people will always run things anyway.
- The people who really "run" the country are not known to the voters.
- Big events like wars and the outcomes of elections are controlled by small groups of people who are working in secret against the rest of us.

2.5.3 Manipulation check

We ask a comprehension question appropriate for each treatment.

2.5.4 Outcome measurements

Policy Outcome To what extent do you favor or oppose each of the following U.S. responses? (1-5 scale from "strongly oppose" to "strongly favor")

- Imposing economic sanctions against China
- Increasing military aid to Taiwan
- Conducting air strikes on a Chinese airfield
- Declaring war on China

We will create the dependent variable by standardizing and averaging these four items into a single index of costly policy.

Personal Costs To what extent do you favor or oppose the following actions (1-5 scale from “strongly oppose” to “strongly favor”):

- Enlist in the armed services yourself
- A close family member enlist in the armed services
- Boycott products made in China

We will create the dependent variable by standardizing and averaging these three items into a single index of personal costs.

2.5.5 Mediator measurements

Prediction Wave 1 How likely do you think it is that China will invade Taiwan in the near future?

- Extremely likely
- Somewhat likely

- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Extremely unlikely

Prediction Wave 2 Which statement do you think best describes the event above?

- China is the aggressor because it invaded Taiwan based on a lie
- Taiwan is the aggressor because it downed a Chinese helicopter
- War has broken out and it is too early to know what has happened

Reputation If the US does not respond to the attack, how likely do you think it is that each of the following things will happen? (1-5 point scale)

- US reputation will suffer
- Other countries will be emboldened to attack the US and its allies
- Allies will lose trust in America's commitment to their security.
- The US will lose influence in global affairs.

We will average and standardize the four questions into a single reputation variable.

Threat [urgency] With which statement about the Taiwan situation do you agree more?

- It requires immediate action to prevent further escalation (1).
- It is better to wait and see how events unfold (0).

This is a binary indicator.

Threat [priority] How strongly do you agree with the following statements?

- Protecting U.S. economic stability is more important than confronting China over Taiwan.
- Protecting U.S. troops is more important than confronting China over Taiwan.
- The costs of economic and military action against China is justified given the seriousness of the threat. (reverse-coded)

We will average and standardize the three questions into a single threat priority variable.

3 Ethics

This study received an exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review from Brown University (Protocol Number: STUDY00000776) on May 7, 2025.

4 Full Survey Instrument

BROWN

Informed Consent

You are invited to take part in a Brown University research study. You are being asked to be in this study because you are part of the Prolific panel, are over 18 years old, and U.S. citizen.

PURPOSE: The study is about hypothetical **foreign policy crises** and will take 5-10 minutes to complete.

PROCEDURES: You will be asked to read descriptions of a hypothetical crisis and answer questions about your opinions. It is critical that you read the scenarios assigned into one of two conditions which offer different versions of the same crisis. This is similar to flipping a coin. The study is designed so that the crisis you read about will be randomly assigned. We guarantee that will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. **We will recruited you 24-48 hours after you completed the first wave,** meaning you take a short follow-up survey that will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

RISK AVOIDED: The study will take approximately **17-20 minutes** to complete, including both waves. **Please proceed only if you can commit to completing both waves.** Your data will be kept confidential, secure, and identifiable potential.

COMPENSATION: You will be compensated at one of two rates through Prolific, depending on your completion of the study. We will compensate you $12/hour if you complete the second wave within 24-48 hours of completing the first wave. If you do not complete the second wave, we will pay you $10/hour if you fail to complete the second wave.

RISKS: The study involves reading descriptions of foreign policy crises that are similar to reading the news paper. There are no reasonably foreseeable risks involved in your participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All information you provide will be kept confidential. The information you provide will be associated with your Prolific ID, but this will be kept separate from your responses. If you are in a telephone journal, it will be impossible for the research team to ascertain your identity.

BENEFITS: There are no direct benefits to participating in the study.

VOLUNTARY: You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. Even if you decide to be in the study, you can change your mind and stop at any time.

VOLUNTARY: You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. Even if you decide to be in the study, you can change your mind and stop at any time.

CONTACT: If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact the principal investigator at the following phone number, address, balance.small@brown.edu or Lab Dr. Kenan Kalkhara at rkalkhara@brown.edu, or the research team advisor, Danny Chai at dannyhchai@brown.edu.

YOUR RIGHTS: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Office of Human Research Protection Program at 401-863-2603 or email at IRB@Brown.edu.

Clicking the below confirms that you have read and understood the information in this document, are over 18 years old, and that you agree to volunteer as a research participant for the study.

Do you consent to participate in the study?

- Yes, I agree to participate and consent to all of the above
- No, I do not want to participate and do not consent to all of the above

Demographics

Please enter your age in years.

_____

Do you describe yourself as a man, a woman, or in some other way?

- Man
- Woman
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer not to say

What racial or ethnic group best describes you?

- Group
- Black
- Hispanic/Latino
- Asian
- Native American
- Middle Eastern
- Mixed Race
- Other
- Multiple ethnicities

Which party best describes your ideal identity?

- Democratic Party
- I do not have Ideologies
- Prefer not to say

What is your present religion, if any?

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- 2-year degree
- 4-year degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate degree

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Something Else
- Not sure
- Not applicable

If you had to choose between the two right now, would you consider yourself closer to a Republican or a Democrat?

- Republican
- Democrat

How would you describe your political ideology?

- Liberal
- Moderate
- Conservative
- Not Ideologically

Pretreatment covariates

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

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Politics is too complicated to understand what is going on					
Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that I can't understand what is going on					
I feel I have a good understanding of the important political issues facing our country					
I feel I have a good understanding of the important political issues facing our country					

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Government officials care much about what people like me think					
Government officials care much about what people like me think					
People like me have no say in what the government does					
People like me have no say in what the government does					

How warmly or coldly do you feel towards the following countries/regions? With 0 being very cold and 100 being very warm.

Warm-Cold	Data Value
Taiwan	Warmth
Taiwan	Warmth
United States	Warmth
United States	Warmth
South Korea	Warmth
South Korea	Warmth
Russia	Warmth
Russia	Warmth
Hong Kong	Warmth
Hong Kong	Warmth

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The government's policies toward Taiwan are too hawkish					
The government's policies toward Taiwan are too hawkish					
The government's policies toward Taiwan are too dovish					
The government's policies toward Taiwan are too dovish					

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Taiwan's policies toward China are too hawkish					
Taiwan's policies toward China are too hawkish					
Taiwan's policies toward China are too dovish					
Taiwan's policies toward China are too dovish					

How frequently do you follow the news about the following subjects?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Foreign Affairs					
Foreign Affairs					
Domestic Affairs					
Domestic Affairs					

Scenario_setup

Now, we will present you with a hypothetical scenario, which takes place in the **year 2030**. Write the scenario is hypothetical it is based on our best understanding of the relevant actors. Please read the scenario carefully and answer the questions about it.

Do you agree to read the scenario carefully?

- Yes
- No

detail_treat

U.S. INTELLIGENCE BELIEVES CHINA PREPARES FOR IMMINENT TAIWAN TAKEOVER

October 19th, 2030

In early Spring, U.S. intelligence agencies have detected increased Chinese naval and army activity around Taiwan, as well as indications of Chinese troop movements on the mainland. While similar activity has been observed over the past decade, the U.S. intelligence Community now believes that China is preparing a military invasion of Taiwan.

According to **anonymous sources, seven-decade, top U.S. Director of National Intelligence** has said, that "China is not ready to attack Taiwan yet, but the preparations for a military invasion are underway." Although China's military capabilities are not substantially ahead of Taiwan's military capabilities, such an undertaking of the thriving within the Chinese leadership. China is getting ready to take Taiwan by force. The United States and its allies are preparing for a crisis.

China's military has conducted a series of drills near Taiwan, and has said that it would invade if Taiwan's government refuses to begin talks on Chinese proposals to reunite China. Taiwan's President, Tsai Ing-wen, has rejected Chinese proposals, and has said that Taiwan's government will not accept a "one country, two systems" model for Taiwan.

Chinese President Xi Jinping (left) and Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen (right)

Similar drills have been observed in recent months, however, U.S. intelligence believes that this year's exercises are different. Unlike previous years, China has deployed more military personnel and equipment closer to Taiwan's coastline. The United States and its allies have also observed increased military activity and preparations, such as increased military exercises, and increased military deployments in Japan, South Korea, and Guam.

Japanese troops conduct a drill in Okinawa

The Chinese Communist Party (CPC), which rules the People's Republic of China, has long claimed that Taiwan is a part of the mainland territory. Taiwan, on the other hand, seems to consider itself an independent country since 1949, separate from CPC control.

The United States provides military aid to Taiwan, and has said that it would come to Taiwan's aid if the mainland attacks Taiwan. However, the United States has not officially recognized Taiwan as a separate country.

Observers believe that the Chinese leadership is also "listening" to Taiwan's domestic politics. Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen has lost her support, and her party, the Democratic Progressive Party, has lost its majority in the legislature. Tsai's popularity has also dropped, and her approval rating has dropped to a record low.

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control_treat

TAIWAN RISK IN THREAT EVENT

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According to the article, what have independent observers noticed?

- U.S. Intelligence Agencies
- Increased Activities in the Taiwan Strait
- The Taiwan Strait
- South Korean military aircraft

mediators_control

How likely do you think it is that China will invade Taiwan in the near future?

- Extremely unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Neither likely or unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Extremely likely

If the United States does not respond to China, how likely do you think it is that each of the following things will happen?

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely or Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
China will succeed in its efforts to take Taiwan by force					
China will succeed in its efforts to take Taiwan by force					
Taiwan will succeed in its efforts to remain independent					
Taiwan will succeed in its efforts to remain independent					
Taiwan will be forced to surrender to China					
Taiwan will be forced to surrender to China					

With which statement about the Taiwan situation do you agree more?

- A crisis is inevitable and I am pressed further escalation
- It is better to wait and see how events unfold

How strongly do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party should be more hawkish in its dealings with China					
Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party should be more hawkish in its dealings with China					
Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party should be more dovish in its dealings with China					
Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party should be more dovish in its dealings with China					

actors_treat

U.S. INTELLIGENCE BELIEVES CHINA PREPARES FOR IMMINENT TAIWAN TAKEOVER

October 19th, 2030

In early Spring, U.S. intelligence agencies have detected increased Chinese naval and army activity around Taiwan, as well as indications of Chinese troop movements on the mainland. While similar activity has been observed over the past decade, the U.S. intelligence Community now believes that China is preparing a military invasion of Taiwan.

According to **anonymous sources, seven-decade, top U.S. Director of National Intelligence** has said, that "China is not ready to attack Taiwan yet, but the preparations for a military invasion are underway." Although China's military capabilities are not substantially ahead of Taiwan's military capabilities, such an undertaking of the thriving within the Chinese leadership. China is getting ready to take Taiwan by force. The United States and its allies are preparing for a crisis.

China's military has conducted a series of drills near Taiwan, and has said that it would invade if Taiwan's government refuses to begin talks on Chinese proposals to reunite China. Taiwan's President, Tsai Ing-wen, has rejected Chinese proposals, and has said that Taiwan's government will not accept a "one country, two systems" model for Taiwan.

Chinese President Xi Jinping (left) and Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen (right)

Similar drills have been observed in recent months, however, U.S. intelligence believes that this year's exercises are different. Unlike previous years, China has deployed more military personnel and equipment closer to Taiwan's coastline. The United States and its allies have also observed increased military activity and preparations, such as increased military exercises, and increased military deployments in Japan, South Korea, and Guam.

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The Chinese Communist Party (CPC), which rules the People's Republic of China, has long claimed that Taiwan is a part of the mainland territory. Taiwan, on the other hand, seems to consider itself an independent country since 1949, separate from CPC control.

The United States provides military aid to Taiwan, and has said that it would come to Taiwan's aid if the mainland attacks Taiwan. However, the United States has not officially recognized Taiwan as a separate country.

Observers believe that the Chinese leadership is also "listening" to Taiwan's domestic politics. Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen has lost her support, and her party, the Democratic Progressive Party, has lost its majority in the legislature. Tsai's popularity has also dropped, and her approval rating has dropped to a record low.

According to the article, who believes that China is preparing to invade Taiwan?

- U.S. Intelligence Agencies
- Independent observers
- The government of Taiwan
- Chinese Chinese citizens

mediators_treat

How likely do you think it is that China will invade Taiwan in the near future?

- Extremely unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Neither likely or unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Extremely likely

If the United States does not respond to China, how likely do you think it is that each of the following things will happen?

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely or Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
China will succeed in its efforts to take Taiwan by force					
China will succeed in its efforts to take Taiwan by force					
Taiwan will succeed in its efforts to remain independent					
Taiwan will succeed in its efforts to remain independent					
Taiwan will be forced to surrender to China					
Taiwan will be forced to surrender to China					

With which statement about the Taiwan situation do you agree more?

- A crisis is inevitable and I am pressed further escalation
- It is better to wait and see how events unfold

How strongly do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party should be more hawkish in its dealings with China					
Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party should be more hawkish in its dealings with China					
Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party should be more dovish in its dealings with China					
Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party should be more dovish in its dealings with China					

Debrief

Thank you for participating in our survey. As a reminder, we will be contacting you again in the next 24-48 hours to ask some additional questions.

Is there anything you would like to add about your experience taking the survey?

_____

Powered by Qualtrics

BROWN

Welcome_back

Welcome back to our study! As a reminder, we are interested in your views regarding foreign policy crises. Below, we present additional information about the hypothetical China-Taiwan crisis that we told you about during the first part of the study. This wave of the study will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

Are you prepared to continue with the study?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

War in Taiwan Straits

WAR IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT
November 10th, 2030

War has broken out in the Taiwan Strait. The Taiwanese Defense Ministry has claimed via a spokesperson that a Chinese invasion of Taiwan has started: "We have been unjustifiably invaded by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)." Chinese forces have been spotted in Taiwan, where they encountered fierce resistance from Taiwanese defenders. A Pentagon spokesperson has also confirmed that China has invaded Taiwan.

The fighting has followed months of tensions in the Strait. Observers have noted a Chinese military buildup for several months. Approximately one week ago, a Chinese helicopter was downed near the island of Taiwan, and the pilot was killed. The Chinese government accused Taiwan of shooting down the helicopter unprovoked, although Taiwan has denied this allegation, calling it a "transparent and false pretext to justify aggression." In response, China has imposed a maritime blockade against Taiwan.

In the past 36 hours, there have been reports of gunfights throughout the island of Taiwan although telecommunications disruptions have made confirmation of these reports difficult. The United States Government is currently weighing different responses and has placed its U.S. forces in the Asia Pacific theater on high alert.

Through a spokesperson, the Chinese government has denied that it has invaded Taiwan: "There is no basis for these false assertions by warmongers. The People's Liberation Army has imposed a blockade on Taiwan in response to the downing of the helicopter and is conducting special operations to enforce the blockade."

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A Chinese Government spokesperson has released the following statement: "Today, the People's Liberation Army launched a targeted operation in the Taiwan Strait to uphold national sovereignty and restore stability in the face of escalating separatist activities and foreign interference. For years, Beijing has shown restraint, but recent collusion between Taiwanese authorities and external forces has crossed a red line with the downing of our helicopter. Taiwan is an inseparable part of China's territory, recognized by the international community under the One China Principle."

WAR IN THE TAIWAN STRAITS
November 10th, 2030

War has broken out in the Taiwan Straits. The Taiwanese Defense Ministry has claimed via a spokesperson that a Chinese invasion of Taiwan has started: "We have been unjustifiably invaded by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)." Chinese forces have been spotted in Taiwan, where they encountered fierce resistance from Taiwanese defenders. A Pentagon spokesperson has also confirmed that China has invaded Taiwan.

The fighting has followed months of tensions in the Straits. Observers have noted a Chinese military buildup for several months. Approximately one week ago, a Chinese helicopter was downed near the island of Taiwan, and the pilot was killed. The Chinese government accused Taiwan of shooting down the helicopter unprovoked, although Taiwan has denied this allegation, calling it a "transparent and false pretext to justify aggression." In response, China has imposed a maritime blockade against Taiwan.

In the past 36 hours, there have been reports of gunfights throughout the island of Taiwan although telecommunications disruptions have made confirmation of these reports difficult. The United States Government is currently weighing different responses and has placed its U.S. forces in the Asia Pacific theater on high alert.

The Chinese government has declined to respond to repeated requests for comment on the matter.

What was the response of the Chinese government to the report above?

- ◯ Denied invading Taiwan
- ◯ Justified an invasion of Taiwan
- ◯ Declined to comment

outcomes

To what extent do you favor or oppose each of the following U.S. responses to the situation?

	Strongly oppose	Oppose	Neither favor nor oppose	Favor	Strongly favor
Publicly condemning China	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Imposing economic sanctions against China	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Increasing military aid to Taiwan	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Conducting air strikes on a Chinese airfield	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Declaring war on China	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

To what extent are you likely or unlikely to do the following in the situation?

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Likely	Very likely
Enlist in the armed services yourself	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Encourage a family member to enlist in the armed services	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Boycott products made in China	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Which statement do you think best describes the event above?

- ◯ War has broken out and it is too early to know what has happened
- ◯ Taiwan is the aggressor because it chose a Chinese helicopter
- ◯ China is the aggressor because it invaded Taiwan based on a lie

If the United States does not respond to China, how likely do you think it is that each of the following things will happen?

	Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
U.S. reputation will suffer	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The U.S. will lose influence in global affairs	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other countries will be emboldened to attack the U.S. and its allies	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Allies will lose trust in America's commitment to their security	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

With which statement about the Taiwan situation do you agree more?

- ◯ It requires immediate action to prevent further escalation
- ◯ It is better to wait and see how events unfold

How strongly do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Protecting U.S. economic stability is more important than confronting China over Taiwan	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The costs of economic and military action against China is justified given the seriousness of the threat	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Protecting U.S. troops is more important than confronting China over Taiwan	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Debrief

Thank you for participating in our survey. Is there anything else you would like us to know about your participation in the study?

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