

*Supplementary Materials*

**Us and Them: Foreign Threat  
and Domestic Polarization**

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# Study 1

## Robustness

### Hypothesis 1

Table 1 demonstrates that the results for  $H_1$  hold when controlling for other factors (model 1), disaggregating the index measure of polarization into views towards Democratic/Republican “elected officials”, “voters”, and President Biden (models 2-4),<sup>1</sup> and measuring out-group favorability specifically rather than affective polarization more generally (model 5;  $p = 0.052$ ).

**Table 1:** Study 1, Hypothesis 1 Robustness Tests

	(1) Avg Polarization	(2) Elected Polarization	(3) Voter Polarization	(4) Biden Polarization	(5) Outgroup Favorability
Vivid vs. Abstract Threat Treatment	-6.667** (3.104)	-9.182*** (3.341)	-5.556 (3.474)	-7.807** (3.543)	4.749* (2.443)
Stronger Republican	1.302* (0.720)				
Hawkishness	-0.278 (1.752)				
Education	-1.009 (0.817)				
Income	-0.138 (0.244)				
Age	0.296*** (0.099)				
Female	11.177*** (3.297)				
White	-0.924 (4.034)				
News Engagement	7.244*** (2.153)				
Constant	11.984 (9.782)	52.838*** (2.167)	51.415*** (2.389)	55.062*** (2.294)	25.575*** (1.658)
Observations	465	468	468	468	468

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. \* $p < 0.10$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>1</sup>The p-value for model 3 is just slightly above conventional levels of statistical significance ( $p = 0.11$ ). For model 4 we replace ratings for “Democratic Party elected officials” with ratings for Biden.

## Hypothesis 2

Table 2 demonstrates that the results for  $H_2$  (when comparing the vivid threat / elite agreement treatment to the vivid threat treatment) hold when controlling for other factors (model 1), disaggregating the index measure of polarization into views towards Democratic/Republican “elected officials”, “voters”, and President Biden (models 2-4),<sup>2</sup> and measuring out-group favorability specifically rather than affective polarization more generally (model 5).<sup>3</sup>

**Table 2:** Study 1, Hypothesis 2 Robustness Tests

	(1) Avg Polarization	(2) Elected Polarization	(3) Voter Polarization	(4) Biden Polarization	(5) Outgroup Favorability	(6) China Threat (All)	(7) China Threat (Dems)	(8) China Threat (All)
Vivid Threat + Elite Agreement vs. Vivid Threat Treatment	-8.441** (3.331)	-7.134* (3.650)	-12.110*** (3.566)	-7.541** (3.825)	4.257 (2.673)	0.149 (0.130)	0.345* (0.190)	-0.052 (0.159)
Vivid Threat + Elite Agreement vs. Vivid Threat × Democrat								0.464* (0.247)
Stronger Republican	1.342* (0.769)							
Hawkishness	-1.946 (1.823)							0.311*** (0.077)
White	-0.527 (4.454)							0.417** (0.172)
News Engagement	5.296** (2.179)							0.113 (0.076)
Female	4.864 (3.448)							-0.228* (0.135)
Education	-0.535 (0.882)							-0.017 (0.034)
Income	-0.363 (0.255)							0.010 (0.010)
Age	0.362*** (0.101)							0.016*** (0.003)
Democrat								-0.463** (0.190)
Constant	16.561 (10.768)	43.656*** (2.544)	45.859*** (2.522)	47.256*** (2.701)	30.324*** (1.794)	5.413*** (0.094)	5.130*** (0.138)	3.350*** (0.388)
Observations	429	430	430	430	430	532	249	528

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. \*p<0.10; \*\*p< 0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01.

<sup>2</sup>For model 4 we replace ratings for “Democratic Party elected officials” with ratings for Biden.

<sup>3</sup>The p-value for model 5 is just slightly above conventional levels of statistical significance (p = 0.11).

These findings also shed some light on which mechanism(s) may be driving  $H_2$ . Given that model 4 shows the treatment generally increases out-group favorability, that provides some evidence for the social identity mechanism. Models 6-8 assess whether the information mechanism may also be at work. Do elite cues shift views about whether China is a threat and help validate the threat stimuli? Model 6 illustrates that there is no statistically significant evidence for this argument among the sample as a whole ( $p = 0.25$ ). However, models 7 and 8 show that the information mechanism may help explain the results for Democratic (but not Republican) respondents. Elite cues significantly shift Democratic respondents' beliefs about whether China is a threat (model 7) and do so to a greater extent than Republican respondents (model 8). This divergence is likely due to the fact that Republicans already have relatively high threat perceptions towards China, and thus further priming the threat via elite cues has a smaller marginal impact on Republican respondents' views due to ceiling effects. In summary, there is some evidence for both the social identity and information mechanisms, but evidence for the latter is restricted to Democratic respondents. Even though the information mechanism may only hold among Democratic respondents, there is not statistically significant evidence that the reduction in affective polarization that results from elite cues is larger among Democrats than Republicans.

Table 3 demonstrates that the results for  $H_2$  (when comparing the vivid threat / elite agreement treatment to the vivid threat / elite disagreement treatment) hold when controlling for other factors (model 1), disaggregating the index measure of polarization into views towards Democratic/Republican “elected officials”, “voters”, and President Biden (models 2-4),<sup>4</sup> and measuring out-group favorability specifically rather than affective polarization more generally (model 5).

These findings also shed some light on which mechanism(s) may be driving  $H_2$ . As above, there is some evidence for both the social identity and information mechanisms, but evidence for the latter is restricted to Democratic respondents.

**Table 3:** Study 1, Hypothesis 2 Robustness Tests (Continued)

	(1) Avg Polarization	(2) Elected Polarization	(3) Voter Polarization	(4) Biden Polarization	(5) Outgroup Favorability	(6) China Threat (All)	(7) China Threat (Dems)	(8) China Threat (All)
Vivid Threat + Elite Agreement vs. Vivid Threat + Elite Disagreement Treatment	-13.265*** (3.188)	-13.014*** (3.505)	-14.449*** (3.593)	-11.430*** (3.677)	9.311*** (2.533)	0.029 (0.129)	0.354* (0.190)	-0.134 (0.160)
Vivid Threat + Elite Agreement vs. Vivid Threat + Elite Disagreement × Democrat								0.535** (0.240)
Stronger Republican	1.308* (0.698)							
Hawkishness	-1.511 (1.831)							0.288*** (0.081)
White	5.219 (4.516)							0.638*** (0.166)
News Engagement	2.330 (2.151)							0.107 (0.077)
Female	0.384 (3.217)							-0.048 (0.123)
Education	-0.083 (0.913)							0.018 (0.033)
Income	-0.745*** (0.251)							-0.002 (0.010)
Age	0.552*** (0.091)							0.011*** (0.003)
Democrat								-0.548*** (0.177)
Constant	19.740** (10.017)	49.536*** (2.332)	48.198*** (2.560)	51.144*** (2.486)	25.270*** (1.577)	5.534*** (0.092)	5.121*** (0.139)	3.420*** (0.361)
Observations	424	425	425	425	425	502	234	499

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. \* $p < 0.10$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>4</sup>For model 4 we replace ratings for “Democratic Party elected officials” with ratings for Biden.

### Hypothesis 3

Table 4 demonstrates that the results for  $H_3$  hold when controlling for other factors (model 1), disaggregating the index measure of polarization into views towards Democratic/Republican “elected officials”, “voters”, and President Biden (models 2-4),<sup>5</sup> and measuring out-group favorability specifically rather than affective polarization more generally (model 5).

**Table 4:** Study 1, Hypothesis 3 Robustness Tests

	(1) Avg Polarization	(2) Elected Polarization	(3) Voter Polarization	(4) Biden Polarization	(5) Outgroup Favorability
Vivid Threat + Elite Agreement vs. Control Treatment	-7.201** (3.198)	-9.109*** (3.494)	-9.978*** (3.445)	-8.293** (3.529)	5.897** (2.528)
Stronger Republican	0.437 (0.711)				
Hawkishness	-4.197** (1.771)				
White	4.923 (4.193)				
News Engagement	5.526*** (2.061)				
Female	1.983 (3.267)				
Education	-0.698 (0.892)				
Income	-0.015 (0.260)				
Age	0.451*** (0.087)				
Constant	16.631* (9.773)	45.631*** (2.316)	43.727*** (2.349)	48.008*** (2.263)	28.685*** (1.570)
Observations	461	463	463	463	463

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. \* $p < 0.10$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>5</sup>For model 4 we replace ratings for “Democratic Party elected officials” with ratings for Biden.

## Heterogeneous Effects

### Hypothesis 1

Table 5 analyzes whether the reduction in polarization in the vivid China threat treatment compared to the abstract threat treatment is significantly stronger or weaker depending on various respondent characteristics. For simplicity, we only display the interaction effects, but all models include our full suite of control variables. We find no evidence for heterogeneous effects based on political identification, hawkishness, education, income, gender, age, race, or news engagement.

**Table 5:** Study 1, Hypothesis 1 Heterogeneous Effects

	Average Polarization							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Treatment × Stronger Republican	1.013 (1.247)							
Treatment × Hawkishness		0.411 (3.219)						
Treatment × Education			0.963 (1.527)					
Treatment × Income				0.215 (0.398)				
Treatment × Female					-1.066 (6.277)			
Treatment × Age						-0.074 (0.180)		
Treatment × White							2.272 (7.237)	
Treatment × News Engagement								3.607 (4.001)
Observations	465	465	465	465	465	465	465	465

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. \*p<0.10; \*\*p< 0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01.

## Vivid Threat vs. Control Treatment

Table 6 analyzes whether the difference in polarization in the vivid China threat treatment compared to the control condition is significantly stronger or weaker depending on a respondent's political identification. Per the discussion in the main text, we find that polarization is significantly higher for Republican respondents than it is for Democratic respondents (model 3).

**Table 6:** Study 1, Hypothesis 2 Heterogeneous Effects

	Average Polarization		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Vivid vs. Control Treatment (Democrats)	-5.081 (4.613)		
Vivid vs. Control Treatment (Republicans)		6.766 (4.463)	
Vivid vs. Control Treatment × Republican			11.241* (6.202)
Vivid vs. Control Treatment			-4.001 (4.304)
Republican			0.686 (4.378)
Hawkishness			-3.197* (1.711)
White			4.738 (4.012)
News Engagement			8.892*** (2.151)
Female			8.118** (3.326)
Education			-0.483 (0.835)
Income			0.067 (0.249)
Age			0.323*** (0.090)
Constant	45.325*** (3.274)	44.150*** (3.001)	4.939 (9.395)
Observations	248	239	484

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. \*p<0.10; \*\*p< 0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01.



## Hypothesis 2

Table 7 analyzes whether the reduction in polarization in the vivid China threat / elite agreement treatment compared to the vivid China threat / elite disagreement treatment is significantly stronger or weaker depending on various respondent characteristics. For simplicity, we only display the interaction effects, but all models include our full suite of control variables. We find no evidence for heterogeneous effects based on hawkishness, education, income, gender, age, or news engagement. We do find some evidence of heterogeneous effects for political identification ( $p = 0.098$ ) and race ( $p = 0.091$ ). Specifically, the treatment reduces polarization to a greater extent for individuals that are stronger Republicans and those that are white. The former finding is particularly noteworthy, but two caveats are in order. First, the interaction effect is not robust to using a binary variable indicating whether a respondent is a Republican rather than the full 7-point measure of political identification deployed in model 1. Second, although the treatment has a greater impact on stronger Republicans, the reduction of polarization does remain statistically significant if we split the sample out into Republicans and Democrats. Thus, it's not the case that polarization goes down for Republican respondents but not Democratic respondents.

**Table 7:** Study 1, Hypothesis 2 Heterogeneous Effects

	Average Polarization							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Treatment × Stronger Republican	-2.270*							
	(1.367)							
Treatment × Hawkishness		-3.021						
		(3.551)						
Treatment × Education			-0.039					
			(1.661)					
Treatment × Income				0.093				
				(0.413)				
Treatment × Female					0.565			
					(6.372)			
Treatment × Age						-0.197		
						(0.179)		
Treatment × White							-14.231*	
							(8.388)	
Treatment × News Engagement								-2.197
								(3.935)
Observations	424	424	424	424	424	424	424	424

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. \*p<0.10; \*\*p< 0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01.

### Hypothesis 3

Table 8 analyzes whether the reduction in polarization in the vivid China threat / elite agreement treatment compared to the control condition is significantly stronger or weaker depending on various respondent characteristics. For simplicity, we only display the interaction effects, but all models include our full suite of control variables. We find no evidence for heterogeneous effects based on political identification, hawkishness, education, gender, age, or race. We do find some evidence of heterogeneous effects for income ( $p = 0.096$ ) and news engagement ( $p = 0.036$ ). Specifically, the treatment reduces polarization to a greater extent for higher income individuals and those that pay greater attention to the news. The latter finding is particularly interesting and could be an avenue for future research. Perhaps respondents that pay greater attention to the news have at least a passing familiarity with the China threat, and thus are more open to being persuaded by the treatment that the severity of the threat is quite high. By contrast, those that pay less attention to the news may be more skeptical about the severity of the China threat, even when presented with the information contained in the treatment.

**Table 8:** Study 1, Hypothesis 3 Heterogeneous Effects

	Average Polarization							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Treatment $\times$ Stronger Republican	-0.019 (1.383)							
Treatment $\times$ Hawkishness		0.651 (3.448)						
Treatment $\times$ Education			-2.044 (1.585)					
Treatment $\times$ Income				-0.709* (0.424)				
Treatment $\times$ Female					-1.313 (6.437)			
Treatment $\times$ Age						-0.053 (0.176)		
Treatment $\times$ White							-13.130 (8.121)	
Treatment $\times$ News Engagement								-8.175** (3.881)
Observations	461	461	461	461	461	461	461	461

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. \* $p < 0.10$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

## Sample Composition

**Table 9:** Study 1 Sample Composition

Variable	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Political Identification <sup>a</sup>	3.80	1	3	7
Militant Assertiveness	3.46	1	3.5	5
White	0.77	0	1	1
News Engagement	3.20	1	3	4
Female	0.51	0	1	1
Education <sup>b</sup>	4.60	1	5	8
Income <sup>c</sup>	9.65	1	8	24
Age	45.74	18	43	94

a. 1 = Strong Democrat; 7 = Strong Republican

b. 1 = Some high school or less; 2 = High school graduate; 3 = Post-high school vocational training; 4 = Some college; 5 = Associate's degree; 6 = Bachelor's degree; 7 = Master's or professional degree; 8 = Doctoral degree

c. 1 = 0-15k; 2 = 15-20k; 3 = 20-25k; 4 = 25-30k; 5 = 30-35k; 6 = 35-40k; 7 = 40-45k; 8 = 45-50k; 9 = 50-55k; 10 = 55-60k; 11 = 60-65k; 12 = 65-70k; 13 = 70-75k; 14 = 75-80k; 15 = 80-85k; 16 = 85-90k; 17 = 90-95k; 18 = 95-100k; 19 = 100-125k; 20 = 125-150k; 21 = 150-175k; 22 = 175-200k; 23 = 200-250k; 24 = 250k+

## Questionnaire

[Some Demographic Information Collected by [Lucid](#)]

### Informed Consent<sup>6</sup>

Please read the following consent form:

This is a study on public opinion. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate or to end participation at any time for any reason.

There are no known or anticipated risks to you for participating. The researcher will not know your name or contact information. The survey is therefore anonymous

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

---



### Pre-Treatment Questions

- Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a...
  - Democrat
  - Republican
  - Independent
  - Other
  
- Would you call yourself a...<sup>7</sup>
  - Strong Democrat
  - Not so strong Democrat
  
- Would you call yourself a...<sup>8</sup>
  - Strong Republican
  - Not so strong Republican

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<sup>6</sup>If respondents answer “No” to the consent, then they are removed from the study.

<sup>7</sup>This question is only presented to respondents who chose “Democrat” for the first question in this section.

<sup>8</sup>This question is only presented to respondents who chose “Republican” for the first question in this section.

- Do you think of yourself as closer to the...<sup>9</sup>
  - The Democratic Party
  - The Republican Party
  - Neither party
  
- In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?
  - Extremely liberal
  - Liberal
  - Slightly Liberal
  - Moderate, middle of the road
  - Slightly Conservative
  - Conservative
  - Extremely conservative

To what extent do you agree with the following?<sup>10</sup>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>The best way to ensure peace is through American military strength</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Going to war is unfortunate, but sometimes the only solution to international problems</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Some people seem to follow what’s going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there’s an election going on or not. Others aren’t that interested. Would you say you follow what’s going on in government and public affairs...
  - Most of the time
  - Some of the time
  - Only now and then
  - Hardly at all

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<sup>9</sup>This question is only presented to respondents who chose “Independent” or “Other” for the first question in this section.

<sup>10</sup>The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

## Attention Screener

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?<sup>11</sup>

- Black
- Red
- Pink
- Green
- Blue

## Treatment Conditions<sup>12</sup>

On the next page, you will read statements based on real, recent reports from non-partisan military, intelligence, and diplomatic officials in the U.S. government. Please read this information carefully because you will be asked questions to check your memory and comprehension.

### *Abstract China Threat*

- China is aggressively expanding its economic and military influence, as well as its nuclear capabilities
- China is using its intelligence services to steal information and spy on U.S. citizens
- China has the ability to launch cyber attacks that can disrupt critical infrastructure, such as electric grids or natural gas pipelines, in the United States

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<sup>11</sup>If respondents do not choose both “red” and “green”, then they are removed from the study.

<sup>12</sup>Respondents are randomly assigned to treatment conditions. There is also a pure control condition where respondents are presented with no information.

## CHINA'S PUSH FOR GLOBAL POWER

The Chinese Communist Party will continue its strategy to spread China's influence around the world, undercut the influence of the United States, drive wedges between Washington and its allies and partners, and foster new international norms that favor the authoritarian Chinese system.

### Regional Activities

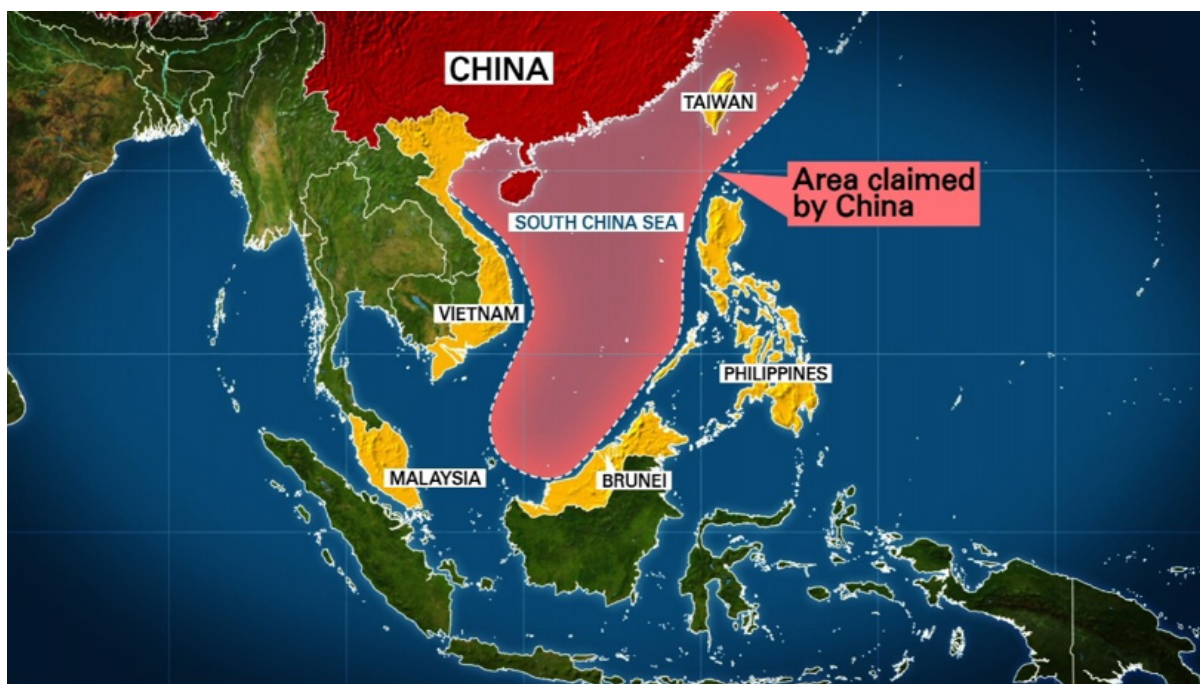
China uses a range of tools to demonstrate its growing strength and compel regional neighbors to acquiesce to Beijing's preferences, including China's claims over disputed territory.

China Deploys Tens of Thousands of Troops to Disputed Border with India. China occupied contested border areas between China and India in 2020. Beijing's action was the most serious escalation in decades, and triggered fighting that killed twenty Indian soldiers.

China's Expansive Claims in the South China Sea. Beijing continues to assert its control over the South China Sea and intimidate rivals using growing numbers of air and naval capabilities. China is also pressuring Japan over contested areas in the East China Sea.

China Asserts Sovereignty Over Taiwan. Beijing is pressing Taiwan to unify with China and condemns engagement between the United States and Taiwan.

Here is a map of the areas claimed by China, which extend extremely close to the borders of other countries and far from the current borders of China.





## Military Capabilities

China seeks to become a global military power.

China is Rapidly Expanding Its Nuclear Arsenal. In the next decade, Beijing intends to at least double its number of nuclear weapons. Beijing is not interested in arms control agreements that restrict its plans.

China Now Has the Largest Navy and Army in the World. China has approximately 350 ships and submarines, versus the U.S. Navy's 293 ships. China also has the biggest armed forces in the world with over 600,000 more military personnel than the United States (around 2 million to 1.4 million).

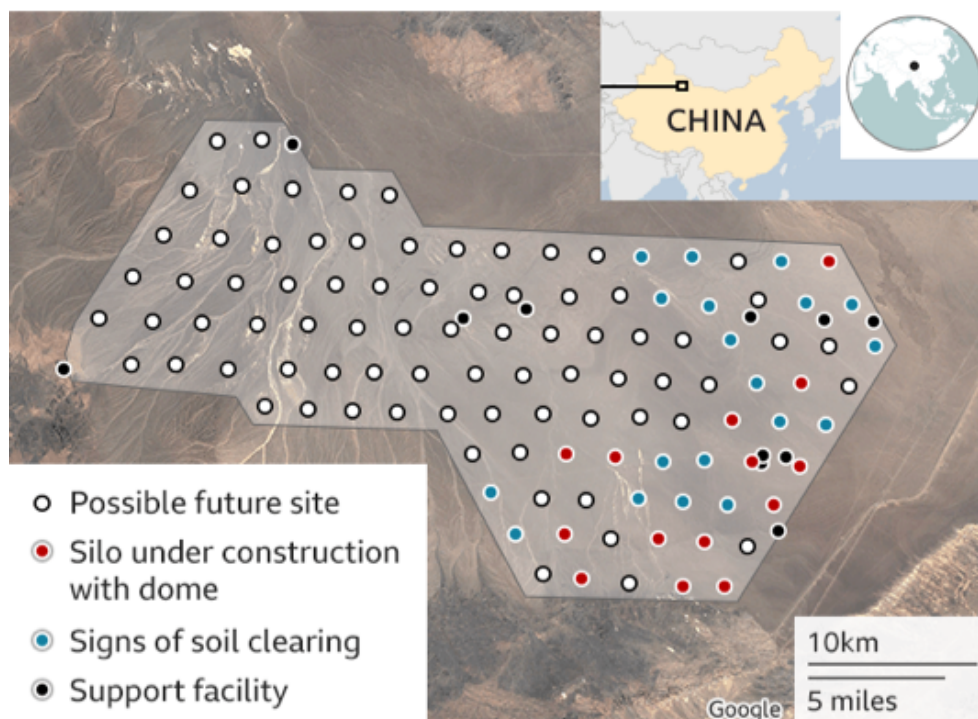
China Opens Its First Overseas Military Base in Djibouti. China has built its first overseas military facility in Djibouti in Africa and is looking to construct more bases and facilities in Africa, Europe, and Asia.

China Built Replicas of US Aircraft Carriers for Target Practice. In order to test and further develop their anti-ship missile capabilities, China has built replicas of a Nimitz-class American aircraft carrier and two guided missile destroyers for target practice.

Here is a satellite image of a new nuclear missile silo field that China is building. Experts estimate that China can house over 100 nuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles in these silos.

### China building missile field

Missile silo field under construction



Here is a photo of the kind of nuclear missile that China could store in these new silos. These missiles can reach and cause significant damage to almost any American city. The United States currently has no effective defense against such a missile strike.



Here is a satellite image of the replica US aircraft carrier the Chinese military has built for target practice.



## Cyber

China presents a major cyber threat as Beijing seeks to suppress US web content that Beijing views as undermining its internal control, and as Beijing uses new technologies to strengthen authoritarianism around the world.

China Conducts Cyber Attacks Against the United States. Beijing routinely conducts cyber attacks that impact American citizens around the world—such as hacking journalists, stealing personal information, or attacking tools that allow free speech online—as part of its efforts to protect the power of the Communist Party.

China’s Cyber Attacks Could Disrupt Physical Infrastructure in the United States. China could launch cyber attacks that damage or destroy American infrastructure—such as shutting down a natural gas pipeline for days or weeks.

## Human Rights Abuses Within China

China is an authoritarian dictatorship in which the Communist Party is in control.

The Chinese Government is Guilty of Genocide. According to the U.S. government, China has committed genocide by imprisoning over one million of its own citizens in prison camps. Beijing has targeted the predominantly Muslim Chinese Uyghurs as well as other ethnic and religious minority groups. China has reportedly committed crimes of arbitrary imprisonment, forced labor, forced sterilization, forced abortions, rape, and torture.

Here is an image showing an internment camp in China where Uyghurs are imprisoned.



Here is an image showing Uyghurs being “re-educated” inside of a prison camp.



And here is what these prison camps look like on the inside.



### *Vivid China Threat + Elite Agreement about the Nature of the Threat*

[Respondents are first shown the vivid China threat treatment]

We are now going to give you information from a recent poll conducted on policymakers, including members of Congress and former and current executive branch officials.

Democratic and Republican Policymakers Agree about the Threat China Poses

- A majority of Republican and Democratic leaders believe China is a critical threat to the United States
- A majority of Republican and Democratic leaders believe the U.S. should not adopt a policy of friendly cooperation and engagement with China

### *Vivid China Threat + Elite Disagreement about the Nature of the Threat*

[Respondents are first shown the vivid China threat treatment]

We are now going to give you information from a recent poll conducted on policymakers, including members of Congress and former and current executive branch officials.

Democratic and Republican Policymakers Disagree about the Threat China Poses

- 85% of Republican leaders believe China is a critical threat to the United States, but just 45% of Democratic leaders believe China is a critical threat
- Only 12% of Republican leaders believe the U.S. should adopt a policy of friendly cooperation and engagement with China, but 56% of Democratic leaders think the United States should cooperate with China

### *Vivid China Threat + Elite Agreement about the Nature of the Threat + Bipartisan Actions to Combat the Threat*

[Respondents are first shown the vivid China threat treatment and the elite agreement treatment]

Democratic and Republican Policymakers Take Bipartisan Action to Combat China

- With strong bipartisan support from both Republicans and Democrats, the Senate recently passed the \$250 billion “U.S. Innovation and Competition Act” to counter China’s growing economic influence.
- With overwhelmingly bipartisan backing, Congress also passed the “Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act” which bans imported goods from areas of China where the regime imprisons massive numbers of Uyghurs.
- Republican and Democratic policymakers both support deploying U.S. troops in countries like South Korea and Japan to counter China’s influence in the region.

## Open-Ended Reflection Question

The report you just read discussed China. Now we'd like to know what you think. What do you think about China's actions, relationship with the United States, and role in the world? How does it make you feel about being an American?

Please take your time and do not rush. To help with that, the next screen arrow will not appear for a few moments to give you time to write out your answer.

## Dependent Variable Questions<sup>13</sup>

- We'd like to get your feelings about some groups in American society. Rate the following groups between 0 and 100. Ratings from 50-100 mean that you feel favorably toward the group; ratings from 0-50 mean that you don't feel favorably towards the group and that you don't care too much for the group.<sup>14</sup>
  - Democratic Party elected officials
  - Republican Party elected officials
  - Democratic Party voters
  - Republican Party voters
  - President Biden

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?<sup>15</sup>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>China poses a threat to the United States</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>China poses an opportunity for cooperation with the United States</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Do you consider China to be a friend or an enemy of the United States?
  - Ally
  - Friendly
  - Unfriendly
  - Enemy
  - Not Sure

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<sup>13</sup>The order of questions in this section is randomized

<sup>14</sup>The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

<sup>15</sup>The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

In your opinion, how acceptable or unacceptable is it for the United States government to take the following actions?<sup>16</sup>

	Very Acceptable	Acceptable	Somewhat Acceptable	Neither Acceptable Nor Unacceptable	Somewhat Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Very Unacceptable
Use nuclear weapons against China	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use chemical weapons against China	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use torture on Chinese military personnel and intelligence agents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intentionally target Chinese civilians with military force	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engage in diplomacy with China	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impose economic sanctions against China	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use covert action to secretly influence China's politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Threaten military force against China	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use military force against China	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Various types of political systems are described below. Please indicate if you think that it would be a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing the United States<sup>17</sup>

	Very Good	Fairly Good	Fairly Bad	Very Bad
Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Congress and elections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having the army rule	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a Democratic political system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<sup>16</sup>The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

<sup>17</sup>The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?<sup>18</sup>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Unacceptable	Strongly Disagree
The President should not need Congress' approval to go to war or use military force	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The president should be able to take action to address foreign threats to the United States, even if Congress does not agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
American citizens of Chinese descent pose a threat to the United States	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Immigrants from China pose a threat to the United States	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are likely many Chinese agents working in politics, government, business, and academia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inequality and racial injustice in the US damage America's image abroad and only help China	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The US should pledge to defend Taiwan against a Chinese attack	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The US should allow Ukraine to join NATO, meaning we pledge to defend them against a Russian attack	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The US should work with China to combat climate change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- How much confidence do you have in the United Nations?
  - No confidence at all
  - Not very much confidence
  - Quite a lot of confidence
  - A great deal of confidence

### Manipulation Check Questions<sup>19</sup>

- According to the report you read, has China opened an overseas military base yet?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not Stated
- According to the report you read, how is China's nuclear arsenal expected to change in the next decade?
  - At least quadruple
  - At least double
  - Stay the same
  - Not Stated

<sup>18</sup>The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

<sup>19</sup>These questions are not presented to respondents in the pure control or the abstract China threat condition.



## Pre-Registered Hypotheses

### Affective Polarization

- Affective polarization should be lower when external threats are primed relative to when they are not primed.
  - Somewhat supported. Polarization is significantly lower when threats are primed in a vivid manner in combination with elite agreement about the threat compared to the control condition, but not significant when just threats are primed in a vivid or abstract manner.
- Affective polarization should be lower when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to when they are primed in a more bland and abstract manner.
  - Supported. See results for  $H_1$  in the main text and the appendix.
- Affective polarization should be lower when there is elite consensus that an external threat is serious relative to when there is elite disagreement about whether an external threat is serious or elite views are not primed.
  - Supported. See results for  $H_2$  in the main text and the appendix.
- Affective polarization should be lower when there is bipartisan action taken to combat the external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported

### Policy Preferences

- Support for hawkish policies towards China should be greater when external threats are primed relative to when they are not primed.
  - Somewhat supported. Support for hawkish policies is greater when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to the control, but not when external threats are primed in a more abstract manner relative to the control.
- Support for hawkish policies towards China should be greater when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to when they are primed in a more bland and abstract manner.
  - Supported.
- Support for hawkish policies towards China should be greater when there is elite consensus that an external threat is serious relative to when there is elite disagreement about whether an external threat is serious or elite views are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- Support for hawkish policies towards China should be greater when there is bipartisan action taken to combat the external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported

## Threat Perceptions

- Perceptions that China is a threat should be greater when external threats are primed relative to when they are not primed.
  - Somewhat supported. Threat perception is greater when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to the control, but not when external threats are primed in a more abstract manner relative to the control.
- Perceptions that China is a threat should be greater when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to when they are primed in a more bland and abstract manner.
  - Supported.
- Perceptions that China is a threat should be greater when there is elite consensus that an external threat is serious relative to when there is elite disagreement about whether an external threat is serious or elite views are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- Perceptions that China is a threat should be greater when there is bipartisan action taken to combat the external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported

## Use of Force Norms

- Support for violating use of force norms should be greater when external threats are primed relative to when they are not primed.
  - Somewhat supported. Support for violating use of force norms is greater when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to the control, but not when external threats are primed in a more abstract manner relative to the control.
- Support for violating use of force norms should be greater when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to when they are primed in a more bland and abstract manner.
  - Supported.
- Support for violating use of force norms should be greater when there is elite consensus that an external threat is serious relative to when there is elite disagreement about whether an external threat is serious or elite views are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- Support for violating use of force norms should be greater when there is bipartisan action taken to combat the external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported

## Authoritarian Preferences

- Authoritarian preferences should be greater when external threats are primed relative to when they are not primed.
  - Not supported
- Authoritarian preferences should be greater when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to when they are primed in a more bland and abstract manner.
  - Not supported.

## McCarthy-Like Views

- McCarthy-like views should be greater when external threats are primed relative to when they are not primed.
  - Somewhat supported. Support for McCarthy-like views is greater when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to the control, but not when external threats are primed in a more abstract manner relative to the control.
- McCarthy-like views should be greater when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to when they are primed in a more bland and abstract manner.
  - Supported.
- McCarthy-like views should be greater when there is elite consensus that an external threat is serious relative to when there is elite disagreement about whether an external threat is serious or elite views are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- McCarthy-like views should be greater when there is bipartisan action taken to combat the external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported

## Concern about Inequality and Racial Justice

- Concern about inequality and racial injustice should be greater when external threats are primed relative to when they are not primed.
  - Somewhat supported. Concern about inequality and racial injustice is greater when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to the control, but not when external threats are primed in a more abstract manner relative to the control.
- Concern about inequality and racial injustice should be greater when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to when they are primed in a more bland and abstract manner.
  - Not supported.
- Concern about inequality and racial injustice should be greater when there is elite consensus that an external threat is serious relative to when there is elite disagreement about whether an external threat is serious or elite views are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- Concern about inequality and racial injustice should be greater when there is bipartisan action taken to combat the external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported

## United Nations Legitimacy

- United Nations legitimacy should be lower when external threats are primed relative to when they are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- United Nations legitimacy should be lower when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to when they are primed in a more bland and abstract manner.
  - Not supported.
- United Nations legitimacy should be lower when there is elite consensus that an external threat is serious relative to when there is elite disagreement about whether an external threat is serious or elite views are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- United Nations legitimacy should be lower when there is bipartisan action taken to combat the external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported

## Ukraine Defense Pact

- Support for a Ukraine defense pact should be higher<sup>20</sup> when an external threat from China is primed relative to when they are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- Support for a Ukraine defense pact should be higher when an external threat from China is primed in a more vivid manner relative to when it is primed in a more bland and abstract manner.
  - Supported.
- Support for a Ukraine defense pact should be higher when there is elite consensus that an external threat from China is serious relative to when there is elite disagreement about whether an external threat from China is serious or elite views are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- Support for a Ukraine defense pact should be higher when there is bipartisan action taken to combat an external threat from China compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Supported.

## Climate Change Cooperation with China

- Support for climate change cooperation with China should be lower when an external threat from China is primed relative to when they are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- Support for climate change cooperation with China should be lower when an external threat from China is primed in a more vivid manner relative to when it is primed in a more bland and abstract manner.
  - Not supported.
- Support for climate change cooperation with China should be lower when there is elite consensus that an external threat from China is serious relative to when there is elite disagreement about whether an external threat from China is serious or elite views are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- Support for climate change cooperation with China should be lower when there is bipartisan action taken to combat an external threat from China compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported

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<sup>20</sup>There was a typo in the original pre-analysis plan where we said for  $H_{31}$ - $H_{34}$  that support should be “lower...”. However, per the logic of the rest of our pre-analysis plan, we expected support to be “higher...”.

## Male vs. Female Leadership

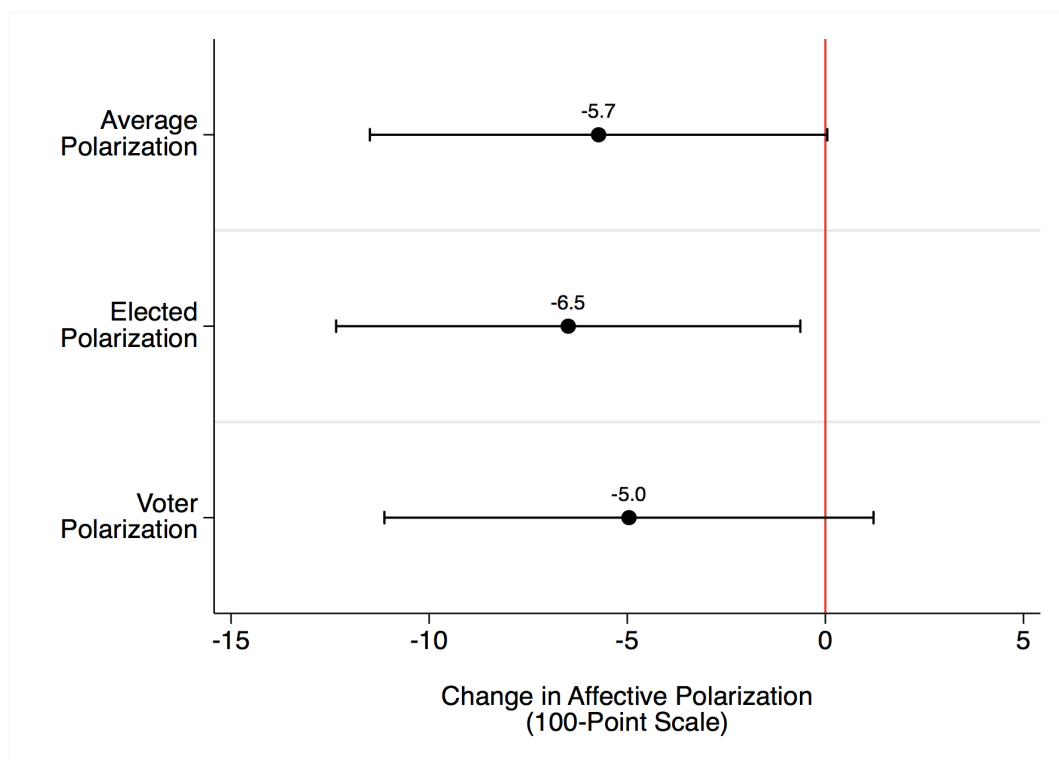
- Support for male leadership relative to female leadership should be greater when external threats are primed relative to when they are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- Support for male leadership relative to female leadership should be greater when external threats are primed in a more vivid manner relative to when they are primed in a more bland and abstract manner.
  - Supported.
- Support for male leadership relative to female leadership should be greater when there is elite consensus that an external threat is serious relative to when there is elite disagreement about whether an external threat is serious or elite views are not primed.
  - Not supported.
- Support for male leadership relative to female leadership should be greater when there is bipartisan action taken to combat the external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported

## Study 2

### Main Results: Affective Polarization

Figure 1 displays the main results from Study 2. Specifically, it compares polarization in the vivid threat / elite agreement treatment to the control condition. Broadly speaking, the results from Study 2 match those from Study 1 and provide additional evidence for  $H_3$ . The one difference being that Study 2 has less statistical power than Study 1 due to a smaller sample size, and thus the results are estimated with somewhat less precision. Nevertheless, priming external threats in a vivid manner combined with elite agreement about the nature of the threat is still associated with a reduction in affective polarization in Study 2.

**Figure 1:** Study 2, Hypothesis 3



*Note:* Error bars reflect 90% confidence intervals.

## Other Key Findings

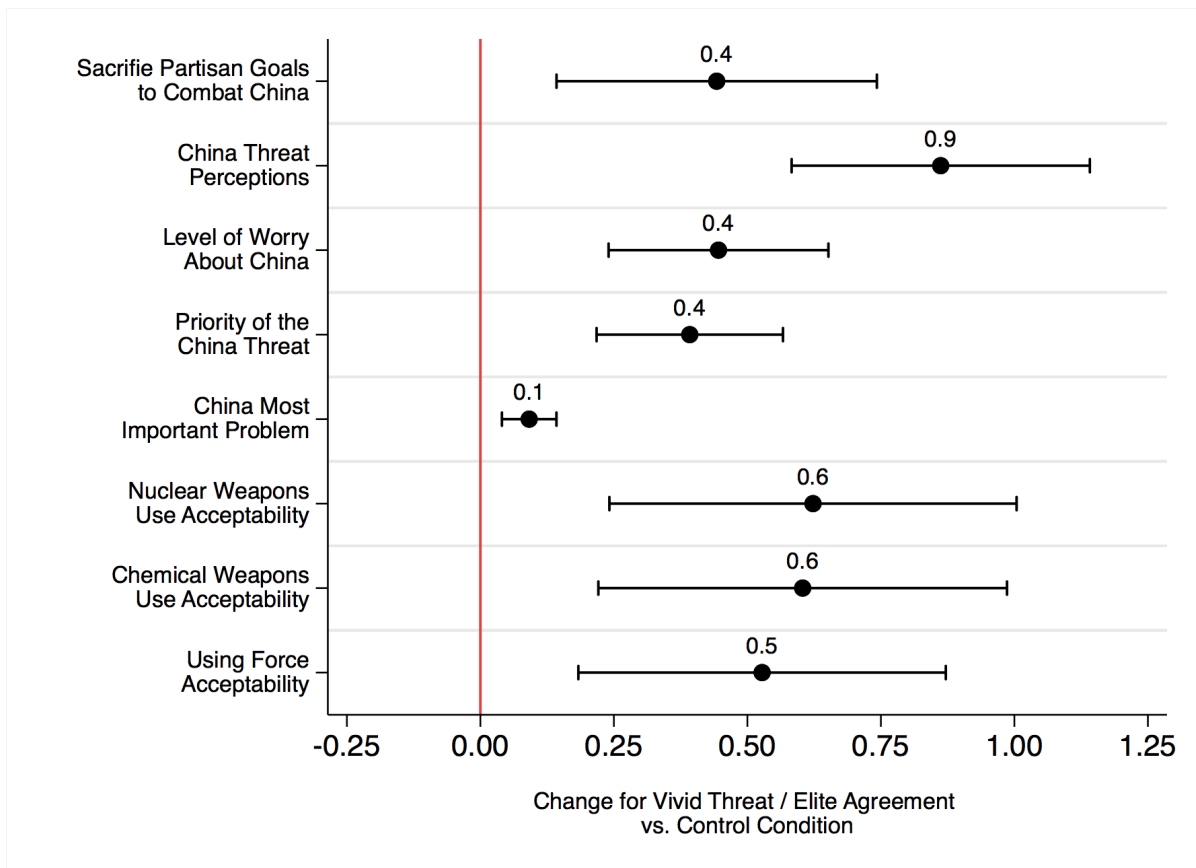
Figure 2 displays other notable findings from Study 2 when comparing the vivid threat / elite agreement treatment to the control condition. First, we find that respondents in the treatment are 0.44 points on a 7-point scale and 10.5 percentage points more likely to agree with the statement that “Democrats and Republicans should be willing to sacrifice some of their individual policy goals in order to unite and tackle the threat from China.” In one sense, we can consider this as a proxy for affective polarization since it measures unity. The finding for this measure therefore bolsters the core result of our study: vivid external threats combined with elite agreement about the nature of the threat can increase domestic unity.

Second, we find that the treatment increases perceptions that China is a threat. Specifically, it increases respondents’ agreement with the statement that China is a threat by 0.86 points on a 7-point scale and a whopping 19.5 percentage points; their level of worry about China by 0.45 points on a 5-point scale and 11.5 percentage points; respondents’ belief that it should be a high priority for the US government to combat China by 0.39 points on a 5-point scale and 7.9 percentage points; and survey subjects’ belief that China is the *single most* important problem facing the US by 9.1 percentage points. Overall, these results dovetail with those of Study 2, further demonstrating the robustness of our findings.

Third, as in Study 1, we find in Study 2 that the vivid threat / elite agreement treatment increases public willingness to violate use of force norms. In particular, it increases the perceived acceptability of using nuclear weapons against China by 0.62 points on a 7-point scale and 8.2 percentage points, and chemical weapons by 0.60 points on a 7-point scale and 7.7 percentage points. These are disturbing findings that highlight the dark side of external threats. They may enhance domestic unity, but they can also erode use of force norms.



**Figure 2:** Study 2, Other Findings



*Note:* Error bars reflect 95% confidence intervals.

## Heterogeneous Effects

Table 10 analyzes whether the reduction in polarization in the vivid China threat / elite agreement treatment compared to the control condition is significantly stronger or weaker depending on various respondent characteristics in Study 2. For simplicity, we only display the interaction effects, but all models include our full suite of control variables. We find no evidence for heterogeneous effects based on political identification, hawkishness, education, income gender, age, race, or news engagement.

**Table 10:** Study 2, Hypothesis 3 Heterogeneous Effects

	Average Polarization							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Treatment × Stronger Republican	1.778 (1.813)							
Treatment × Hawkishness		4.052 (3.458)						
Treatment × Education			-1.389 (1.746)					
Treatment × Income				0.122 (0.451)				
Treatment × Female					-7.472 (6.958)			
Treatment × Age						0.054 (0.214)		
Treatment × White							-2.189 (7.746)	
Treatment × News Engagement								0.210 (3.973)
Observations	413	413	413	413	413	413	413	413

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. \*p<0.10; \*\*p< 0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01.

## Sample Composition

**Table 11:** Study 2 Sample Composition

Variable	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Political Identification <sup>a</sup>	3.24	1	3	6
Militant Assertiveness	3.38	1	3.5	5
White	0.74	0	1	1
News Engagement	3.23	1	3	4
Female	0.52	0	1	1
Education <sup>b</sup>	4.46	1	4	8
Income <sup>c</sup>	8.90	1	7	24
Age	46.30	18	45	95

a. 1 = Strong Democrat; 6 = Strong Republican

b. 1 = Some high school or less; 2 = High school graduate; 3 = Post-high school vocational training; 4 = Some college; 5 = Associate's degree; 6 = Bachelor's degree; 7 = Master's or professional degree; 8 = Doctoral degree

c. 1 = 0-15k; 2 = 15-20k; 3 = 20-25k; 4 = 25-30k; 5 = 30-35k; 6 = 35-40k; 7 = 40-45k; 8 = 45-50k; 9 = 50-55k; 10 = 55-60k; 11 = 60-65k; 12 = 65-70k; 13 = 70-75k; 14 = 75-80k; 15 = 80-85k; 16 = 85-90k; 17 = 90-95k; 18 = 95-100k; 19 = 100-125k; 20 = 125-150k; 21 = 150-175k; 22 = 175-200k; 23 = 200-250k; 24 = 250k+

## Questionnaire

[Same consent, pre-treatment, and screener questions as Study 1<sup>21</sup>]

### Treatment Conditions<sup>22</sup>

On the next page, you will read statements based on real, recent reports from non-partisan military, intelligence, and diplomatic officials in the U.S. government. Please read this information carefully because you will be asked questions to check your memory and comprehension.

#### *Vivid China Threat*

[Same as Study 1]

#### *Vivid China Threat + Elite Agreement about the Nature of the Threat*

[Same as Study 1]

#### *Vivid China Threat + Elite Agreement about the Nature of the Threat + Bipartisan Economic Actions to Combat the Threat*

[Respondents are first shown the vivid China threat treatment and the elite agreement treatment]

#### Democratic and Republican Policymakers Take Bipartisan Action to Combat China

- With strong bipartisan support from both Republicans and Democrats, the Senate recently passed the \$250 billion “U.S. Innovation and Competition Act” to counter China’s growing economic influence.
- With overwhelmingly bipartisan backing, Congress also passed the “Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act” which bans imported goods from areas of China where the regime imprisons massive numbers of Uyghurs.

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<sup>21</sup>The one difference being that political identification is measured on a 6-point scale rather than a 7-point scale.

<sup>22</sup>Respondents are randomly assigned to treatment conditions. There is also a pure control condition where respondents are presented with no information.

## *Vivid China Threat + Elite Agreement about the Nature of the Threat + Bipartisan Military Actions to Combat the Threat*

[Respondents are first shown the vivid China threat treatment and the elite agreement treatment]

### Democratic and Republican Policymakers Support Deploying Troops to Combat China

- With strong bipartisan support from both Republicans and Democrats, Congress agrees that the United States should deploy soldiers to the Asia-Pacific region to contain China.
- Thousands of American troops may be sent to countries like South Korea and Japan.
- Republican and Democratic leaders agree that this is a crucial move to deter or stop Chinese aggression.

### Open-Ended Reflection Question

[Same as Study 1]

### Dependent Variable Questions<sup>23</sup>

- We'd like to get your feelings about some groups in American society. Rate the following groups between 0 and 100. Ratings from 50-100 mean that you feel favorably toward the group; ratings from 0-50 mean that you don't feel favorably towards the group and that you don't care too much for the group.<sup>24</sup>
  - Democratic Party elected officials
  - Republican Party elected officials
  - Democratic Party voters
  - Republican Party voters
  - President Biden

Please explain why you chose to rate Democrats and Republicans the way you did. Please take your time and do not rush. To help with that, the next screen arrow will not appear for a few moments to give you time to write out your answer.

---

<sup>23</sup>The order of questions in this section is randomized

<sup>24</sup>The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

In your opinion, how acceptable or unacceptable is it for the United States government to take the following actions?<sup>25</sup>

	Very Acceptable	Acceptable	Somewhat Acceptable	Neither Acceptable Nor Unacceptable	Somewhat Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Very Unacceptable
Use nuclear weapons against China	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use chemical weapons against China	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use military force against China	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?<sup>26</sup>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Unacceptable	Strongly Disagree
The President should not need Congress' approval to go to war or use military force	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The president should be able to take action to address foreign threats to the United States, even if Congress does not agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
American citizens of Chinese descent pose a threat to the United States	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
China poses a threat to the United States	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Democrats and Republicans should be willing to sacrifice some of their individual policy goals in order to unite and tackle the threat from China.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Policymakers are dealing with the threat from China effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- How worried are you about China?
  - Not at all worried
  - Not very worried
  - Indifferent
  - Somewhat worried
  - Very worried
  
- How high a priority should it be for the government to implement policies to combat China compared to addressing other issues?
  - Not a priority
  - Low priority
  - Medium priority
  - High priority
  - Essential

<sup>25</sup>The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

<sup>26</sup>The order of questions in this matrix is randomized.

- Please rank the most important problems facing the country in your view from 1 (most important) to 10 (least important).
  - China
  - The economy
  - Covid
  - Environment/climate change
  - Crime
  - Abortion
  - Immigration
  - Racism
  - The media
  - Education
  
- It was mentioned earlier that Democratic and Republican policymakers have taken bipartisan action to combat China. To what extent do you support or oppose this action?<sup>27</sup>
  - Strongly support
  - Support
  - Neither support nor oppose
  - Oppose
  - Strongly oppose
  
- China is spending billions of dollars on new education and science programs to dominate global emerging technologies. To compete with China, the US government must launch major new investments in national education, science, and technology, for example, universal pre-K education, and more spending on green technology.
  - Strongly support
  - Support
  - Neither support nor oppose
  - Oppose
  - Strongly oppose

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<sup>27</sup>This question is only asked to respondents in the bipartisan action treatment conditions.

## Pre-Registered Hypotheses

- Affective polarization should be higher when there is bipartisan action taken to combat an external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported.
- Relative concern about the threat from China compared to other issues should be lower when there is bipartisan action taken to combat an external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported.
- Absolute concern about the threat from China should be lower when there is bipartisan action taken to combat an external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported.
- Belief that policymakers are effectively dealing with the China threat should be greater when there is bipartisan action taken to combat an external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported
- Belief that Democrats and Republicans should be willing to put aside some of their individual goals in order to unite and tackle the threat from China should be lower when there is bipartisan action taken to combat an external threat compared to when no such action is primed.
  - Not supported
- Affective polarization should be lower when there is bipartisan action related to troop deployments to combat an external threat compared to when there is bipartisan action related to investments/sanctions to combat an external threat.
  - Not supported